

BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS

Speaker: Dr. Robert Stein

Introduction

The purpose of our course is to introduce students to a brief history of the English Bible. Nowhere in the curriculum, before we organize the Hermeneutics class, was there a place where every student would be getting an introduction to the history of the English Bible. And it seemed just incredible that a person could graduate from seminary without having some overview of “How did we get this English Bible of ours?” So we will begin that and it is also a helpful introduction to the issue of Hermeneutics.

We start tonight with a brief history of the English Bible and then we are going to seek to understand the goal of interpretation; what part presuppositions play in interpretation; the role of genre in interpretation and how to arrive at the meaning of an ancient text as well as its present significance. The major goal of this course will be to master the technical hermeneutical vocabulary in R. H. Stein’s *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible*. There are three texts: Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard’s *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, the second is Stein’s *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible*, and the other is Paul Wegner’s *The Journey from Texts to Translations*. That is a really good text. It fills in a lot of things in this area that I could not find elsewhere. A lot of books have been written on Hermeneutics in the last fifteen years. It is simply incredible to try to keep up with them. Yet I think I could honestly say that of all the books I’ve read so far there are none I could agree with than the Stein book and that is why we are going to be using it. I think you will find it very user-friendly and helpful that way.

By the end of this class you will have an understanding of Hermeneutics that will make clear just what interpreting the Bible is all about, an understanding you did not have before. I guarantee that. And part of that, if not the best part of it, will be to master a vocabulary of definitions. There will be twelve terms or so, expressions that we will carefully define, for that will become the framework in which we will understand the issues and discuss it. Now I will give definitions to these terms and there are other definitions that you can find elsewhere. But, in this class we will always use the same definition. It is kind of silly to talk about meaning when you have a different understanding of what that term means, and **you are talking cross-purposes**. So we will have a specific vocabulary that we will use precisely in time and time again, and it will become second nature. You will find that it will be very helpful.

By taking this course we will arrive at an understanding of how the Bible was translated into the English language. We will talk about some of the various translations and their strengths and weaknesses. We will develop a conceptual

framework and vocabulary, which explains the role of the author, text, and reader. We will distinguish different genres of biblical literature and understand the basic rules involved in those particular genres. Simply, you do not interpret a medical report the same way you interpret a love poem. Well the Bible is filled with different kinds of genres and there are different rules that the editors expected people would understand about them. But, over the millennia we have lost sight of some of the rules and some of the principles of these genres. We will learn and re-learn them in class. We will seek to understand how to interpret various approaches.

Early Beginnings

Prayer: Father, we are thankful of the opportunity we have this semester of studying your Word, to study how to understand and interpret it. We have a great task and a responsibility to be faithful stewards of your Word. Help us to learn, we pray. Help us to have a sense of understanding your Word so that when we proclaim it we will have a confidence in so doing. We pray for the dynamics of the class; that you give us a sense of joy, of learning, of openness, we pray. And, we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Now I want to talk about the translation of the Bible into English, and we have to remember, of course that there was no such thing as an English language when the Bible was written. Actually English is an amalgam of various kinds of dialects. The English language begins roughly in the 5th century when Germanic tribes left the continent of Europe and came to England. The main three tribes were the Angles, for which we get England; the Saxons, these were a Germanic group up in Schleswig-Holstein; and the Jutes, the Jutes were out of Denmark. Now if any of you are history buffs in World War I, the greatest naval battle in the war was the Battle of Jutland, when the British naval forces and the German navy slugged it out with one another. The Battle of Jutland was off of Denmark, the Jutland Peninsula. Now as they came to England, they were not taking vacation cruises. They came to conquer, and they did. As they settled in England, there developed a common dialect out of these Germanic tribes, which was called Anglo-Saxon or Old English. Now if any of you have studied German, you will note that a lot of the vocabulary in German is very, very similar. I have listed some of them: *haus* (spelled differently, pronounced the same way), *schuh*, *wasser* (water), *buch* (book), *finger*, *knie* (knee), *haar* (hair), *glas* (glass), *hand*, *feuer* (fire), *boat* (same), *blau* (blue), *weiß* (white), *roge, student*. Lots of words are similar and the reasons are very clear, English comes out in part in the German language.

Now in the 11th century William the Conqueror, who is a Norman in France, conquered the English in 1066 at the Battle of Hastings. He introduced the long bow at that time and brought magnificent victory to the French. It was kind of a reverse of D-Day in 1944. Here was the Normandy people going over to England rather than the reverse. Now that brought, then, a Norman or French invasion and the influence of the French language came. The French language worked with the Anglo-Saxon, you throw a little Latin in there and put in whirring blunder, get English, our English. So that is the way the English language originated.

Now in the earliest period of the Bible of the people of England was the Latin-Vulgate, the Bible of the Church. Most people could not read, however, in fact a lot of the priests couldn't read. So, in effect, people learned their Christianity from the art of the Church, the paintings of the Church. I don't know if you have gone to any of the old cathedrals in Europe. Stained glass windows, these were pages of the Bible, so to speak. You would learn your Bible stories through them. The preaching was

lousy; you look to the windows. You read your Bible somehow this way. You go to a door in a church and there were carvings of Bible stories. Anything that was art was primarily associated with the art of the Christian faith. And many people learned their Bible from these things.

There were other kinds of ways people learned about the Christian faith. Not only the preaching of the church and so forth, but there were groups called Troubadours, people who would have an ability to sing and go from village to village. They would sing and people would learn the Bible. Some Troubadour would come to your little town and you would start singing, "Only a boy named David; only a little sling; only a boy named David, but oh how he could sing" and they would sing the story about David. We do the same with our children, right? Helpful way of learning, especially for people who can't read or write, like our children at that stage. They can learn these stories even if they can't read and write. "Zaccheus was a wee little man and a wee was he" and so forth. They would sing the Bible stories and this is the way people would learn them.

Now in the Old English dialect, beginning around the 600s, the Bible began to be translated into Anglo-Saxon, not English, but Old English. The pre-French influence English. **Stedman**, around the 7th century put into poetry and song various Biblical stories. Aldhelm, who died in 709, he translated the Psalms into Anglo-Saxon - the Lord's Prayer, the Decalogue (interesting!). Psalms you need to sing, that's why you sing. The Lord's Prayer, you have to pray together, and the Decalogue, moral instructions. So the basic needs of the church were first dealt with. They didn't start with translating the Book of Leviticus into Anglo-Saxon, but those which are most crucial to the worship of the church. The Venerable Bede, by his death, the gospels had been translated into Anglo-Saxon. It's debated as to how much he personally translated, but he was very much responsible for seeing that it was translated. This is all Old English or Anglo-Saxon.

The first real approach to translating the Bible into English, you have to add this one here, would be William of Shoreham, 1325, who translated the various Psalms into English, not Old English, but English. The first major name, however, who comes across the history of the English Bible is a man named John Wycliffe. I spelled it two ways, the last one is the Old English kind of spelling. If you look at a Bible back in the 1600-1700, they will spell in this manner. John Wycliffe produced the first Bible in the English language in 1382. He really was a kind of pre-Luther/Calvin reformer. He convinced a lot of people who were priestly, and these priests would go around sharing the Bible and the message of the Bible with other people. He didn't know Greek or Hebrew, so what he did was to translate the Bible from the language he did know, in which it was in, and that was the Latin Vulgate. So, the Wycliffe translation was a translation of the Vulgate, which is a translation of the Greek and Hebrew. You say that that's not real good. You should go from the Greek and the Hebrew. If Wycliffe were here he would say, "What do you want, nothing or from the Vulgate?" The answer, "Well sure anything, we don't have anything." So, the Vulgate was really fine.

Now as people begin to hear the scriptures read, they began to notice a lot of things, which cause problems. And that is, the character of the clergy and a lot of the political leaders did not match what they were reading in the Bible. They became critical of the church. They became critical of their political leaders as well. And the result was that the ecclesiastical and civil authorities began to crack down on this and say, "Let's put an end to this." By 1414 it then became a capital offense to be found reading the Bible in the English language. Just reading the Bible in the English you could get executed. I wonder how many people in our churches would be reading the Bible if that was the alternative. But, they did that.

Now with Wycliffe it was too late, because Wycliffe died in 1384 some thirty years earlier. So, what they did was to dig up his body and then they burned his bones at the stake. We laugh at that, but there has been a recent survey among translators and well over 98% say this is the way they prefer.

This translation occurs before the printing press. So there are hand written copies and there are hand written sections of the Bible that the Lollards were selling. They were like book sellers, Bible book sellers, who went around selling passages and teaching from those passages. The result is that if you were going to start a mission society whose basic goal was to translate the Bible into the language of the people and you were living and coming out of the English-speaking world, you might think of the name Wycliffe Bible Translators. He was the first who truly began the translation of the Bible into English. And, he did the whole Bible that way.

Now the next person who comes along, comes after the printing press, his name is William Tyndale. He produces the first printed New Testament. Remember, Wycliffe has already done the whole Bible, but it is hand written. This is the first printed New Testament. It appears in 1526. It was not published in England because there was opposition to this. It was printed in Worms, Germany, the place where the Reformation was centered—very much active. He did something in translating the New Testament that revealed right away that he was a Luther supporter. Now, tactically that might not have been a wise thing to do because Henry VIII, the king of England, had received the medal from the Pope for resisting the Lutheran doctrine in England. What you do when you immediately on opening this New Testament you knew this was a kind of Lutheran translation. It was evident because in the introduction, the Preface, he used the term "justification" and talked about the need of justification. He used other words that were not the Church's words. He used the word "repentance" instead of "doing penance." He used the word "congregation" instead of "church." He used the word "elder" rather than "priest." But, I think the clearest indication of all was his order of the New Testament. Luther has an unusual order in his New Testament, and the last four books of the Luther New Testament are not 1, 2, 3 John, Jude, Revelation like we have, but Hebrews, James, Jude, Revelation. Very unusual order. I think it partly involved his evaluation of those books. He didn't like some of them, James especially, and Revelation and the like. Well, when the Tyndale New Testament

came out everybody knew this guy was a pro-Luther because his order is the same. He also translated large parts of the Old Testament. Some were destroyed; some were burned as he was fleeing and the result was that he never completely finished that. Now there was a lot of opposition to this and the result was that they sought to destroy the various New Testaments. There is some irony in this because the church would go about trying to collect Luther testaments and some of the merchants were approached and said, "Yeah, we can get some of these New Testaments for you. We will collect them." Well, they were actually some supporters of Tyndale. So what they would do was say, "We can sell them, make profit and then make more." And so, they were selling to some of the clergy these New Testaments, making profits so they could make even more New Testaments and selling them in this way. The effect to destroy the Tyndale New Testament was really effective. There were something like 18,000 printed Tyndale New Testaments. Only two still remain—one in the British Library in London and the other in the Baptist Bible College in London. Listen to how some of the religious leaders oppose this. The Bishop of London fumed against "the maintainers of the Luther sect that have craftily translated the New Testament into our English language." Cardinal Wolsey assured the people that "no burnt offering could be more pleasing to Almighty God than the burning of the Tyndale New Testament." Another man by the name of Coklia says, "the New Testament translated into the vulgar tongue [meaning the common everyday language] is in truth the food of death, the fuel of sin, the veil of malice, the pretext of false liberty, the protection of disobedience, the corruption of discipline, the depravity of morals, the termination of concord, the death of honesty, the wellspring of vices, the disease of virtues, the instigation of rebellion, the milk of pride, the nourishment of contempt, the death of peace, the destruction of charity, the enemy of unity, the murderer of truth." Now if you read very carefully between the lines you get the impression he didn't like it real much. Right? So they had this attempt to wipe out the Tyndale New Testament.

Tyndale himself was living at the time in Antwerp, Belgium, which was an open city, neither Catholic or Protestant. He was kidnapped by followers of Henry VIII and in 1536 in a little named Vilvoorde outside of Brussels he was burned at the stake. His last words were "Lord, open the eyes of the King of England." Boy, if someone is about to strangle me and burn me down I don't know if I'd say that. I would have some other choice words, but who knows God does promise that at such times the Spirit will be present and we will be able to do things like Stephen does, "Lord, lay not this sin into their charge," as he is being stoned. Bless rather than curse—a good example.

Now, Tyndale was an excellent translator. He had a mastery of the Greek and Hebrew languages. He not only knew the languages, the original languages, but he had a tremendous ability to translate that into good English. Now you say, when I look at Tyndale's writing it sounds very archaic. Well it wasn't archaic in 1530; it was very modern. When the King James version is later translated in 1611, with regard to the New Testament ninety percent of our King James version is simply Tyndale. He did a masterful job. Great translator, a great martyr of the faith.

When he dies, his work is followed by a number of his co-workers. For instance, Miles Coverdale, who was one of his disciples, completes and publishes a complete printed English Bible. Now pay attention, this is the first printed Bible in completion. Wycliffe had a Bible but it was handwritten. This is the first printed Bible in the English language in completion. He had been a co-worker with Tyndale. He did not know Greek or Hebrew, however. What he did was do some minor revisions of the New Testament and he did the Old Testament by taking that which Tyndale himself had already done and then the parts that he had to do for himself he translated from the Latin Vulgate, from Luther's German. The result was to come out with a Bible. He also was the first person up to that time who separated the books of the Apocrypha from the Old Testament.

The books of the Apocrypha, like first and second Maccabees, Tobit, Judith, are intermingled in the Old Testament. The Reformers had to wrestle with the issue of what books belong in our Bible. We will talk more about that at the end of the semester when we talk about the canon of Scripture, which books measure up to the canon of scripture. They concluded for various reasons, we will discuss then, that the Apocrypha did not measure and were not to be understood as scripture. So they separated them out of the Old Testament, put them in between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

English translations continued to have them in the Bible, between the Old and the New Testament, indicating they were separate from those two until sometime around the 1700s and then there was a large, massive attempt in England to produce cheap Bibles so that everybody could read and have their own Bible. One way you could make it cheaper was to leave out the Apocrypha. Since they didn't think this was part of Scripture, they did so and from then on there is a tendency not to have them in the Bible.

End of Lecture 1

Coverdale mostly revised the work of Tyndale in the New Testament and another translator who was a co-worker with Tyndale was a man by the name of John Rogers, who produced the Matthew Bible, published in 1537. Now you say well, why did he call it the Matthew Bible? John Rogers knew what happened to Tyndale. He said let them burn at the stake any Thomas Matthew they can find, just leave John Rogers alone. Unfortunately we find out that they found out who he was. He, too, was martyred for the faith. This was a revision of Tyndale for the most part and he used Coverdale for those areas that Tyndale did not translate. There is an irony here in that in 1537, both Matthew's translation and Coverdale's were licensed by Henry VIII. In other words, they could be printed and sold in England. This is only one year after the martyrdom of Tyndale. I just add the note in 1555, Rogers is burned at the stake by Mary Tudor. We will come to that shortly. Another translation, the Taverner, comes out in 1539 was a revision of Matthew's Bible.

All these translations that we talk about will be revisions of Tyndale. They all come from that central root, that central stem, Tyndale's work. Most of them all, we start out with the presupposition, "unless it's broke let's not try to fix it." Is there any reason we should change Tyndale. If they were working on Coverdale's translation they would say "is there any reason to change Coverdale," which of course isn't Tyndale. So you keep on going back to the original parent, Tyndale.

Now the Great Bible, named for its size, listed here. Its size was fifteen inches by nine inches. I've seen elsewhere that it was 16 1/2 inches by 11 inches. That maybe whether you leave out the blank margins around it or not. But whatever it was size it was not your pocket New Testament for witnessing in street corners. This is the chain Bible in the pulpit. This is the first authorized version. It is not *the* authorized version. It was the first one authorized, but when we talk about *the* authorized version, we are talking about the King James authorized version of 1611. But, this was authorized before by Henry VIII. He had assistance support from Thomas Cromwell, Cramer, and Coverdale and what they did was to revise the Matthew Bible. Published in 1539 was the official Bible of Henry VIII in his reign.

To get authorized they did some things that would make it more palatable to the clergy and to political leadership. One was by going back to the traditional order of the New Testament books at the end. So they reversed the order, instead of following Luther, they followed the other ones before. It was also required that there be no footnotes in this Bible. What's wrong with footnotes? One cupit footnote (a cupit is about 18 inches) or one talent (a talent weighed so and so). That's not what we mean by footnotes. In the Geneva Bible, which comes later, we'll talk about it. Here are some of the kinds of footnotes you get. "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath wit count the number of the beast. For the number of a man that is numbered is six hundred and three score and six" Footnote—"such as maybe understood by man's reason, for about 660 years after this revelation the Pope or antichrist began to be manifest in the world." These are the kind of notes we are talking about. You have another one, "There followed another angel, saying 'It is fallen, it is fallen, Babylon the great city,' signifying Rome for as much as the vices which were in Babylon are found in Rome in greater abundance as persecution of the church" and so for. Let me read one or two more. "For they are spirits of devils working miracles to go unto the kings of all the earth." Footnote—"For in all the king's courts the Pope has had his ambassadors to hinder the work of the kingdom of Christ." And if you are king, you didn't come out too well in these things either, princes and the like. So, these were not what we mean by the normal notes of the Bible. And, needless to say, if you were a king you don't want notes. So, he did not allow any notes to be had in the Bible.

Now I have a little parenthesis here that Mary Tudor, or Bloody Mary as she was called, comes to the throne and begins a period of persecution. Let me just give a little history. You don't have to memorize these dates or anything like that, but it might be nice to just put them down.

Henry VIII died in 1545. At the end of his life he had made England an Anglican or Protestant nation. I wish that we could say that he had very good motives, but the big issue was that the Pope wouldn't let him divorce his wives. He probably should have because he killed some of them as a result of that. But, there became a clash between papal authority and Henry VIII over moral issues in which some I think the pope was right. But anyhow, he makes a break with the papacy. Also, since the Bible is the strengths of the reformers in the Reformation he wants to have a great Bible so that the people can read it and the like. Now he dies in 1545 and he is succeeded by Edward VI who dies in 1553.

For eight years Edward VI reigns and he is also strongly Protestant in orientation. When he dies Mary Tudor becomes queen and she wants to undo the Reformation. She wants to make England Catholic once again. She begins persecuting the reformers there, some 300 of them are put to death. Bible translations are burned and destroyed, all but one—the Great Bible. Why didn't she try to destroy the Great Bible? It was authorized by a king. If kings didn't make mistakes, queens made mistakes. They leave those things alone. So, that was not touched. Coverdale flees to Europe. He would have been martyred by Mary Tudor except that the king of Denmark interceded on his behalf and thus, he escaped that.

She marries Phillip II of Spain. In 1558 the people of England chop her head off. They don't want to go Catholic. Do you know how England and Spain got along? They were the great rivals and thirty years later you have the Spanish Armada which is not a cruise line trying to invade England, so that was too much. She is put to death.

In 1558 Queen Elizabeth takes the throne and she reigns until 1603—some 48 years. Strongly affirming the Reformation and after Mary Tudor's death the fate of England as far as religion is concerned, Protestant or Catholic, is settled in the Protestant camp.

Now when Coverdale flees England under the reign of Mary Tudor, he goes to Geneva and there he produces what is known as the Geneva Bible. This was a revision of the Great Bible and it is the first Bible in the English language that has verses, verse-division in it. 1560, the first time we have verses in our English Bible. Now the Geneva Bible was rather Calvinistic in its emphasis. Up to 1560, no English Bible has verse divisions in it. If you look at some of Luther's writings, he doesn't say "In Galatians 3:23 we find" he says "towards the end of Galatians chapter 3 we find." Chapters are there but not verses.

The first person who begins this is a printer named Stephanus or Robert Estienne in 1551 and he produces a Greek New testament in which he makes verse divisions. The chapters are there and now he "versifies" them. I remember a professor of mine, Bruce Metzger, saying that much of this work was done on horseback as he was riding through France and sometimes the horse went up and the pen went down at inopportune places. But we are stuck with them. We will never change verses. How

would you ever have a new versification and read a commentary where the verses are different and so forth. It just would be absolute chaos. Besides, even if they are not perfect it is much easier to try to find a verse in Psalm 119 if it is numbered. So, it became very helpful. But, this is the first one.

It was a very popular translation in Queen Elizabeth's reign. It has over 70 different editions and the people chose this over the Great Bible. It was the "People's" Bible. Sometimes this is known as the "Breeches" Bible because in Genesis 3 when the Lord saw that Adam and Eve were naked it translated, "He made for them breeches." So it has been called the "Breeches" Bible.

Now the bishops in England were not happy with the Geneva Bible. First of all it was too Calvinistic. It's Geneva, where Calvin was located. By osmosis it would be Calvinistic there. They knew that there had to be some sort of a neutral translation because they hoped that instead of having two Bibles the one in the church, the Great Bible, and the one of the people, the Geneva Bible, they could produce one that would be a compromise that everyone would accept. And so they produced the Bishop's Bible, named because most of the people were either already bishops when they were in the translation process or later became them.

The greatest and most famous translation of the Bible in the English-speaking world that ever was or ever will be takes place beginning in 1604. The new king, King James I, orders that a new translation be made. Based on the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts that it would take the place of all other Bibles up to that time. It would be one without notes. Forty-seven of the very best scholars in the nation of England were divided into six panels, three of them for the Old Testament, two for the New, and one for the Apocrypha. And afterwards, a panel of two from each of those panels would become the final committee that would go over the work and come out with this final product. A lot of translations proceeds today along the same lines. Only today after those twelve have finished with it they send it off to English stylists who then work it over and then it goes back to that committee again because stylists don't know Greek, and they may have taken liberties with the language that causes them to no longer be faithful to the translation. They have to proofread that again. But, in King James' day the literary men of their day were the scholars of the church. So, you didn't need stylists in this way. This was then to supersede all other English translations. It's estimated that ninety percent of the New Testament is simply Tyndale.

Until 1881, when there was a revision of this, the only other change for the King James Version took place in 1769. It was a major change in one sense, but it was insignificant in the other. It was just a change of spellings from the Old English—remember how I showed you Wycliffe with the "ffe" at the end—to the more modern English, which simply had "if." So there were lots of spellings of that nature, and they were all changed in 1769.

All of these are from the same family. All of them have the same root of Tyndale.

Now if you were Roman Catholic, you have a problem. If you want to read the Bible in the English language, what do you read? Do you read the Geneva Bible? I showed you some of the notes on that one. The Great Bible has no notes in it, but you can't even carry the thing, it's so heavy. So eventually they decide to have their own Bible and this was produced in Douay, France, the Old Testament, and that is how they got the name Douay Version. The New Testament was produced mostly in Rheims, France and sometimes they talk about the Rheims New Testament.

The major difference here is that it is based not on Greek and Hebrew text, but on the Latin Vulgate. This is due to the fact that in the Council of Trent in 1546 a counter conference to oppose what the reformers were doing it was decided that it would not be the Greek and Hebrew text that would be the final authority but the Latin Vulgate. So this was the authoritative text and it remained pretty much that way among Catholic translators until the 20th century. Modern Roman Catholic scholars do not follow that. Although, the Council of Trent did. Published in 1609-1610, the present one that people would use in the Roman Catholic Church would be a revision in 1749. It became the authorized translation of the Roman Catholic Church.

Now look at here for a minute something of a chart as to the various translations. The influence of Tyndale. From Tyndale you have the Coverdale, the Matthew. The Greek Bible comes out of Matthew with goes back to Tyndale. The Taverner uses both Tyndale and Matthew. The Geneva goes back to Matthew and Tyndale. The Great Bible, the Bishop's Bible, the King James, the English Revised 1881, the American Revised 1901, Revised Standard Version 1952, the New Revised, the American Standard, the New American Standard Version, the Updated New American Standard Version—all of these ultimately come out of the seed of Tyndale. Wonderful translator, a great gift to the Church.

Let me just talk a little bit about some of the translations here. You don't have to write this down, but if you want to that's fine. In 1881 we had the first revision of the King James. It was the English Revised Version or the Revised Version, for short. The English invited some American scholars to be part of that revision. But they had to promise that they would not come up with their own revision for at least twenty years. Twenty years, bingo! –the American Standard Version. In 1952 a Revised Standard Version is completed. There have been several revisions of these. One of the things about modern translation is that they are constantly being revised. So about every ten, fifteen years there are small changes in it. You know, Germans still use the Luther translation. But, what edition is it? Twenty-six, seven, twenty-eight, somewhere up there. So there have been twenty-eight times where changes were made and it is so gradual you don't have this traumatic experience that after 340 years you have changes like the RSV make. It is too earth shattering, so this is being done regularly. The NIV has gone through three, four, five changes already. The New Living Translation that came out ten years ago, we are working on a revision of that again, and updating of it.

One of the things that is interesting that when the King James Version came out, I read a letter of one of the biblical scholars in England castigating it. That it lost the beauty of the Geneva Bible. And I thought everything in this letter sounds like the kinds of things that happened in 1952, when the RSV came out. All you could have done was taken this letter and changed names and you wouldn't have had to change anything. It was the same kind of thing. We don't like change and that's why I think you want to make translations and revise them regularly so you don't have these traumatic exchanges.

The New American Standard Version came out in 1960. The Berkley was an evangelical one that was somewhat of an attempt to give an alternate to the Revised Standard Version. The New American Standard 1963. The Jerusalem Bible, this came out in 1966. It was originally a French translation, but it was so successful they translated it into English. The New English Bible, a completely new translation from scratch. The Roman Catholic New American Bible 1971. The New International, 1978. The New King James, 1982. The New Revised Standard Version, 1989. The Revised English Bible, a revision of the New English Bible, and so forth.

There are so many different translations coming, it is simply impossible to stay on top of them. It is incredible how much is coming out that way. I have had quite a few translations, but I'll go broke if I try to keep up with everyone. And, I have some real problems with all the translations that are coming out. And, the problem is simply this, it is not accidental that there is big bucks in English translations of the Bible. A lot of money here to be made. And, in a world in which there are all sorts of languages that don't have any part of the Bible in their language do we need dozens and dozens of translations all the time coming out? I don't know, I have real questions on that.

End of Lecture 2

Hermeneutical Issues

I want to talk about the philosophy of Bible translation. C. H. Dodd made the statement—he was involved in the RSV—“The first axiom of the art of translation is that there is no such thing as an exact equivalence of meaning between words in different languages. Languages are a part of culture. No two cultures are the same.” So we have a problem. For instance, the word “spirit” in English has a number of possibilities. The norms of language for that word can have a variety of understandings. You can talk about a ghost; you can talk about the Holy Spirit; you can talk about the soul, or something like that; you can talk about alcoholic spirits; and the like. Now in German there is a word *geist* and there is an overlapping of these, but they are not identical. You can’t talk about alcoholic *geists*. And in Greek, you have the word *pneuma*. You can talk about the spirit of man, you can talk about the Holy Spirit, but you can’t talk about the alcoholic *pneuma*. So, what you have is the realization that there are overlappings of words, but identical synonyms in all of the possibilities you just can’t find. So when you go from one language to another you have a problem.

Now let me give you an example of that. In 1975, my family and I went to Germany and we spent our sabbatical in Heidelberg. My oldest two children, Julie and Keith attended Bunsen Gymnasium that year. Now how do you translate that in English? They spent the year and the Bunsen gym. No they didn’t play basketball and soccer and do all those things in gymnasium, this was was the name of the school, an academic thing. So what grade were they in? They were in fifth and sixth grade. So why don’t you say they went to Bunsen Junior High? A little problem—this Junior High, so to speak, went from fifth grade to thirteenth grade. Well, why didn’t you just say they went to High School? Well there’s another problem. And that is, when a student in Germany graduates from fourth grade—grades one to four--are Grundshule, foundation school. They all go there, but after that they go to one of three kinds of schools. They go to Fachschule, beginning in fifth grade, where they learn a trade—electrician, carpentry, things of that nature. They can go to Mittelschule, where they learn how to be in business and economics. Or they can go to Gymnasium, in which you study only for the university. Well, there’s another problem here. There were three Gymnasiums in Heidelberg. There was a science, chemistry, physics, math. There was another one which was a modern language Gymnasium. There was a classical language Gymnasium. They went to the modern language Gymnasium.

Now, you understand where my children went. But, there’s no English equivalent. What do you do to simply translate that? Do you put, “They went to Bunsen Gymnasium” then you put a footnote, with a large paragraph explaining it? Gymnasium is a kind of school where after fifth grade students go in order to prepare for the university that goes from grades five to thirteen. Or do you try to find an equivalent? That’s the problem.

Now a biblical problem like that is found in Matthew 1:18. Now in Matthew 1:18 we read,

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way, when his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph. Before they came together she was found to be with child with the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this behold an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bare a son and you will call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’ All this took place to fulfill what was written by the prophet, ‘Behold a virgin child conceived and bore a son and his name shall be called Immanuel, which means God with us.’ When Joseph woke from sleep he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him. He took his wife, but knew her not until she had born a son and he called his name Jesus.”

What is the relation of Joseph and Mary in verse 18—they are betrothed, verse 19, Joseph is the husband thinking of divorcing her, verse 20, Mary is his wife, and in verse 24, Mary again is referred to as his wife. Are they engaged? Are they married? What’s going on here? And the answer is, yes! There is just no English word. Joseph and Mary, in the culture of that day had entered into a legally binding engagement, in which they were considered husband and wife although the sexual consummation had not yet taken place. To break that engagement you had to divorce her. So you can’t say they are engaged simply using the English word because engagement for a lot of American young people think of kind of like going steady. It is not going steady; it’s a legally binding situation in which you can only break it through divorce. If she has a sexual relationship with someone else this is adultery. So, it is a different culture, a different relationship. How do you translate that? Problem. How do you translate to Eskimos in northern Canada that “he is like a sheep led to the slaughter?” There ain’t no sheep up there! What do you say? “He was led like a four-footed animal whose skin people peeled to make clothing?” Do you say? “He is led like a seal pup to the slaughter?” How do you convey to a different culture something that is different in your culture? The Bible has problems that way. Do you see the difficulty?

Some people get so exasperated and say well you never understand anything. Well, that’s not true. That’s to over exaggerate the problem. You can explain and people can understand. You understand what kind of a school my son Keith and my daughter Julie went to. You understand the relationship of Joseph and Mary. The problem is when you try to translate this there are not often good English equivalent words that you can use. So this is the major problem.

If you are going to have a translation what are the qualities that we want to find in such a translation? Well, the first thing to note is that a translation can never be better than the text they use. So what you want to do is base your translation on the

best Greek and Hebrew manuscript that are available. When Tyndale translated the New Testament he used for his Greek text a printed edition by a man named Erasmus. Erasmus was a leading Renaissance scholar--a brilliant man. A publisher came to Erasmus and said to him, they are producing a Greek translation in Spain, polyglot of various languages, and the publisher said to Erasmus, "I think there is a big market for a Greek printed text. Can you produce one and beat the Spanish product?" So Erasmus worked on it. He went in 1516 to the library in Basil and he had four Greek manuscripts that he found, dating from the 12th to the 14th century. He used those four Greek manuscripts to produce this Greek text, which later became so popular, was called the *Textus Receptus*, the text everybody receives and uses. Some interesting things. None of those four Greek manuscripts had the last six verses of the book of Revelation in them. So what he did was he got a Latin Vulgate and translated the Latin into Greek for those verses. Needless to say, he has a translation in part that is not found in any Greek manuscript of the book of Revelation that's ever been seen before.

Since that time we have come across some 5500 additional Greek manuscripts in part or in the whole. Since that time we have come across fragments and whole manuscripts that are up to 1000 years older than the one used in Erasmus' Greek text. Now that Greek text was the one Tyndale used and the revision of that was the one the King James Version translators used. So, since the King James Version has come out what we have now are thousands of additional manuscripts, some of which are much, much older. What should we do with these additional manuscripts? Do we say, get rid of them they just cause problems? There is a sense of ignorance is bliss, right? If we only had four it would be a lot easier. Now we have 5000 of them to deal with, much more difficult. Well, most of the New Testament translations today are based on the best of these Greek manuscripts. One of them is the *Codex Vaticanus* around 400, named because it was found in the Vatican Library. The other one is the *Codex Sinaiticus*. Generally those are the two best old manuscripts that we have that are somewhat complete. Those two are at least 800 years older than the best manuscript that Erasmus had available for the *Textus Receptus*.

If you are going to now make use of these older Greek manuscripts it is going to be clear that sometimes you will see changes in them than in the manuscripts that were available and became part of the work of Erasmus. Most, as I say, modern translations make use of the best Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. The glaring example to the contrary is the New King James Version. That does not. It refuses to accept these older Greek manuscripts and leaves what the King James has as a result. If you have a Bible, I want you to turn with me to 1 John 5:7. Like the King James Version, this New King James Version reads this way:

This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.

What do we do with this? When the King James Version was translated the Greek text of Erasmus had those words in the Greek text. Now let me tell you a little about that particular verse as it is now found, verse 7. Of all the Greek manuscripts in the world, there are only four that have that expression in 1 John about the “three that bear witness...the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.” One is a 12th century manuscript and it is written in the margin in a modern hand other than the 12th century after the 12th century. It is not in the text itself, it is on the side of the text and in a later hand. We know that from styles and so forth. There is an 11th century manuscript which has it, but again it is not in the text. It is in the margin written in a hand from the 17th century. There is a 14th and 15th century manuscript and there again it is not in the text; it is in the margin written in a 17th century hand.

Erasmus was not going to include this in this Greek text because it was not in any of the manuscripts that he was using. He said to somebody, “If you could show me even one Greek manuscript that has it in, I will include it.” There is a Greek manuscript. It dates from the 16th century and it has it in. The only one that has it in the text. Most scholars are convinced that it was written just for Erasmus to make sure he put it in. The only one who has it.

Now what do you do? If you are responsible for a translation for the word of God, do you leave it in, like the King James has or do you not have it in? You say, you know there is a warning in Revelation about anybody who takes out of the Bible these verses. But, read that warning, it also says about adding into it. Now are we taking something out that is there or are we not allowing anybody to add something that was not there? All the other manuscripts on that passage that are earlier don't have anything, not even in the margin. But, what is really interesting is that in the second, third and fourth centuries the Church debated the issue of the nature of God, and they hammered out the formulation of the doctrine of the trinity. The Nicene Creed comes out of Nicaea and so forth. As they wrestle with the nature of God isn't it interesting that never once all those who argued for the trinity quoted this verse? Now wouldn't you think if you were trying to prove the trinity and this was in your Bible you would quote it? They never quote it. They didn't know it. It wasn't in their Bible. It started to come into the Bible later, centuries after those conferences. So, what we have here is something—do we allow it in or put it in? Or do we say no, no one can add to the word of God and we are not going to allow this to be added to it. I assume it is the latter.

And, when the New King James Version came out while I was teaching at Bethel Theological Seminary and one of the editors came out and gave everybody, faculty and students, a copy of this after a chapel address and then there was a time for questions, and he said, “Are there any qu...” He never got the word out and my colleague in New Testament, Berkley Michelson had his hand up and he said, “Yes?” “Why did you include 1 John 5:7?” And the editor said, “You know the editorial staff really felt we shouldn't include it, but the publisher said that if we don't include it

the translation won't sell." --which is a noble reason for adding something to the Bible.

Other translations, this is not a major problem. But, this is one. Same thing when you get to the issue of the woman taken in adultery, John 7:53-8:11. If you look at that, most translations will either put it in the footnote or they will put brackets around it and they'll say, "The earliest Greek manuscripts we have don't have this." John 16:9-20, same thing. Most translations eliminate that or put it in brackets and say "some manuscripts add this in" and so forth. So what we have dealing with here is with the issue of textual criticism. And the average layperson really doesn't know enough about textual criticism. The average pastor doesn't know much about textual criticism. The average New Testament scholar like me, I don't know much about textual criticism. So, it is an area where we feel uneasy about and you have some dogmatic people who have a direct line to the Lord and they are making pontifical statements about this, which, first of all, doesn't show any humility at all. When you don't know enough about something and you are dogmatic about it, that tends to be arrogant rather than humble. Whenever you preach you have to exegete wherever your congregation is. Where do they lie? In some churches this would not be a big issue. You would say the early Greek manuscripts don't have it; it seems to be a later edition. Oh o.k. Others would say "what do you mean? What are you taking out of my Bible?" And if you have the latter congregation, needless to say, it takes a lot more explaining to deal with that. Fortunately, none of these begin a book of the Bible. Right? So by the time you get to Mark 16, you have been with the congregation long enough that they will have either a trust for you or a suspicion. If they have a suspicion on it you can't help them. But if you develop a trust, if they see you have a real love for the Lord. You have a great reverence for the word of God; that you are not going to allow anybody to add something to it, then they might say "I'm not really sure or I don't kind of agree with him, but he loves the Lord and he wouldn't say something like this if he didn't believe it. Or, if you are dealing with John, you have at least seven chapters to prepare your congregation for that, right?"

Now, if somebody says to me, "I'm only going to read the King James Version. I don't care what you say." I would say well why don't you get a New King James Version, some of the words we don't use anymore are explained a little better and they would feel more comfortable with it. I'd say fine. If a person won't read a different translation, whatever one they'll read, unless it's a Jehovah's Witness kind of thing, I'll get it for them. Say, you read that.

So what we want is the use of the best Greek and Hebrew text available. Since the discoveries at Qumran we have discovered Hebrew manuscripts that are 1500. 1300 years older than the oldest manuscript that was available at the time. The oldest was something like 900 AD, 11 manuscripts of the prophets. Now we have about 300-400 BC, some of them. Wouldn't it be absurd not to use manuscripts that much closer to the original. It's not quite as mechanical, but it's simply put this way—here we are today, 2002, and here we have the biblical author of say the prophet Isaiah, 600 BC. Would you like to base your manuscript evidence on

manuscripts dated from 1600 or 300 BC? All things being equal, isn't the tendency down here for more misspellings and errors to creep than up there. Now it's not quite that simple, but it's still relevant to see it this way. With Greek manuscripts there are a number of issues, for instance if you have the original Mark and here you have a copy that dates 600 and here you have a copy dating 1200 and this one is based on a 500 copy and this one's based on a 300 copy. So now this evidently 600 years later, but it's predecessor is early. So you talk about families of traditions and the like and it gets to be a whole art that I'm not really that much of an expert in. But, generally I think you would say the older they would be the more that they would tend to be less affected by changes and errors that could have crept in. The older they are the more opportunity for that.

End of Lecture 3

The second issue—we want the translation to be based on the latest knowledge of the languages and culture. Now, since 1611 they have King James, there has been considerable knowledge that has increased with regard to various translations. We know, for instance, that a lot of the Bible consists of poetry and we can recognize that poetry. Well up to the 1700s no one knew biblical poetry. They didn't understand it. We'll talk about poetry and how we interpret poetry different in other works. We've learned a lot since that time and what we want to be is to be careful about what we've learned during that time and apply all of the knowledge to our particular text.

We want a translation that is accurate. You say, well of course that's true. Sometimes people take liberties in translation, like the Living Bible. In John 21:2, they translated, "A group of us were there—Simon Peter, Thomas the twin, Nathanael from Canaan in Galilee, my brother James and I, and two other disciples." The Greek text doesn't say "James and I" it says "the sons of Zebedee." Now the translator of the Living Bible thought, and he maybe right, that John was the writer of this gospel. But even if he is right, that's not what the text is saying. He says "the sons of Zebedee." And so, you should put in "the sons of Zebedee." You want an accurate translation this way.

You have to realize, too, just producing an accurate translation in manuscript form doesn't mean that it comes out accurate in printed form. There are some notorious goofs this way. For instance, in 1631, **Bark and Lucas** were printers, printed the King James Version. It was a nice copy of the King James Version. A little problem—in the seventh commandment they left out a word and so it read, "Thou shalt commit adultery." They were taken to court, fined, and went out of business. In 1653, Paul asked the question, "Know ye not that (and then they had a little word change) the unrighteous shall enter the kingdom of God" rather than "righteous." In 1716 in Ireland, there were 8,000 copies of a Bible that were printed and they discovered that no word was left out, no incorrect word; no letters added, just two letters were reversed. So in the story of the woman taken in adultery, Jesus says to her, "Sin on more" instead of "Sin no more." You have the famous Printers Bible

where David in Psalm 119 complains, “Princes have persecuted me without a cause” and it came out “Printers have persecuted me without a cause.” In 1682, in Deuteronomy 24:3 it talks about if the latter husband hate his wife and the “h” dropped out, “if the latter husband ‘ate’ his wife.” In 1795, Mark 7:27 “Let the children first be killed” instead of “filled.” So, you can have all sorts of interesting problems.

Before the author of the New American Standard came into our Pew Bibles at the seminary, we had a King James Pew Bible, and some guy—I don’t remember which pastor it was—came in and he preached on 1 Timothy 6. A lot of people used the Pew Bible and they didn’t realize that it read a little differently. Instead of reading, “There is great gain in godliness with contentment.” Everybody who had the Pew Bible read “There is great pain in godliness with contentment.” He was preaching on that verse and there were chuckles going on and I felt so sorry for the guy because you had to laugh. Here’s a Bible that said a very negative thing about godliness and he was preaching on it and you couldn’t escape it.

On the other hand you can be very accurate and not have a very readable Bible. For instance, I think the New American Standard Bible is probably the most useful Bible for verse-by-verse reading and analysis in English, but it’s a miserable Bible to try to read large sections. I mean it has accuracy but very, very awkward reading. Does anyone have a New American Standard Bible here? Will you read 2 Corinthians 10:13? It’s very awkward—whatever it might mean. You want a translation that is understandable. Now understandable sometimes doesn’t mean accurate. If you look at the Living Bible, it is always understandable—even when the biblical writer is not clear, the Living Bible will be clear. No question about it. And it will always be orthodox. That makes people very happy in many ways. But, you sometimes have a compromise here of will you sacrifice understandability for accuracy or vice versa.

It should be contemporary. There are a lot of changes happening in the English language since the King James Version, and the King James has all sorts of words that don’t mean the same or we don’t know what in the world they mean anymore. For instance, in the King James when you come to 1 Corinthians 13, “The greatest of these is charity.” Now most people who read English today do not think that that word means “love.” It’s a synonym for it; they think of alms for the poor or something like that. Charity has a different connotation 400 years or so after the King James Version. How many of you know what a *besom* in Isaiah 14:23 is? They did in King James day—it was a broom! I don’t have a problem with that. In Nehemiah 13:26 it refers to an “outlandish woman.” What they mean is a foreigner. Well, we don’t use “outlandish” in that way. In Acts 13:34, “respecting person” is very positive in some ways or it can be negative. It is not always clear. “I trow not I believe,” Luke 17:9. One that always drove me crazy as a young Christian and I’d just come to know the Lord and a baby Christian of a few months and I read in Romans 1:13 where Paul says to the Romans, “I would have come to you sooner, but I was let hitherto.” I said, well if he was let why didn’t he go? I couldn’t figure it out. Well, in 1611 the word “let” meant to “hinder,” just the opposite of what we

understand it as today. In fact, we only understand the word “let” in this sense when you play tennis, when someone serves and there is a let that hinders the game from proceeding. Other than that it is still totally different. You can’t have a translation use words that no one understands or understands differently than they do now. “He waxed strong.” What kind of a car wax were they using? “He wist not” from to wit or to know. The word “ghost” has negative connotations so when we talk about the Holy Ghost it brings up something different in American minds than say the Holy Spirit. “Suffer the little children to come unto me.” Let those rascals suffer a little before they come unto me. It means to allow. If somebody comes into your church, James 2:3, in “gay” clothing. In the last fifty years that word was used totally differently. You can’t use that word like that anymore. The result is that since there are changing words, we have to recognize that language has to be brought up.

Furthermore, for many centuries the English language was quite stable. It was controlled by two things—the Bible and Shakespeare. Now, the language has no great matter controlling it and language is changing drastically and so quickly. Words mean opposite things before you know it. My father, when you wanted to talk about somebody as being a really good person, he would say “He’s a square guy.” That doesn’t mean anything—“square guy.” The fact that language changes so quickly means that translations will have to continually be revised. The fact that language changed so slowly allowed the King James Version to continue on for many, many, many decades and centuries, in fact.

Let me point out that when you get to the universal language—when you do a translation, you have to understand what your target group is and be careful. The New English Bible, when it first came out—I like to read it; it reads very smoothly; if I had to read through the Old Testament quickly, I think I would use the New English Bible. It reads very well. But, the problem with the New English Bible is that it is too British. In your church Sunday, if you were reading something like this people wouldn’t understand it. 1 Corinthians 16:5ff, Paul says, “I shall come to Corinth and after passing through Macedonia for I am travelling by way of Macedonia and I may stay with you, perhaps even for the whole winter and then you can help me on my way wherever I go next. I do not want this to be a flying visit. I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits.” It reads beautifully. Then it goes on, “But, I shall remain at Ephesus until Whitsuntide.” Well, the New English Bible has changed that, “I shall stay in Ephesus until Pentecost.” It’s more universal; people can understand that. You have to also realize that Mark 2:23, again you have a misunderstanding that takes place in an American culture. “One Sabbath, he [Jesus] was going through the corn fields and his disciples as they went began to pluck ears of corn.” The average American, what is he thinking of? They are thinking of maize, but for the British it is barley or wheat. Corn means grain. The American looks at it as going through the corn fields of Iowa, shucking ears. It is totally misunderstood in an American culture. You have different kinds of weights, pounds, a far sling. My favorite is the Mary Poppins’ translation of Luke 12:16, “Are not sparrows five for two pence?” I can’t handle that. But my favorite one would be to read this in the

middle of eastern Kentucky or somewhere like that and reading the story in John 21:6, "Some time later Jesus showed himself to the disciples once again by the sea of Tiberius and in this way Simon Peter and Thomas the twin were together with Nathaniel of Cana in Galilee. The sons of Zebedee and two other disciples were also there. Simon Peter said, 'I am going out fishing.' 'We will go with you,' said the others. So they started and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing." It reads great, really nice. "Morning came and there stood Jesus on the beach. But the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. He called out to them, 'Friends, have you caught anything?' They said, 'No!' He said, 'Shoot the net starboard and you'll make a catch.' The British know what starboard is; I haven't the faintest, I think it's right or left, back or forward, or something like that. It's a very British type of translation.

The revision of this, the subsequent, removes some of that to make it more acceptable. If you have in the market simply the British people, you can do that. But, if you want an English translation that is universal for all the English-speaking people in the world, you have to make sure that there are on that committee Canadian translators, American translators, British translators, South African translators, Australian translators, because something that may seem perfectly good English may be an horrendous idiom in the other culture. To be universal you want to take all that involved. A lot of the translations are sensitive to that. The Revised English Bible is somewhat surprising. Again, it reads wonderful in some ways and then all of the sudden you get something like a coinage or a different weights and the like.

I think another thing you want in a translation is that it should be dignified. Now I don't mean that you remove for political correctness that some people don't like. But, I think you don't want to be unnecessarily harsh simply for the affect it may take place on someone. For instance, in the earliest translations of the Living Bible there is a story of about how David fled from Saul and Saul is asking his Jonathan about David and Jonathan says to Saul, "David asked me if he could go to Bethlehem to take part in a family celebration." Jonathan replied, "His brother demanded that he be there so he told him that he could go ahead." Saul boiled with rage. "You son of a bitch," he yelled at him. Well, Grandma and Grandpa, they are gone for the rest of the service. There is no way they are going to get over that. The message is lost at that point. Meanwhile, Johnny from Junior High is saying, "Momma, I like that translation. Will you get that Bible for me?" Or something like that. You don't want to be crude simply for shock affect or something like that. Another example of that is the Cotton Patch version of the New Testament. That's a really nice, nitty gritty, down-to-earth Southern translation. There are a number of places where Paul is asked—he uses a dialogue here, with a hypothetical appointment, "shall we sin that grace may abound [God forbid or let it not be] and here we read, "shall we continue and sin that grace may abound, hell no!" Again, Johnny has another translation he wants. He may become a Bible student or something like that.

Now, avoiding a theological bias may be more easily said than done. There are some notorious biased translations. I think, for instance, of the Jehovah's Witness Bible. It

just avoids translating things in order to maintain its anti-acceptance of Jesus as deity. When I got the New Testament version of the Jerusalem Bible I liked it very much. I read lots and lots of Paul's letters. It's a really fine translation. It's a Roman Catholic translation and I thought—hey I wonder how they translate Matthew 1:25 where the Greek text says, "and Joseph did as the angel of the Lord said and took Mary his wife but knew her not until she brought forth her firstborn son." And the word "know" there is a beautiful biblical word that the Bible uses to describe the sexual relationship. In other words, Joseph marries Mary but they have no sexual consummation of that until the birth of Jesus. Well the implication, of course, is that after the birth of Jesus they live in a normal husband and wife relationship and then when you read of the brothers and sisters of the Lord, they are the sons and daughters of Joseph and Mary. But in a Roman Catholic setting where you argue for the perpetual virginity of Mary, which by the way is not simply a Roman Catholic view. I remember reading in the synoptic gospel commentary of Calvin where he argues fairly strongly for that. But, in this particular translation it read "he did what the angel of the Lord said and though he knew not Mary, she brought forth her first born son." If you can find a place where that particular construction of Greek is translated "even though he knew her not" rather than "until" I can show you ten thousand on the other side for every one. It's not the normal way of reading it. It's a theological bias that came in there.

When I was in Minnesota, one of the big mega churches was doing a study as to what Bible they wanted to have for their pew. They asked me to be part of the study and I was and they compared the RSV, the New International Version and some of the others, the King James was one and the like. Anyhow, they had a number of questions they asked and one of the questions they asked was this, "Which translations has the highest Christology?" What does that got to do with the translation? Translation is, "Which translates the Christological passages best?" Supposing you have a translation, the Stein translation, which translates this way, "and she gave birth to her first born son and laid him in a manger. He was very God of very God of the second person of the trinity preexistent from all eternity." That's a high Christology! It's a false translation though. God doesn't need our help, by the way, in the Bible. Just let him say what it says and we'll be alright. So we don't have to help the Bible. What you want to say is, "which translates those passages most accurately?" And, that's the most important.

End of Lecture 4

Various Issues

Words that were perfectly good in translation in the past because the language is changing today we can't use those words; we have to use another one. That's going to happen even more and more quickly nowadays than before. That means that no translation can ever be the final one. Now leaving aside finding additional information about Greek texts and Hebrew texts, suppose we have the original of all of the books. We translate directly from them and it was the perfect English of 2002. In 2050 it is going to have to change, because the language is changing. What we are trying to communicate with is people who now are in 2050. We are not saying that you have to convert your thinking back to 2002, you have to convert the way you worded the infallible word of God in 2050. When you talk about the Bible being without error what do we mean by that? I'm going to argue later on beginning next week and following that what is inerrant is what the biblical authors meant by these words. Now the translation of that into English is not inerrant, but what the biblical authors meant by these words and the English to the extent that the English translation faithfully reproduces that it is without error. But again, I don't want you to think that any of these translations we mentioned tonight—King James, New King James—even those are inaccurate in the sense that they are just filled with errors. We are concerned about the smallest kinds of poor translations because this is so precious to us. This is the word of God. We will never be content without perfection. And, in this life we know we can't get perfection. So, if you say, well it's 99.44% pure. Well that may be good for Ivory soap, but this is our Bible. We will never be content with anything less. No one who reads the Bible is being led astray in these regards.

One of the things you have to wrestle with is what is the basic philosophy you have as to translation in the sense of—are you doing a word-for-word translation or a thought-for-thought translation. The Tyndale, Great Bible, King James, American Standard, RSV, New American Standard—all, word-for-word. What we are trying to do is to say, what is the nearest English equivalent that we can use for that? And that is why in Isaiah 53:6 we would use the word “seal pup” for our Alaskan translation—word-for-word. Whereas, if you were doing thought-for-thought you might do something like “a helpless sacrificial animal.” You use a paraphrase. Now, thought-for-thought translations—The New International Version, the Revised English Bible—those are thought-for-thought ones. Now the fact that the NIV is a thought-for-thought translation indicates that we are not looking for mere English equivalence, we are looking for how best to express this. Therefore, when you come to a passage—and I'm not on this committee, by the way, and I don't think the NIV is that great of translation even if it is the number one. I think it is a little sloppy in some parts, but leaving that aside. When you come and you are trying to translate what the author means, what do you do when the author addresses the church—“brothers” (in the Greek, *adelphoi*)? That's an interesting problem isn't it? How do you handle that? Do you say “brothers” translates the Greek word-for-word? But you know he doesn't mean just males. It means the whole church. Do you think all

brothers and sisters? You have more of a tendency to go brothers and sisters in a thought-for-thought translation than in a word-for-word one.

Now you go to Mark 8:34, here's the King James, "If anyone will come after me (anyone being the word *tis* in Greek, which can be male or female) let (now you go to a single pronoun. We do not have in the English language a pronoun that is good for both male and female. Other languages do. Now don't ask me which one? I don't know, but I know they do. It like my daughter once, when she was young, I said you should eat this there are millions of people starving in the world that would love to eat this. She says "oh, name two.") In the Greek text it goes, "If anyone will come after me (this is the way the King James goes) let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." The RSV, interestingly enough was much more sexist, says "If any man will come after me let him deny himself." Whereas really "any man" could be "any woman" you could translate for that matter. It means "anyone." But after this you have the single male pronoun. What the New RSV decided to do was put everything in the plural. "If any will come after me, let them take up the cross and follow me." So that's the way, because let's face it even if you have "if anyone come after me let *him*" doesn't mean just males, right? Are we convinced of that, just anybody can come after. So, how do you deal with that? If you are doing a word-for-word translation you may want to do it "him," and say you should understand that this is the corporate use of the male pronoun. Or, if it is thought-for-thought, "let he or she come after me" or something like that. Or, "let *them* come after me." If becomes more and more difficult. Well, if the goal is to translate what the author meant and not simply words then, I think, you have to say that sometimes if they use male pronouns and mean male or female we should review that in the text. That is what the International Version is assuming.

We will argue, beginning next week, that the goal of interpretation is to understand what the biblical author meant by the words he used. And, how we go about that is we are able to say we understand what these words meant back then and how the average reader would have understood it. Once we understand that now the question is how do we translate that and on these issues many times he may be using words that are corporate terminology. Suppose, for instance, you agree that the biblical author uses him or he or man, but they are using it in the sense of man or woman, how do you then translate that? If you are doing it with thought-for-thought you say well man is a corporate word also in English—not for everybody. But, if you knew it was corporate then you may want to use then not man, but male or female. If I wanted to read, say, tomorrow I think I want to read through Genesis I would not use the RSV I probably would go to a New International Version. I might use the New English Bible or the Revised English Bible; it reads really nicely. Or, I might use the New Living Bible. If you had children who needed a Bible I would get a New Living Bible for them. It is a great children's Bible! It is not a Bible I would use for studying carefully worded arguments and the letter of Paul to the Romans, but for a person to read through, yeah. It depends on what you need it for. Now, if you had a pew Bible, probably an NIV or something like that. When I deal in gospels we use a synopsis based on the RSV. For that purpose, to compare Matthew, Mark

and Luke word-for-word in English there is nothing better than the RSV. There is nothing. The New RSV won't be as good, because you can't compare words-for-words anymore when you get into thought-for-thought translations on those gender passages. But, you couldn't do that with a New International Version. You can't do it with the Living Bible that's for sure—to underline word-for-word to see changes. So, I like the RSV for that purpose, but that's not a reading kind of decision that's a scholarly use of the RSV which one tenth of one percent may be interested in that. Most people want it for how it reads and so forth. I would say, you know, we are dealing with good translations and a little better translations—or, excellent translations and a little more excellent translations.

When the King James originally came out in its Forward the editors say “we have not sought to make a good translation out of bad translations, but from good translations an even better one if we can.” And, I think that's what we are doing—we are looking for improving the 99.44% and getting closer to that 100% in our translations.

Now there are some where this has become a real issue. And, I think the reason that some Southern Baptists have become very uneasy about the New International Version is because of the new RSV. The new RSV really—I had great hopes for and have been rather disappointed in some ways. They do a really nice job in some areas. For instance, in the RSV in Psalm 50:9 it reads, “I will accept no bull from your house.” The new RSV says, “I will not accept a bull from your house.” In Luke 7:47 the RSV is really misleading; it says, “Her sins which are many are forgiven for she loved much,” which gives you the impression she is forgiven because she loved much. The new RSV is very good on this, it says, “Her sins which are many have been forgiven, hence, as a consequence she has loved much.” This is a sign of her forgiveness not the cause of it. In 2 Corinthians 11:25 the RSV has, “Once I was stoned”—do that in a Bible Study at a college. The new RSV, “Once I received a stoning”—nicely done. Zechariah 3:3, RSV, “Now Joshua was standing before the angel clothed in filthy garments.” That was the dirty angel they sent that day. “Now Joshua was dressed with filthy clothes as he stood before the angel”—new RSV. Change from a girdle to a belt—that's kind of nice. The “thee,” “thou,” “thine,” are “you,” “yours.” “I beseech thee” becomes “I beg you.” “In travail” becomes “in labor.” “Betroth” means becomes “taken for a wife,” “betrothal” becomes “marriage,” and things of this nature.

But, there are times where it has gone out of the way and I know from some people who are on the committee that there is a lot of pressure from feminists in the new RSV in its translation. The editor of the new RSV was one of my professors at Princeton, Bruce Metzger, and I wrote him a note because in Luke 13:18, 19 they, in order to avoid sexist language, really destroyed the argument of Luke. In Luke 13:18, 19 Luke reads this way, “What is the kingdom of God like, into what shall I compare it? It is like a grain of mustard.” And, the new RSV has, “which a person took and sowed in the garden and it grew and became a tree.” And, again he said, “To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? It is like leaven which”—and they left

“a woman took and hid it in three measures of flour.” Now the same thing they did in Luke 15. There are two parables side-by-side, one talks about a man losing his sheep; it becomes “a person” who lost his sheep. And, the next one is about a woman losing a coin and they left “a woman losing a coin.” Now, Luke intentionally in his gospel places side-by-side male and female example. The gospel chapter one, an angel appears to a man named Zechariah followed by an angel appearing to a woman named Mary. Chapter two, Jesus is brought to the temple and he is blessed by Simeon followed by he is blessed by Anna. And here you have a parable of a man losing something and a woman losing something; a man doing something and a woman doing something. And I said that they are destroying the intention of Luke of placing side-by-side male-female images in this translation. And, he wrote back a very nice letter, and he said well I think you have a real point and when they meet to discuss that again in the future it will receive serious attention. So, I’m hoping that it will.

I’m a little worried that we’ve made a faith issue on how to translate things which we may differ in philosophy but not in our view of the Bible or not what we are trying to do. I would argue that if you are trying to translate what the author meant by these words. If that’s our goal then some of these things of which they have talked about as being big issues are really not because you are faithfully translating when you have brothers faithfully translating according to authors, meaning if you say brothers and sisters. Unless you are just talking about the brothers and you name James and John or something like that.

One of the things that I tend to be uncomfortable with are translations done by an individual rather than by a committee. You see, when the Stein translation comes out, somebody might say that’s a totally wrong translation of this passage, Stein. And Stein says make your own; this is mine. Now if I’m part of a committee, they say there goes Stein again. We’re not going to translate the way he wants we are going to translate the way it should be. And there is a control more. So, I feel more comfortable with a committee project in this way. It gives a great deal of reliability to it. I have some real questions with footnotes in the Bible in general. The reason for that is when I first became a Christian the Bible somebody gave me was a Scofield Bible and I wore it out. In fact they did a study back then about Scofield Bibles because they checked with Oxford Press as to whether they were using inferior materials. So they discovered that no it is just people who buy this one read it more and they wear it out normally. But, I came to a place where there was a footnote in it that I didn’t believe. I was a young Christian and I was wondering if I still was an evangelical Christian or whether I was still saved. I look back and kind of laugh. It wasn’t a laughing matter back then. So, footnotes take the infallibility of the biblical text, rubs off on footnotes in appearance, and you give more credence to a footnote in the Bible than you would do—if somebody asks what this text means and I gave my interpretation and they say well my Bible says in the footnote this, who would they believe?—the Bible! The guy who wrote the footnote may be as dumb as I am and so you may not get any smarter. So, who knows? But, no! it’s in the Bible. So I am very uneasy about footnotes in the Bible and I’m uneasy about

Study Bibles as a result of that, because without knowing it people accept the footnotes and what is in a Study Bible with an awe and authority that they don't deserve. So, I'm very nervous about that and you should be careful about that as well.

Now, I'm passing out to you a comparison of Galatians 3:23-28 found in six translations—the King James Version, the New RSV, the New American Standard Bible, the NIV, the Revised English Bible, and the Living Bible. And what I would like you to do is to look carefully at these lines and we will go down one at a time and note that there are some theological differences that show up in the translation. They are, if you read them, they are somewhat different. None of them will lead you into heresy, but there are some differences. Look at that first line.

"Now before faith came, we were kept under the law."

New RSV- "Now before faith came"

New American Standard Bible- "Now before faith came"

The NIV- "Before this faith came"

The Revised English Bible- "Before this faith came"

Now notice that the first three give the impression that we were under the law before faith. Faith came later, which would have been a surprise to Abraham and to Paul, right? I think we were talking about the Christian faith. And, some of those translations could be misunderstood this way.

Then the next line.

"We were shut up unto the faith" or "until the faith." Did the law protect us leading us to the faith or were we imprisoned until faith came and we were freed from this stuff? Is the law viewed as a mean-spirited guard imprisoning us or as an instructor guiding us to this faith? There differences of impression here in these different translations.

And then again in the next line.

Schoolmaster unto Christ. Then we were freed from this terrible schoolmaster disciplinarian. Schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ; loving schoolmaster to help us to get to Christ or disciplinarian until Christ finally broke the powers of that disciplinarian and then freed us. You see the difference in those?

Then if you go down to the Living Bible in verse 25 where they simply change "faith" to "Christ" there is poor translation there. Then at the very bottom, is the expression in Christ Jesus adjectival or adverbial? In other words, the second one the New RSV "you are, in Christ Jesus, children of God through faith." In Christ this is taken place, but in the others you have "through faith in Christ Jesus." Now you are talking about the kind of faith that we have. There is an "in Christ Jesus" faith or you are according to the New RSV this takes place that you are in Christ that you are

children of God by faith. And on page two, the second passage, no one who has a New International Version today has this translation, but originally the New International Version was wrong. It read, "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ"—passive. Whereas actually the text means you "have clothed;" you are actively doing this, you have done this. I think that this is probably a good example that there a lot of Calvinists in that particular translation and the idea of "your" having put on Christ didn't seem to fit and Christ does that for you. Theology started to interfere in that regard. But, they've changed that now. You have the repetition of "no longer" **in some senses**. But the very last one—let's look down there.

Are you heirs according to "the" promise or according to promise? Here you have, "Are we heirs according to the biblical promise of the Old Testament? Or, are we heirs according to the principle of promise rather than works or something like that. There are some significant differences here in regard to that. So, if you look at translations—now I chose a passage where there are more of these than usual just to exemplify this issue at all. So, it gives you an example of how translations can be different in various ways.

End of Lecture 5

The Goal of Interpretation

Introduction 1

We want to begin today with an introduction to hermeneutics proper. We looked last week at the translation of the Bible into the English language. And that's kind of a survey of how we got our English Bible, but it also introduced various hermeneutical issues.

Hermeneutics is a word that frightens a lot of people. It's unfortunate and unnecessary and actually is the transliteration of a Greek verb *hermenuo* which means to interpret, to explain. A form of the verb is found in Luke 24:27 where the RSV says, "and beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he [that is Jesus] interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." The NIV, "and beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he [Jesus] explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself." Interpreted, explains, is a way of translating that Greek word.

Now in Acts 14:12 there is an interesting passage where Paul and Barnabas come to the city of Lystra and he heals a crippled man, Paul does, and the people go absolutely bonkers. The gods have visited us! And we read in Acts 14:12, "Barnabas they called Zeus and Paul because he was the chief speaker they called Hermes." Now I kind of wondered by that because Paul was the preacher, he did the miracle and yet they called Barnabas the chief god, Zeus, and they call Paul, Hermes. But Hermes was the interpreter of the gods. He was the one who interpreted *hermenuo*, the message of the gods to humanity. So, Paul is therefore assumed to be the interpreter and is attributed the name Hermes.

For a lot of people hermeneutics is very complicated. Texts are very difficult to explain and read. I don't think hermeneutics should be a difficult subject. People have understood what people have been reading and saying for thousands of years. Communication has gone on long before anybody took a course in hermeneutics. There must be something that's pretty down to earth about hermeneutics and we'll try to be simplistic in some ways. We may err on that side, but let's get basic and then as complications arise we'll worry about those. But, let's try to deal with hermeneutics in a basic manner.

Now in all communication there must be present three basic components—in all communication, oral or written, any way like that, there has to be three components. There has to be an author, a text, and a reader. All three has to present if there is communication that takes place. Now, linguists use the same root and they talk about an encoder, the code, and the decoder. The encoder—the one who puts the code in—the author. The code, or the text that they are writing, and the decoder—the reader or the one who is trying to understand. In radio we can talk about a sender (the speaker), the message, the receiver as other alternatives. Now I was born and raised in New Jersey and we liked to use alliteration to help and so in New

Jersey we talk about the witer, the witing and the weeder, and we have nice alliteration that way.

Now various people, since there are three components, have argued that each of these components is what determines the meaning. Some argue for the author being the determiner of meaning, others for the text, others the reader. Now, let's look at who or what it is that determines the meaning of a text. Some argue that it is the text that determines the meaning. For instance, you all have heard Billy Graham say "The Bible says" or a pastor says "Our text says." What they are saying, however, is not what this argument is for because Billy Graham could be saying just as readily if he is preaching from Romans he could say, "The Bible says;" he could say "Our text says;" or he could say "Paul tells us in our text" and he means the same by all of this. That's not what is going on in this particular viewpoint. The view point here is rather that the text in and of itself conveys meaning. It is autonomous. It's as if there was never an author. It is as if a text comes to you, drops from heaven without any relationship in time and space to anything without any person being involved in it, it just comes to you in this way. It is an autonomous text. To ask about what Paul was thinking is totally irrelevant. The text is an end in itself. It's as if it magically appeared without author, without circumstances, without any particular time and place.

In the 1930s through the 1960s and into the 70s there was a movement that was called the New Criticism. The New Criticism. This view argued for the autonomy of the text. When one read text one didn't ask about authors. One says what does the text in front of you mean. In and of itself it has its own meaning. An author by the name of Young writes, concerning this period, "The critics of the new criticism almost all insist that the proper end of literary study is the work itself conceived as an independent object. These premises assume that a literary work exists independently of the interests and purposes whether conscious or unconscious of the author or of the responses to or the experiences of the work on the part of any particular reader or collection of readers on any given time and space." So if you talk about reader, text, author, it is the text that gives it meaning. It is the text that means something. Totally apart from author—irrelevant. You don't talk about authors. It is irrelevant who wrote it. It is just there a text in front of us. Another one writes, "Not the intention of the author, which is supposed to be hidden behind the text; not the historical situation common to the author and his original readers; not the expectation or feelings of these original readers; not even their understanding of themselves as historical and cultural phenomena. What must be appropriated is the meaning of the text itself considered in a dynamic way as the direction of thought opened by the text." Now as I say, when Billy Graham says, "The Bible says." If he's preaching from John he means "John the author means" and following. This view looks at texts as art, isolated from their author. Sometimes the illustrations is given. If you came to a chess game, and you wanted to understand what is going on, you just look at the chess board. It is irrelevant what the author, what the players were doing before. It's irrelevant how the moves got to this point. What you have there is now the chess board and the men in various places on the

chess board. Now try to understand it this way. Texts are to be seen this way. If you are in a Bible study and you are studying the book of Galatians, and you come to a passage that is very difficult, if by some miracle the apostle Paul entered in the door and said to you, "What I meant by Galatians 3 here is." This approach would say that's very interesting, but it is irrelevant. Long ago you lost control of this text. It is a work of art. Now it is isolated and has nothing to do with what you said at the time. That's the text isolated as an independent entity. It's a work of art and has nothing to do with what people meant in the past.

Now the biggest problem I have in this is trying to understand what meaning is and what a text is. Meaning is a construction of thought. In the threesome of communication authors can think, readers can think. They can construct a meaning, but texts are inanimate objects. Ink, paper, can't think. A piece of stone and engravings on that stone, they can't think. Because texts are inanimate, they simply can't mean anything. To mean something you must have the ability to think and reason. And since they can't think and reason, they cannot mean. Now can they convey meaning? Yes, but they can't mean. They are simply inanimate. So to treat them and say what does this text mean? You have to say if there is any construction of thinking here or meaning it doesn't come from the ink; it doesn't come from a papyrus; it doesn't come from the steel with its letters in it. It comes from someone who is either reading it. They can construct some meaning in it. Or, it comes from the person who did the engraving. The stone, the paper, the papyrus, the ink, grooves can't think; they're inanimate. It seems very simplistic this way to me, but I don't understand how so many people can say "no the text means this." The can't mean anything.

If you had attended the universities in the 60s, 70s, and 80s this would have been a dominant way of understanding and interpreting literature. This was the wave in academic circles. Since then a new approach has come on the scene and this concentrates on the reader and assumes that it is the reader that gives meaning to a text. Now, sometimes they talk about implied readers, competent readers, intended readers, ideal readers, real readers. We're just talking about a reader—the guy, the gal who reads the text. That's the person we're talking about. Now, the argument here is that person, as they read the text, give meaning to it. Until the reader comes and looks at the text, it's dead—can't do anything. Now the reader gives it the meaning. That doesn't mean they learn the meaning. That doesn't mean they decipher the meaning. It doesn't mean they discover the meaning. It doesn't mean they ascertain the meaning. They give the meaning. They supply the meaning to the text. Now, according to this view, if people come up with different meanings—what it means for me is different for what it means for you—no problem, because since you give the meaning to the text, the text can have multiple meanings. And, they may have contrary meanings. If you hear an expression like a not so popular as it was before 1990, "a Marxist reading of a text," or "a feminist reading of a text," "a complimentarian reading of a text," "an Armenian reading of a text," "a Calvinist reading of a text." What frequently is meant by this is that these people with their theological viewpoint give this meaning to the text in front of them. Now, a lot of

people who may be Calvinist and so forth and on read it and say no the meaning is already there, I'm just interpreting it. But, this particular view says that it is irrelevant if it is there, I'm giving it that meaning. And, they are the ones who are giving the meaning to the text.

A man by the name of Zeisler, in *Expository Times* in 1994, says—and he gives a great analogy that you'll want to remember—“To put it crudely there is a question of whether the text, any text, is a window or a mirror. [You're going to carry through with the analogy; it is a good analogy] Does it, the text, in some way facilitate our own illumination, [like a mirror, you look at it and you are illumined by it] or does it give us access to another world. Do we see through it like a window to a different world. It is far more fruitful to accept their mirror-like nature and concentrate on how we read them. The texts are a language through which we generate meaning. There is therefore no such thing as a single meaning of a text which simply has to be uncovered. The role of the reader is more active than that. Furthermore, any reader has a perfect right to say of any text this speaks to me in the following way regardless whether that way agrees or disagrees with the way other scholars perceive the text.” The text, in other words, functions much like an ink blot. You look at the ink blot and you see meaning. Someone else might look at that ink blot, they see different meaning. But, it is the reader who gives meaning to it. You can go out sometimes when there are clouds in the sky and you can look up and say well this is what I see and someone else says well this is what I see. You both are right. You give meaning to the cloud. That cloud means according to how you view it. In this particular view you are the determiner of meaning. And since you determine it, there is no absolute to compare it to so others read it and find a different meaning. Fine, isn't it wonderful. Like in the Bible study where you have a Bible study in a passage and four different people say well what it means to me is this, well it means something else, and someone else says what it means to me is the following and you're the Bible study leader and you say isn't it wonderful how rich the Bible is that it can have all these meanings. Of course if your Bible has all these meanings it doesn't have any of them. This is the approach that is dominant today. I don't know if any of you took literature recently in the universities. This is not foreign. This is very much a dominant approach. It is a dominant approach in biblical studies today. And a lot of evangelicals have been biting into this far more than I would like to see. I'm very nervous about this.

Now the traditional approach is that it is the author who is the determiner of meaning. It is what the author consciously willed to say in the text that we are seeking after. Thus the meaning of Romans is what Paul intended by these words when he wrote Romans. And that if Paul were alive and told us what it meant that would settle it for us. We know what the meaning is now let's see what the implications of that are for us today. The texts means what Paul says it means. Now this is the common approach we have in studying the Bible and in studying any book. For instance, why if you are studying Galatians and having problems do you go to Romans instead of Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*? Well you say that's absurd. Why? Because Paul also wrote Romans. That's right, isn't it? In other

words, the author of Romans thinks more like the author of Galatians because he is dealing with the same issues and the same time and the same place and the same man. As a result of that if you want to know what Galatians means Romans will help you, but that's assuming you want to know what the author of Galatians means. If you are dealing with the book of Acts and you are confused about something, where do you go? Do you go to Plato's, *The Republic*? Or, do you go to the Gospel of Luke, which was written by the same man who no doubt at the same time is thinking very much like the other work. So, that common sense approach that we have when you are reading Acts you go to Luke. When you are reading Paul you go another letter of Paul. If you are reading John, you may go to 1 John. The common sense approach is all based on the idea that you want to know what the biblical author meant by this and you go as closely as you can elsewhere to that biblical author and if the biblical author wrote something else you go to them. That's a pretty common sense approach.

The Bible then is not and all literature is not to be treated some isolate form of art, but it is a form of communication. In communication we want to know what an author meant. All this time so far this evening you have been trying to understand what Robert Stein means by the words he is saying. And when the exam comes you want to explain what Robert Stein means. You might say well Oksana this is the meaning I gave to what you said. Creative thinking, great imagination. F! In communication we want to understand what the other person is referring to. Now to say that something is no longer a communication but a work of art that takes some thought in doing. How do you judge, for instance, a good translation of the Bible? Do you like this translation because these translators gave a good meaning that you like to the text? I have heard people say "I like what this Bible says." Is it true? Is it correct? As soon as you raise that question you say does the translation accurately reflect what the author meant in this passage and explain that well for you? That's the way I think you have to judge a Bible translation. All that assumes that you want to deal with what the author meant by the text. Does our translation reflect accurately what Paul meant by this? Would Paul, for instance, say, "This accurately reflects what I am saying." Then you say well we are looking for author meaning here or are we saying it is totally irrelevant if Paul would like this translation. Then you have kind of a reader approach. But when you get down to common sense that doesn't make sense in a translation of a Bible. So sometimes you have to start saying well you get to another level called art and now you are just interested in looking at the art. So you should not judge text as communication, but as art. Like you go in a museum and look at paintings. Does it really matter what the author meant by the painting or do you just look at and you read into it your meaning. You should do the same with the Bible—reader approach.

In the 1980s and 90s this was a major issue and it is still a major issue in the nomination of Supreme Court Judges. Whatever the hooplah was about Robert Bork and Clarence Thomas' nominations there was a basic issue and what was at stake was the issue of who determines the meaning of this text we call The Constitution. Do the judges give it

meaning? And that was Blackmun, the former justice Blackmun's attitude toward it. He said that "It is arrogance to think that we could find out what the original authors and framers of the Constitution meant." Or is that the responsibility of the Supreme Court judges – not to say what they want to read into the text, but what the original framers of the Constitution and those who approved it meant by these words.

Big struggle today and it is not a very simple issue for – at stake here. I think it is a simple issue but it is a very controversial one. Long ago James Madison said if the sense in which the Constitution was accepted and ratified by the nation be not the guide in expounding it, there can be no security for a faithful exercise of its power. How would you like to be a Jew and appear before 9 Nazi Supreme Court judges who gave meaning to the text. It's kind of scary.

Furthermore what does a supreme court nominee swear to uphold to be supreme court judge? Does he swear, "I swear to uphold the meaning I give to this Constitution." Now practically I think there would be a lot of Americans who would be very upset with that and we would never get through. But this is the approach if you think the author(?) or the judges give it meaning, then you have a reader approach view to the Constitution.

On the other hand, Bork and Thomas all argue "No. What we do is to interpret what the Founders of the Constitution meant and we can know that. We can know what they had in mind and then we could try to see the implications that flow out of this for the particular situation at hand. It is not just the Bible. It is not just the law. But that's struggling with this issue. A few years ago, maybe five or six now, Michelangelo's paintings in the Vatican - Sistine were redone. I think there was a large grant from an organization in Japan for the redoing of that.

Michelangelo did these in the 1500s. For how many centuries didn't they have electric lights in that place and how did they light them up? With candles. You know after several hundred years that can affect the ceilings. And there were various earthquakes - pieces breaking. There was moisture coming in. So they re-did the whole Sistine Chapel. Do any of you remember what happened when they opened it up?

There was a huge outcry. An uproar in the Art community. They said, "You have changed it. The colors are too bright." Michelangelo had much more somber colors. Now the question was whether 400 years of candles burning made brighter colors more somber or whether they were that way and the new re-doing of it used brighter colors. But so what? Is it an issue? Who cares? Well you say, "Wait a minute. This is Michelangelo's art." "Well. This is the way I as the restorer want to reinterpret or to interpret this art." And all of us say, "No. I didn't come here to see your reinterpretation. I wanted to see Michelangelo." Comes up in Art.

There is a composer by the name of Gilbert Kaplan who concentrates on the directing of Gustav Mahler's work. In a particular work of Mahler, in the original manuscript, there comes a place where there is an E-flat that every conductor changes to an F because an E-flat does not harmonize with it. They all think what he really wanted to do is have an F here, not an E-flat. So they change it. When he conducts it, there is a dissonant E-flat.

[Hard to Hear] This is in his manuscript. This is what he intended. We are doing Mahler's work and we ain't have to play it that way. He also surprised everyone because there was a particular work of Mahler that was usually a work that took about 12 or 13 minutes and it was kind of a funeral dirge. When he conducts it, it only takes 8 minutes. Now it's kind of a polka that they are doing in some ways.

Does it matter? If Mahler were present and you asked him, "Is it a dirge or a polka? Does that really matter how you direct it?" If you say "Yes" then you are dealing with an author controlled meaning.

Art, music, law – major issue. It's the issue you have to face because lots of people will start saying this is the way I read it and I don't read it the way you read it. Is there something out there that is an absolute that we must submit to? I am jumping ahead to something but let me make a comment.

Much of this movement gained strength and impetus in the 70s. It was the rebellion against authority that manifested it in its marches – a rebellion against governmental authority and in other areas it's a rebellion against any kind of authority. "I'm not going to have Paul sit over me when I read a text. I am going to do what I want." And it is a rebellion against authority here too. It is maybe not as clear as what was going on in the marches in Washington and so forth, but it is a generation that does not like authority to which they have to submit to in some way. And I am not a theologian to get into this argument now – whether this is a reflection of sin or likewise. It is there.

Now let us talk a little bit about the whole idea that writings are works of art. That is very debatable. How do you define a work like Romans? When does it become art? Now it is clear, when the Romans got that letter and read it, it was communication and you were trying to find out what does Paul mean here? Paul would not have said, "Well. Whatever meaning you gave is fine with me." He intended it as communication.

Now somehow something magical is supposed to happen and the Bible now becomes art. Well how does this take place? Well supposing you have something that lasted for 2,000, 3,000 years. People still read it. Then it becomes art after it's been around along time. What do you do in a class in 20th century English literature? Don't treat that as art? Don't treat it as literature as such? You treat it as communication.

And also ok, let us forget about having to be old. If it is something that lots of people read that is no longer communication, it is literature or art. Well. In my generation the greatest literary artist in the world is Mickey Spillane. In yours it maybe John Grisham. [Hard to Hear] Shakespeare [Hard to Hear] even past. Very subjective. Very subjective.

I would suggest again that the idea that the author is the controller of meaning is the natural way of communication. In fact, supposing someone here wanted to argue the other side. That person, he or she could not argue with me, except on the basis that our argument is dominated by what the author means as the determiner of the meaning. You can't communicate otherwise. Communication requires that what the two communicators are speaking, that is what you want to know and that's what determines the meaning. So there is a sense in which to even discuss the issue, you have to first basically agree that at least in communication of – in conversation – what the author means is what we are getting at. And we have to say no, but when we get to art or literature, it is a different rule. You can't communicate, you can't debate apart from this presupposition.

A man by the name of E.D. Hirsh spoke heavily on this issue. He was asked to review a work – a book written by somebody in which the thesis was that the author was the determiner of text meaning. He reviewed the book and he got a letter from the author complaining terribly. "You completely misunderstood me." And E.D. Hirsch wrote back. "Thank You. E.D. Hirsch."

In other words he wanted his work to be understood by what he meant. He didn't allow for an author to determine the meaning. Now there are some objections to the idea that the author is the determiner of meaning and a very famous one is called the Intentional Fallacy.

Any of you take literature at the university? Come across the intentional fallacy. That expression ring a bell?

This was an expression coined by William K. Wimsatt Jr. and Monroe Beardsley in 1954 and what they argued was this. You cannot know what the experiences the author was when they were writing these texts. You cannot relive their experiences. They are beyond us. We cannot go through what the author was going through when they wrote. And that's absolutely right. You cannot relive the experiences that Paul was going through when he wrote. That's why you need to read the C.S. Lewis article for next week. Very important article. Delightful article. You must read it for next week.

We cannot relive the innermost feelings, the motives and so forth. They are not accessible to us. But the question is when you read a text, are you trying to relive the experiences of the author or are you trying to understand what the author

meant by the text he gave to you and that you have in front of you. That is different. We are not trying to relive how the text came into being. We are trying rather to understand what the author meant by the words he has given to us or she has given to us – a Biblical author would be a “he” of course.

If you went to a theatre and all of a sudden, the movie was cut off and there was a sign on the theatre which says, “Please move immediately to the nearest exit and leave. There is a fire in the theatre.” How many of you are trying to experience what the author meant as they were writing that sign. What - [Hard to Hear] was just interested in what they were conveying.

If you heard somebody drowning in the lake and saying, “Help me! Help me!” Are you saying “I would love to go through those experiences.” Or you can just say, “He needs help. I am going out there to help him.” Most of the times we are not interested in going through feelings that gave rise to this. Are you really concerned over the fact that one of the reason Paul was so upset when he wrote Galatians was that he had a terrible problem with athletes foot? No.

We are not interested in reliving the experiences of the authors. Well you know maybe we are. Maybe we would like to, but we have no access to and we might as well simply accept that’s not available to us. That is very different thought because what is not available in that is available with regard to what they mean. We have their words and what their words are doing will reveal to us what they are trying to express.

Now a second objection here in the intentional fallacy is that the author may have been incompetent to express what they intended. What teacher has not had some student get a paper and come back and say “What I really meant was ...” Yeah. But you didn’t say it. You may, like I did that one time, try to correspond to my wife, with my wife, said that I would meet her at a certain restaurant in one town and I went to another town with the same kind of restaurant. I was incompetent in trying to express what I was thinking.

So is it possible that Biblical authors may have had some thoughts in their mind, but in the expression of that they were incompetent? Yeah. Ok. Sure – hypothetically sure – what is intriguing to me is so many of the authors that raise that point, never think that they are incompetent in expressing the problem. They simply assume that they are fairly competent.

On most times you try to express something, write something, say something, you are fairly competent in expressing what you have on your mind. There may be exceptions to that but those are by far the exceptions, not the rule. So most writers seem to be quite competent. Now you think about someone like the apostle Paul, he is a fairly intelligent person. So is Luke.

My general impression would be they would be quite competent in expressing what they have on their minds. But now I have a bias that comes in at that point and that is that I am a Christian – an evangelical Christian who believes that they are inspired by God in what they are writing. And if inspiration comes in at any point, my assumption would be, it would be coming right in at this point – that what they want to express, God through His spirit enables them to well inadequately at least, so that what they mean can be conveyed adequately to their readers. So for me that objection that a person can be incompetent – it is not a big point for me because, I think most people can and if you believe in inspiration there is something here that goes over that problem to say the least.

Now another objection that some people raise is kind of radical historicism, and saying well, how can you really understand what somebody in the Old Testament, living in a period of sandals, animal sacrifices is saying? We are in the world of jet engines, intercontinental flights, computers, atomic weapons and the like – How can they – help me understand the way they think.

Well it's a real problem. I think it is. I think many people read the Bible as if it were written yesterday to someone. And we lose sight of the fact that we have to go back into time and culture and try to understand what they are talking about. A number of years ago, I watched a television program on public television and it involved an anthropologist who had just come after five years in New Guinea.

He had gone into a remote place in New Guinea and lived those years with a stone age people. Stone age – no metal tools, lived like stone age people – and he began the program by saying “You just can't understand the way they think. It is just impossible for us to understand how they think.”

And then for the next 55 minutes, he explained to us how they think. Well, what he meant was, there is a difficulty in understanding of the cultures. And that is true. And we should not lose sight of them. But to say it is impossible, well, the anthropologist understood it is not impossible because he spent 55 minutes explaining it. If you really believed it, he would say, “And the result is that there is no sense in my trying to explain it to you.” Short program.

There are some other things that I think draw us together in understanding other people writing at other times. And that is our common humanity. The fact is they are human beings made in the image of God just like we and the basic needs that exist are really not different. Technology may change but we still have a need for hope.

The assurance of life everlasting – of love. Of something that allays the fear of death. Of food, clothing and warmth and fellowship. That basic humanity, I think allows us to understand people who lived in other cultures, times and places.

After all we are not trying to understand how frogs think but of others who are made in the image of God this way.

So these - I think – these objections should not be minimized. Having said that however we shouldn't make them insurmountable. They are objections, yes to be sure, but they are not insurmountable objections.

Text has meaning in and of itself – semantic autonomy.

The reader determines the meaning, gives the text its meaning.

The author gives the meaning – we want to know what the author meant.

Those are the three components. I will argue for author oriented meaning in class.

End of Lecture 6

We are going to look at the different roles of the people involved in these three components. Let us then look at the role of an author. What does an author do in the communication process. Texts don't just magically appear in history.

It is not like people walk along the Nile and see papyrus sprouts there and all of a sudden before their eyes, they begin to peel and form into scrolls and magically words appear on it. Or you are walking in the country and you see a flock of sheep or some goats up there and their skin begins to peel off and all of a sudden, again letters appear on [Hard to Hear] Or you look at a stone and it becomes clear and grooves start appearing in it. Communication takes place somehow.

No. If you are going to have a text, that means that someone, somewhere, sometime wanted to communicate. An author willed a meaning. A thinking person wanted to communicate something –whether they used papyrus, whether they used the clay tablet, stone – whatever they used is irrelevant. Whether they wrote right to left, left to right, up or down – all that is irrelevant. What is important is that some person, some time in history wanted to write something.

Now that is something that is a historical fact of the past. What it means then is that what the author wanted to say in this text can never change. It is past. It is always there. It can never change. Meaning cannot change because the meaning of the past is simply part of the past and you cannot change the past.

An author may decide to repudiate what they meant. But they can't change what they meant. I wrote something in my 1st edition of The Method and Message of Jesus' Teaching About The Term Abba Father and later on I no longer believed that. But I couldn't say, these words mean something differently now. Too late right. It is history. What you can do is publically recant in class. You say, "I made something – it was wrong in that point. Here is what I mean now." Or you can write a 2nd edition.

I was fortunate and was able to write a 2nd edition and I recanted and repented and did homage to whoever needed it and you can change. You can change your views but you can't change the meaning of the text that is in the past, because the text is locked in the history. So meanings are locked forever in history. You can't change them.

So when Paul writes to the Ephesians in Ephesians 5:18, "Do not get drunk with wine ..." what he meant back then is the exactly the same as it means now. It can never change. "Be not drunk with wine..."

Now what Paul meant back then with wine, we will talk about a little later in the semester is not what we call wine. It is a mixture of water and wine. Usually around 2, 3 parts water, 1 part wine. That is what he meant by it. Then we know that ... I will tell you how we know that another time.

So he says, "Be not drunk with wine". Now imagine a situation. Paul comes to visit unexpectedly, the church in Ephesus. He comes and visits them and he finds them all drunk. And Paul says, "Didn't you get my letter? I said 'Be not drunk with wine...'" And one of the deacons says "That is right brother Saul, brother Paul. We don't touch that stuff anymore. We switched to beer since then."

Now how would Paul respond? Would he say "Oh. That is alright. If it was wine I would be really ticked off, but don't worry about beer."

No. No. Well. What would he have said? "Well I meant that too."

Now wait a minute. He didn't say beer and wine. He just said wine. But do you believe that he also meant beer? Or did he simply mean that wine or is there something about his command "Be not drunk with wine" that has implications in it that are unstated that he may or may not have been aware of.

Alright supposing he came in one of our churches and he found us drunk with whisky. But he say "Well. I just meant beer. What by the way, what is whisky?" And you explain, "Well whisky is a kind of thing that we get from wheat and then we distill is so that it becomes - the alcohol content goes from say 10% to about 50%."

He says, "Oh. You know wine, we dilute it, so we get from 12% down to 3 or 4%. But you concentrate it to 50%."

Well. I didn't know about whisky, but that's exactly the thing that I am talking about. You see what he says is not "Be not drunk with wine but if other things can bring the same thing about it doesn't bother me," but "Be not drunk with wine and those kind of things like wine."

In other words there is a principle here, so that whisky is included. Vodka is included. Gin is included. Bourbon is included. I say is a little silent because of Baptists traditions

with bourbon. Alright now what he is saying is a principle – I'll use the expression a pattern of meaning that contains more in it than simply the meaning wine itself.

Sure. I think most people would say “Well, yeah of course he meant ‘Be not drunk with beer, Be not drunk with whisky.’” Now so far we have said “Be not drunk with whisky” fits “Be not drunk with wine.” Beer fits. Beer he would have been aware of. Beer was a beverage at that time. Whisky, he wouldn't have been. Bourbon, he wouldn't have and the others because those are 1700s, distilled and so forth and so on.

Can we interpret that way and then say “Be not overcome with too many Big Macs from McDonald?” I am a cashew nut fan. There is no such thing as a half-can of cashew nuts. It is all or nothing. It is kind of a drug for me.

Now, does he mean, stinopi – intoxicated – with cashew nuts. Well wait a minute. What is it about the wine that he is talking? “Be not drunk...” Do not come into a stupor where you no longer think correctly. What is intoxication? I would think, things that bring about an intoxication fit, but cashews don't do that. I can still think real clearly. Upset stomach. Things like that but, no, my mind has not gone yet.

And so what you have to say is then “What is the pattern that he is talking about in something like?” I would say maybe what he means if you want to break it down into the pattern or principle – paradigm – something like that. It would be something like this.

Don't take into your body, substances that cause you to lose control of your thinking and your doing. Something like that. Now is caffeine something that does that? That might be easily debatable. Does it effect the mind so that you no longer control what you are doing or does it control other physical aspects of your body more.

I don't drink coffee or something like that. I drink caffeine-less pop so I ... it's not that. See what you are wrestling with is “Does it fit within this pattern?” Something for instance that cause you to overeat I don't think fit.

So it is not like these commands or these teachings are endless and they are just a kind of an amorphous amoeba that you throw anything in. There is a principle here. You have to arrive at that principle and you say now coming out of that principle what are some of the implications that Paul might not have been aware of.

He wasn't aware of the kind of alcoholic beverages that we have today. But let me ask another one. Would there ... is it possible that he is talking about something has implications for narcotics? Morphine? Cocaine? Marijuana? Are those similar in the kinds of things they do? Ok. Then I think... Yeah. Then they fit here?

It is not like all of these are just an amorphous mass you could make them be anything you want. You have to arrive at the principle and say, “Now what other implications are there that fit this principle that Paul might now have been aware of?”

There are all sorts of commands that we have like that, that a person may not be aware of that flow through this. For instance, Mark 5:21-48(= Matthew 5:21+) has a list of what we call the antithesis.

“You have heard it said of old, thou shall not...” Alright – then Jesus said “But I say...”

Now I don’t think what Jesus is saying “I don’t care if you do that but I’m going to give you a different – a totally different – command.” I think what He is doing is bringing out an implication of that. For instance,

“You have heard it said of old, you shall not commit adultery. But I tell you, if you look on a woman to lust, you have committed adultery already with her in your heart.”

My understanding of that is that in this principle or pattern “thou shall not commit adultery” are implications which involve looking on a woman to lust. There would be implications I think with regard to pornography and things of this nature that flow from that pattern.

“You have heard it said, you shall not kill” but Jesus ... If you want to know the implications of that, it means you can’t hate a person, because if you hate them you are already beginning on that path of violating that commandment. And so what Jesus is doing is the very thing we have done with Paul’s command about be not drunk with wine. We are looking for implications that flow out of the principle and pattern of that particular saying or teaching and I think the best way I would understand Matthew 5:21 and following is this particular way.

How many of you have a 12,10, 11 year old son? Alright. Christmas time, grandma comes and grandpa gives your son named Trevor. He gives Trevor a \$50 dollar bill for Christmas and Trevor knows exactly what he wants to do with it.

With tax for \$49.69 is this game down at Target that he is been lusting after since Thanksgiving. He is going to use that \$50 dollars from Grandma down at Target. You know that however and you say, “Travis. I don’t think Grandma and Grandma want you to go down to Target and buy that game.” I think they want you to use it this summer at camp. And so I am telling you don’t go down to Target and spend the money on that game.

Well. You go off to school and you come home that night and Travis is playing with that game. And you say to Travis, “Travis, didn’t I tell you, you should not go down to Target and buy that game.”

And Travis responds, “Oh. I didn’t go down to Target. I went to Wal-Mart. It was \$2 cheaper.”

How do you respond? Do you say well it is different then? It could be. Maybe there is something about Target you are boycotting or something like that. But most probably you

meant, “I don’t want you to buy that game,” and even though you meant every possible store, you meant that and he knew that.

So that when we give teachings we don’t list every hypothetical. You wouldn’t say, “I don’t want you to go down to Target, Walgreens, K-mart ... I don’t want you to go down to Toysrus and list every hypothetical one in the world. If you list one, either have – the understanding is there. So there is an implication there that even though it was not stated, you meant it. And Travis knew it. So that when we speak there are implications to what we say many times as parents, that our children, you know, like Travis – probably – a good kid wouldn’t do this, but might look for, what’s not mentioned, how can he get around it, but would violate the command itself and the implications.

So when we say something like this there are frequently implications like this that we expect the person to carry through and understand so that an author oft times includes in their meaning, implications they may not have even been aware of, but are nevertheless there

Sometimes you talk about these implications as unconscious meanings that the author might not have been thinking of or in our conversations somebody might not [Hard to Hear] be thinking of.

I use the word ... I will talk about something like that a little later. Now let me just stop here for a minute and deal with an issue. Some people say, “Yeah. Dr. Stein but isn’t God the author of Scripture?” All this emphasis on Paul or Luke or Mark – Isn’t God the ultimate author of Scripture?” That sounds real devout. A popular way of speaking. But is it an accurate way of speaking?

When you look at Paul’s letters, I have yet to see one of them that starts out “God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To the Church at Corinth.” It starts out with Paul. No ... No book of our Bible claims God as its immediate author. The divine meaning of the text is that meaning which God has conveyed through his authoritative spokespeople – the prophets of the Old Testament, the gospel writers, Paul and others in the New Testament. To understand therefore what God means, we must understand what God’s inspired authors mean.

And I found too much in my own life that those who have an ultimate meaning that God intended that Paul doesn’t – I don’t think have God’s meaning at all, because what God meant is what the Apostles meant. They are his spokespeople. When they speak, they speak with divine authority and it is that meaning that they are intending to find. That’s what we are assigned to look at. What does God’s authoritative author mean by this?

Another question: When we talk about interpreting the Bible literally – during the Reformation, the Reformers argued strongly that we are not interested in allegorical meaning or something, we want the literal meaning of the text. But now, the Reformers knew that there are a lot of things in the Bible that would be figurative. Parables,

exaggerated language and what they meant is the way I am going to define literal meaning of the text.

The literal meaning of the text is what the authors meant by the words. That's the literal meaning of the text. And I would say yes, that's what we are after. After the literal meaning of the text when you interpret it like the Reformers – the author's meaning.

But the literal meaning of "If your right hand offend you, cut it off. If your right eye offends you, pluck it out." The literal meaning of that text is what the authors meant by that and what they meant by that is something fairly simple: there is no sin worth going to hell for. Better to repent even if it is as painful as plucking out the right eye or tearing off a right arm and going through that pain of repentance and entering life than not doing that and perishing. That we take very literally. But the imagery? No. No.

What the author meant by these things – that we take literally and that's the literal meaning of the text. Later on when we talk of historical narrative, that sometimes in the Bible, we have actually two authors. For instance Peter preaches at Pentecost – what is the meaning of that text? Who gives the meaning to that text? Well. If you want to know what the meaning of the text is in our definition at this point, it is what Luke means to convey by Peter's speech to Theophilus. But you also have another author and that is Peter himself and you can investigate this to understand what Peter meant.

And sometimes they are identical. They are never contradictory in my understanding. They are frequently complementary. When you get to the Gospels, you have Jesus' teachings. You could try to understand the text in light of what Jesus meant and we will talk about the study of the subject matter of the Biblical text. Or we can seek to understand what the Biblical author, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John meant by these words. Those are authoritative words as far as I am concerned but we will talk primarily of the meaning of the evangelist of that text as the meaning of the text. We will then talk about the investigation of the subject matter to find out what the Son of God who is inspired of God in His teaching also meant. But the text meaning is primarily what the writer, the penner, not the speaker, but the writer of that text means.

We are going to now talk about the role of a text. In the communication process, what function does a text have in the issue of communication? Again texts are a collection of symbols, written in various ways and one thing about authors is that when they write, they write surprisingly enough to be understood. You might not always think that, but that's what they intend to do.

Very few people write not wanting to be understood. Now there is an exception to that and that is in time of war, people write codes in order that those who they want to understand and they can communicate with, but those who they do not want to understand what they/you are saying will not because they do not understand the code.

And there is all sorts of famous examples of codes and code breaking. For instance the deciding battle in the second World War in the Pacific was the Battle of Midway. And

American cryptographers had broken the Japanese Enigma Code just in time. And they found out that they were planning a major battle at the island of Midway, attempting to lure out the American Navy, and they prepared accordingly and the battle [Hard to Hear] the war took place at that point because there were four major Japanese aircraft carriers that were sunk and from then on the Japanese fleet was always not in aggressive offensive mode but in a defensive mode.

In a similar way the British had broken through the German code through the help of Polish cryptographers and the Germans till the end of the war never knew that. They simply could not believe that their code-work was being broken because of the machine involved in that regard. The possibilities of breaking that were just astronomical and it caused some very interesting problems, for instance the British broke a code in which the Germans were preparing an air raid to bomb the city of Coventry and Churchill was informed of this.

Should we warn the people? There is a moral dilemma. If we warn the people, then the Germans will know we have broken their code. So for the sake of hiding that secret, the city of Coventry was bombed and only later at the end of the war to the complete surprise of the Germans, recognized that their - were told that the German code had been broken.

On the other hand, the Germans had broken the British code too at times, so you almost wonder why don't you just share with one another and stop going through all of this problem. But in codes you don't want people to understand. People do not write codes. No author writes a book saying, I don't want anybody to understand what I am saying. As a result when somebody writes, they use the principle of share-ability by abiding by the norms of the language.

And the French used the word, *lingua*, to explain this – the norms of language. In other words, they used words in accordance with how those words are understood by their audience. They use grammar in accordance to the way grammar is used. They use verb tenses and clauses as they would be understood. There is a sense in which the author may wish to write anything they want, but when they write this to their reader, they become in a sense the servants of their reader because they must use language as their readers will understand it.

For instance in writing the Stein text, there are a number of times I could have used other kinds of language, but I didn't think some of that technical terminology would be shareable and I thought there are other simple English terms that can be used. Why don't we use them instead? So there was a sense in which I was placing myself in your place saying how will you read this text? Shareability so that texts are always written in light of how the audience would understand that.

Now the norms of language or the *lingua* involves such things as looking up a word. If I use the word, love, there are [Hard to Hear] a number of possible meanings for this. It could mean deep emotion. It could mean sexual relationship. It could mean the end of a letter. It could mean a score of zero in tennis. It could mean fond affection.

The possibilities you could look up in a dictionary. You say when Stein uses this word love, because he wants to be understood, he is using it in a shareable manner, it has to be one of these twelve ways. Now therefore love can't be mean potatoes. You say "Well why not?" Well if I want to be understood, I have to use it in the way an audience would understand.

Now there are sometimes when a biblical writer uses a word in a way that is not normal. For instance in John 2, John has Jesus saying, "Destroy this temple in three days and I will raise it." Now John knows that that is [Hard to Hear] what Jesus means by the temple is not in norms of language and so he explains it and says "By this He meant, His body".

So I can use words in ways that are not found in the dictionary but if I want to be communicative, I have to explain it that way. If I don't explain it it's a dictionary definition – one of those possibilities. Now what an author does – or what we do when we communicate is to provide not isolated words but words in a context and so the word love can be explained in different ways.

For instance I remember at a faculty/student seminary retreat when I was teaching at Bethel Theological Seminary, John Cionca, one of my colleagues in the faculty – we were going to play some tennis and two new students said to us "Why don't we play doubles? Would you mind if we play doubles with you? Dr. Cionca and Dr. Stein?" And so I said John, "Yes. Why don't we and John, let us love them." Now John knew that I meant let us not let them win a game. Let us beat them 6-0, 6-0."

But the word love in different contexts have different meanings. When Jesus says to His disciples, "Let us love one another," that meaning is very different than Hugh Heffner's mansion when he says let us love one another. The possibilities are limited. The context allows you to zero in on what is meant in that way, so the norms of language, the possibilities. The context provides the norms of the utterance or if you want to use French, the parole in which you get to the specific particular meaning and once again, share-ability is what allows you to communicate.

You know in the English words that I am using, that it has to follow one of the normal meanings in the definitions of those words. As far as finding share-ability, the norms of language, the best help in the norms of language is a dictionary. Or since we are seminary graduates and we are dealing with graduate work, we call it a lexicon because other people don't know that word. We want to be educated and use a more refined word.

The norms of utterance? The way to get at that is most helpful tool here is a grammar. How are verbs in these constructions used this way? And for us, we have a different form of grammatical importance. Word order is very important for us. In Greek, word order is quite irrelevant. If I say Bob loves Joan, the only one possible meaning. If I say Joan loves Bob, one possible meaning.

Now in Greek, doesn't matter where you put those words. If you say Bobus loves Joanine, the endings on those say one is the object, one is the subject. And whatever

order you want to put it in, put it in a blender and mix it up any way you want. Doesn't matter. The norms of language are different for different languages so that primarily for the individual words, dictionary is helpful – main tools.

For the norms of the [Hard to Hear] how they are used in combination, grammars are more important. Now another thing about a text is that it provides for us a huge storehouse of information. The Bible is like a great mountain full of gems and precious metals and you can mine them for all sorts of reasons. What we want to do then is to find out information sometimes. Is it perfectly alright to study the Bible to learn about things. That's different however and we should not confuse that with the learning – studying the Bible to learn about the meaning of the text. So what we can do and this will become most apparent in a historical text.

Reading Acts. You can read Acts as a mine to learn information about the early church. What was their view of baptism? What was the role of the Holy Spirit in all of this? Who were the leading apostles? What was the missionary strategy of the apostles Paul? What was the Roman law about the citizenry – citizenship and so forth? You can study Acts for all of that information.

None of that involves a studying of Acts for what the meaning is. If you take any historical passage, you can study it for its information, but if you want to learn the meaning of historical narrative – Acts, the Gospels, Exodus, Judges, Samuel, 1st Chronicles and so forth – then you say, the author, I – the author, whoever it may – John, Mark, Matthew, Luke have told you this story about – and I give the story – and because.

Now you are not interested in information per se but meaning and such. Why did the author teach this story? That's meaning. What the author uses and the material he is talking about, that's the subject matter and there are all sorts of examples of that. In the text I talk about the example of Jesus crossing the Sea of Galilee when a storm comes up. Well you know you could preach about the shape of the Sea of Galilee. You can talk about why storms come up so surprisingly in the Sea of Galilee. You can talk about the kind of fishing boat they used. When Jesus was sleeping on a pillow in front of the boat, what does that mean exactly? And you can show pictures of the particular kind of boat that must have been used that was discovered about 10 years ago in the Sea of Galilee when the Sea of Galilee had a drought.

They discovered this mud covered boat dating back to the time of Jesus. You describe it. That's all subject matter. What Mark doesn't say – "I am telling you this story about Jesus crossing the Sea of Galilee because some day he may find one of these archaeological relics and I want to explain that to you. It's not what... You can show your slides by the way of the Sea of Galilee when you are preaching a sermon. That's subject matter.

But now if you ask the question, why did Mark tell this story? There is something about the end of the verse where he talks about Jesus' stilling the storm and the disciples say "Who is this man that even the winds and the waves obey Him? I want to tell you about

this man, Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, verse 1 in chapter 1 because He is Lord of nature Himself. He can stand up and tell the storms 'Be still'. There is no one like Him. He is the Son of God."

So the meaning versus the subject then. Lots and lots of subject matter in the text. Now what about the role of the reader? What is the first thing that a reader must do? The first thing a reader must do is to find out about the literary form that is being used. What kind of form do we have here because let us face it, different forms have different ways of conveying that meaning. For example, do you interpret poems the way you do historical accounts? No.

Would you interpret Romans ex- verse by verse exegesis – the same way you would do the symbolism of Revelation? How do you know for instance how to interpret the story about the rich man and Lazarus? Some people say "Well. This must be a real story." It's not a real story. It's a parable. Well how do you know it's a parable? Well because Luke introduces this the same way he does other parables.

"There was a certain man who ..."

"There was a man who had two sons ..."

"There was a judge ..."

"There was a certain rich man ..."

And He introduces it and you know this is a parable and the point is what is the parable? You don't interpret by saying well, "You know this indicates that you can see between Heaven and Hell because this man was in Hell and he was able to see in Heaven." That's part of the parable and you interpret a parable differently than you do a narrative as such. So you need to understand the literary form that's being used and we are going to talk about 7 or 10, 12 specific literary forms and deal with the rules governing them.

One of the big problems we have is that the writers and the readers knew about this. We don't. They knew things about prophesy and poetry and proverbs that we really don't know today. We have lost in a 2-3,000 thousand years in between – these materials. So we need to learn those forms and the rules governing them.

What we want to do then is also learn what the author means by these particular symbols. We talked about implications and let me talk a little about implications. We will define these shortly. But at first, who determines the implications of a text?

Question was raised during break time. Well – do we give these texts implications? For instance, when Paul says, "Be not drunk with wine", do we say there is an implication and give to this text and implication – this also means whisky, vodka, beer and the like. I think there is a distinction here we must be careful of. Who controls the meaning of a text? Who determines it? If it's the author, then the author controls the implications. And therefore all these implications are thereby the author. He determines it. We discover them. We don't create them. They are there already.

When Paul said “Be not drunk with wine”, the minute he penned that to the Ephesians, he meant also “Be not drunk with whisky”. He wasn’t aware of it, but it fits the pattern and you would say, he wasn’t thinking of it but, yeah, that’s what it means. That’s what it means.

We discover them and much of good preaching today is to discover the implications of authors meaning. What are the implications of this for today? For instance if you talk about “Thou shall not steal” – alright or “Give to Caesar the things that are Caesars,” what are the implications of this with regard to income tax and the like? What are the implications about this about deductions and claims that we do on our income tax form? The implications of this are what are most necessary for many times our sharing with the congregation.

We are going to look at another word and we will look up the word significance. We will define these more fully in just a few minutes. Implications are determined by the author. Significance is how you give credence or credibility to what the author says. Implications and meaning are determined by the author. You determine significance. Implications are our mental understanding of what the author meant. Significance involves not the mind but the will.

Simply put, once you know the meaning and its implications, your yes, your no is the significance. What you do with regard to the significance of a text, your yes or no, your volitional response – that is your doing – you are master. You are king, you are queen here. When it comes to meaning and implications, the author is king.

A term that we will not use in our text is the word application. Now the reason for that is that application is a combination of two things. Our definitions are essentially elements in regard to our nuclear structure. Compounds or combinations.

So water is not an element. It consists of two elements – hydrogen and oxygen. When we talk about the application of a text to our lives, we are combining two things. We are combining, the implications of that text that are especially relevant for us and the responding to that. But since they are two elements forming a compound, we don’t want to inter-mix those two. We will leave these as separate entities. Implications, significance - application combines those two. So we will not deal with them in our definitions as such.

End of Lecture 7

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Vocabulary for Interpretation \(Part 1\)](#)

Alright here is a definition of meaning – you are going to have to know this. You are going to have to memorize these definitions. These are all in your text.

Meaning: The meaning of a text is that pattern of meaning the author willed to convey by the words or shareable symbols he/she used.

We are going to make one change here. I would add, the meaning of a text is that pattern of meaning which the author consciously willed to convey by the words or shareable symbols he used.

And later on we are going to talk a little more about the distinction between consciously and unconsciously. At the present stage just leave consciously - add consciously to that definition. What the author consciously willed to convey. The pattern of meaning the author consciously willed to convey. Later on we will talk about meanings that some people attribute to the sub-consciousness of the author which the author was totally oblivious of and we want to use conscious to eliminate that possibility.

Again the author, notice wills the meaning. The text is present by the shareable symbols and the reader is present by the shareable nature of the symbol. So all three entities are present. The author, text, reader, they are all there. The author may not be aware of all the implications in that pattern, but they are consciously willed by the author.

The meaning of a text is that pattern of meaning which the author willed to convey by the words – consciously willed to convey by the shareable symbols.

There is a sense in which that's not a good division because I am using meaning twice in it: pattern of meaning to explain meaning. I could use something like, the paradigm that the author wills instead of pattern of meaning. But I think for most people, the pattern of meaning is a little more helpful than paradigm or principle or something of that nature.

Implications: Those meanings in a text of which the author was unaware but which nevertheless legitimately fall within the pattern of meaning which he willed. Implications as such. Let me give an example of this. I will give it in the text. Let me use it again because it is meaningful for me and also for Martin Luther.

When Paul writes in Galatians 5:2, "Listen! I, Paul, am telling you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you."

Now think of the conscious meaning of Paul. Paul is dealing with people who think that faith in Christ is not sufficient. There are Judaizers out there telling Gentiles, "You know believing in Jesus is alright, but if you really want to be saved, you have to also become circumcised as the Old Testament commands." And so some of Paul's converts are thinking about "Should I be circumcised so I can truly be saved?" And Paul says, "If you are thinking about circumcision, then you are not trusting in Christ anymore. When you believe in Christ, it is not Christ plus something I do. It is Christ alone. And if you are saying right now, that faith in Christ is not sufficient, you are saying there is something

that I must do to bring this about. I must merit or earn and therefore you have fallen from grace.”

Now for Martin Luther, this meant that the buying of indulgences from the church, to escape Purgatory and go immediately to Heaven or to spend less time in Purgatory, that is condemned by what Paul says. Paul says you are not saved by faith and indulgences but by grace alone. And if you [Hard to Hear] taught buying indulgences, you are repudiating Christ. You are falling from grace.

You say well “If you asked Paul about indulgences, how would he have responded?” If you say well, “Paul are you forbidding buying indulgences to be saved?” If you say well, “What do you mean by indulgences?” And when you explain it to him, he would say, “Well. No one was doing that in my day, but that’s absolutely what I mean.”

You don’t get to heaven by purchasing anything. It is by grace through faith alone. In my own life, I remember somebody telling me that, “Bob. You know if you don’t worship on the right day of the week, like we do, you are never going to get to heaven.”

So I replied and said, “You know, my hope for salvation is the fact that Jesus Christ died for me. That He rose from the dead and through that death He brought about the forgiveness of my sins and my only hope is that when I appear before God in Heaven, that He will remember what Jesus did for me. Are you saying that’s not enough?”

And they said well, “You know if it’s in ignorance that you don’t keep the right day of the week, then maybe.”

And I said, “Well. It’s not in ignorance. When Paul writes Corinthians, he talks about worshipping on the first day of the week and collecting offering at that time. When he visited the church, he celebrated the Lord’s Supper on the first day of the week – the Ephesian elders and so forth. I believe I am following the pattern of the early church.”

Then they said, “Well. That means you are going to Hell.” Yeah. [Hard to Hear] people have told me straight on in my face, you are going to Hell. This text became very important for me. But if you said well, “[Hard to Hear] The apostle Paul...”

“Did you mean that if I start worshiping on the seventh day of the week, in order to be saved, I will be damned?”

He said, “What – what do you mean?”

And I explained to him, “Well you know, I wasn’t thinking about... I had a different issue. But that’s exactly the kind of thing I am thinking of. And there may be other kinds of things that people are saying like you can’t be saved unless you have this particular kind of experience – unless you speak in tongues, unless you tithe or unless you do this or that or [Hard to Hear]” All of that are implications that flow out of this, some of which Paul may not have consciously thinking of.

They may have been unconscious meanings or sub-meanings that he was not aware of. So that here would be a kind of implication. This morning in chapel, Dr. Carson was talking about this saying in Exodus 21:23-25, “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth”. What are the implications of that?

I mean does it cover anything that doesn't involve an eye or a tooth? What about other things? Well, I think the implications are and we may not be aware of them – what is an appropriate punishment for the crime? Is it an appropriate punishment to cut off a man's hands for stealing? No. I think it is excessive. I think it violates what the Scriptures teach. It's an eye for an eye – not two eyes and two hands for an eye.

Is it appropriate punishment to put a person to the death for killing a deer in the king's reserve? No. That violates the equality and punishment and the penalty and crime must fit hand in hand. So there are implications that flow out of a number of those. Let me look at another one for instance.

Deuteronomy 22:8. Here you have a saying,

“When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof; otherwise you might have blood-guilt on your house, if anyone should fall from it.”

In other words when you build a house, you should put a railing around the roof. Now you have to envision the roof in that day. A roof would be the coolest place in the house. When the house is still very warm – a lot of windows, there would be no air conditioning – and so when the breeze would come in the evening, you would go to the roof. But you would have to be careful to put something around the roof to keep people from falling off. What are the implications of that?

Well there is nobody going to walk off my roof. They are going to slide off real quick. Ok. There's no implication – well wait a minute. Wait a minute. If that is true of the roof, what about other things?

Do you have a swimming pool? Should you protect people from that? Little children walking in. Are you responsible – do you have a dog? Are you protecting people from that dog? You are responsible for concerns about the safety of other people here. So I think there would be all sorts of implications that flow out of this which the Biblical author may not have been aware of, but they are included there because the principle, paradigm is concern for the safety of others in the possessions you have.

1 Corinthians 16:20. Here Paul makes a simple statement.
“All the brothers and sisters send greetings.”

King James would have “All the brethren”. The New RSV I am reading, “All the brothers and sisters send greeting”. A thought for thought translation. Then he says, “Greet one another with a holy kiss.” Alright now, what are the implications of something like this? I have never yet greeted anybody in my church with a holy kiss.

Remember my sister-in-law says, “Oh. Bob, you are going to greet me with a holy kiss.” I don’t know if it would be holy to start with.

So the question we are asking – is there any value to this at all? For instance, some of you come from cultures where the physical dimensions of greeting one another is very reticent. Something like this would be terribly improper. It would be disrespectful. Some of you come from an Oriental culture. This would be quite offensive. The French do it all the time, although they are really not kissing, they are blowing bubbles on each cheek, but they are not kissing the air but that is the way they would greet. In Oriental cultures you don’t do that kind of thing. What would be a bow – a respectful bow that would be. In American culture, it would be different again. For me, I always look forward to meeting Bob Bennett at church and shaking his hand. I look forward to that.

There is something about shaking his hand. It was this... I think what Paul was talking about was the kind of holy kiss he is talking about only it was a different culture and a different application from it. But the warmth of greeting which may vary in culture, but the warmth of greeting doesn’t vary. It should be there, in any culture. How it is expressed might change, but not what is being expressed.

The loving concern of Christian towards Christian, that warmth. I have never been to Russia but have had friends who went there and they were quite shook when the male men would kiss them. It was not really a nice experience, especially when they had a bushy beard. So they grew bushy beards themselves to protect themselves in part from some of this kind of thing.

It’s a cultural matter. And how do you express it? Well, warmly greet one another in the love of Jesus Christ. That remains. That’s the principle. And specifically it may vary. We don’t know and who is to say which one is the best of all.

Psalm 150:

- 1 Praise the Lord!
Praise God in His sanctuary;
praise Him in His mighty firmament!
- 2 Praise Him for His mighty deeds;
praise Him according to His surpassing greatness!
- 3 Praise Him with trumpet;
praise Him with lute and harp!
- 4 Praise Him with tambourine and dance;
praise Him with strings and pipe!
- 5 Praise Him with clanging cymbals;
praise Him with loud clashing cymbals!
- 6 Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord!

Alright now you are part of the worship committee of your church. Are these the only instruments that one can use in a church? Doesn't say organ trumpets alright but is it the same trumpet? And tambourines, dance, strings, pipe – I don't know if the strings are violins. Or is the principle here in the idea of let everyone praise the Lord – let everything – let every musical instrument you have praise the Lord. And so you would say here, yes in the worship of God, the more instruments we have that can be involved in the worship service, the better it is. I much prefer the Tuesday morning worship in our chapel with the symphony – I enjoy that - more than simply an organ. But I enjoy an organ better than nothing either. I can enjoy organ music by itself.

The totality that we have available for praising God is at stake here. We are not supposed to say, these are the only instruments that are permissible, as some of the old Scottish Presbyterians used to say. It is not strictly ordered in the Bible. I would like to add one thing to it, "Let every instrument that doesn't have an amplifier praise the Lord," but I don't know if I can go that far.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9: "Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. 7 Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. 8 Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, 9 and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

Well in practice, verses 8 and 9 talk about the use of phylacteries on your arm. It had little scrolls in them. Remember being at the wall in Jerusalem, a Jewish boy being bar mitzvah'ed and he had phylacteries on his forehead and on his hands and it was a joyous occasion when he became now a man.

In Jewish homes, many of them have a mezzuzzot on the doorpost, which has a little scroll on it. "Here O Israel, the Lord your God is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, strength ..." Something like that. I don't do that in our house. But the principle is that the word of God should always be before us. We should be teaching our children how to do this and I must say that I think my kids have done a better job than I did in that regard. I think that, they are using all sorts of means to train them in the word of God.

They have much more music for children that they can play, so there is always Christian music on a CD or something like that for them. And the kids are humming them and singing them and sometimes, I don't think that the tune is the greatest in the world, but you know it is nice to hear that your grandson and granddaughter singing something like that than a Pabst Blue Ribbon beer commercial. So what are you doing with your children to train them?

We would read the Bible with them at nights. We would give memorize verses. I had real trouble trying to keep up with my kids in that area but we try to help them with Bible school, memorize Bible verses together. We made a big issue of that.

What are you doing so that your children will be so trained and grounded in this that this will be part of their thinking processes and here is where we can help one another and share and have insights as to how we see an implication as to how this can be done.

Alright let us look another kind of implication, Mark 7:5-7. Here we have – I think I will begin reading at verse 1, so that we can get a feel for this.

“Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, 2they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them.”

Dr. Stein: Unclean hands had nothing to do with whether they are really dirty or not. It has to do with whether they are ceremonially clean. And then Mark adds in verse 3 and 4, a note. He explains to his readers, probably Roman Christians about these Jewish practices.

“3(For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; 4and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) 5 So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, ‘Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?’

6 [Jesus] He said to them, ‘Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; 7 in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.’”

You abandon the commandment of God and hold to the human tradition. Now I would suggest that what Jesus is doing is taking Isaiah’s meaning and bringing out an implication of that. I do not think that Isaiah specifically had in mind the Pharisees that were talking to Jesus when he wrote the book of Isaiah. I think he had a different group of hypocrites in mind.

But Jesus is saying, what Isaiah meant back then, that is exactly the kind of thing we are dealing with right now and he draws out an implication saying Isaiah spoke, [Hard to Hear] spoke just about people like you. You have your traditions. You honor me – honor God with your lips, but your hearts are far from him. And so that specific meaning of Isaiah back then Jesus sees as being applicable to the particular people that he is dealing with at the present time and He draws out an implication of that.

At the end of that saying passage in verses 20 and following, we have another kind of example, I think. There He has,

“for it is what comes out of a person that defiles. 21For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, 22adultery, avarice,

wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. 23All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

Now Matthew has a parallel passage and if you look at Matthew’s, he omits a few of those found in Mark and he has a couple not found in Mark. Now my understanding of that is not that, put them both together, add them all up and that’s exactly what Jesus said. I think that these are inspired interpreters and what Jesus said about evil coming out of the human heart, He mentioned probably a number of these sins. But I would find it perfectly acceptable in my own understanding to see the inspired interpreter of Jesus’ words here, seeing other implications that maybe particularly relevant for their community.

And he says out of the heart comes these sins and He adds a particular sin that maybe the problem His community faces. Matthew may add a different one, because they are dealing with what Jesus meant and as His interpreters they can bring out implications of that, so what we might have in verses 21 and 22 in Mark and the parallel in Matthew might be some of the implications that a Biblical writer like Matthew or Mark sought in the saying of Jesus and His inspired interpreters bring out at this point.

Turn with me to Exodus 21. In verse 28 through 30,

“28 When an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall not be liable. 29If the ox has been accustomed to gore in the past, and its owner has been warned but has not restrained it, and it kills a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned, and its owner also shall be put to death. 30If a ransom is imposed on the owner, then the owner shall pay whatever is imposed for the redemption of the victim’s life.”

Not very relevant. I don’t know of anyone in this room who has – who has a neighbor who owns an ox. So is it totally irrelevant? Well you say, “there are societies where they use oxen and things like that.” Ok. But don’t you see something of an implication in this that goes beyond ox? Sure.

And notice the implication that if you had an animal that ... like a collie. It tends to be a very friendly animal, would you treat that differently if some little boy came here and the dog just went bananas and killed him? Or then if he walked near and a pit bull ran on to attack him?

One is somewhat accidental. One is by an animal who is trained to do that. Different kind of responsibility a person has in that regard. And so I think this would apply to dangerous animals that a person possesses. There was somebody in Kentucky a few weeks ago that was in a hospital because his pet cobra bit him. My goodness. Does that person have some sort of responsibility about the neighbors in regard to this?

Look – whether you have an oxen or not, the passage does have implications that go beyond in our way. Now I use the example in the book when we talk about implications of the statement, “Aren’t oak trees wonderful?” And I had a little boy say it as he is

climbing a tree. Mom and Dad saying it as they go to a tree with a heart carved in it or with the names of their children or something. Or somebody in charge of flood control saying it. Somebody who is a carpenter saying it.

Now there are implications that flow from that statement. But that statement doesn't have all sorts of implications such as if the boy said it, it has implications about the fun of oak trees. It has nothing to do with being good wood for cabinets. It has nothing to do with how very helpful for flood control [Hard to Hear] breaking the water and keeping the ground in the soil down.

On the other hand, it is very unlikely that the carpenter was thinking about climbing trees. So it has no implications involved. See the person who said it determines the implications that flow out of it. In that sense, the author is in control of the implications that flow out of it. The author controls the implications. It is not the text by itself that does so. It is the author who worded that text and what the author meant by that specifically and that gives the pattern for the implications that flow.

Later on when you are talking about narrative, we talk about a text about how Jesus got into a boat after He had finished teaching in Parables. A storm came up. He was sleeping in the boat. The disciples are panicking and saying, "Master, Don't you care that there is a storm?" and Jesus stands up in the storm and rebukes the storm. The storm ends. There is a great calm and the disciples come and say, who is this man that the wind and the waves obey Him? Okay.

Now, story is not about how to build fishing boats. It is not about why there are storms that come on the Sea of Galilee that can be very dangerous. It has nothing to do with the psychological unbelief of the disciples. The story comes to its high point at the end. Who is this Jesus?

This Jesus is one who stands up and says to the storm, "Be still," and the hurricane stops. Never seen anybody off the keys of Florida walk out there when the hurricane comes "Be still" and all of a sudden the wave just washes them away, you know. That's Jesus in this story. Now if you don't think Jesus can go out in the pier when hurricane Andrew came and say "Peace. Be still and end it," you don't know the Jesus of the Bible anymore. Now what are the problems that you are struggling with?

"I am struggling with something. I own a house in Minnesota. I own one here. I don't like owning two houses. Hopefully it will sell on Thursday. And somehow I have to remind myself that "Good grief. What a trivial thing for a savior that can still the storms." And you are trying to make sure you have enough money to go to school and feed a family. Is this Jesus of Mark big enough to handle that kind of situation? You are worried about how to put together your time, your work, your study and you don't know how you are going to do it all.

Mark wants to tell you about a Jesus who is big enough to do those things. Yeah. I think there are implications that flow out of it. There is a story ... you know another kind of

thing about the book of Hebrews, talks about coming to Jesus, because he tempted in all points like we and yet without sin.

When I was going to seminary and went on for my graduate work – had a wife and two, three children. I didn't know how He was going to take care of them. But somehow the Jesus that we are told – who understands and that we are to come to pray to – you know He once got into a jam, when He left the carpenter shop and began to preach. And He left His job which was to support His mother and His brothers and sisters.

All of a sudden it dawned on me that I could come to this Jesus and pray to Him about that. There are implications that flowed out of that. So you can do that with narrative well. Alright well, let me go on and just say that for instance – we talked about implications, Acts 1:8, "... You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Now the implications of that are that God's people will witness for Him throughout the world. Now we can get as individuals, through God's spirit and understanding of how that specific implication that God has for us in that text, whatever that might be. In my family it means for my daughter to be a missionary in Africa. For my sons it means that they are leaders in their churches. For their father it means to be teaching at seminary. The pattern is that we will be His witnesses. How specifically that the implications flowing out of that applies to me is going to be different than how it applies to you. But there are implications and when we talk now about the specific implication meant in that text for me, we are talking about something, we are going to talk about next week, about the role of the Holy Spirit in guidance.

General implications, yes we can figure those out, but specifically what has God calling me for, that specific is something that comes through the Holy Spirit, but we will talk more about that next week.

End of Lecture 8

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Vocabulary for Interpretation \(Part 2\)](#)

Significance refers to how a reader responds to the meaning of a text. Ok. Now, implications are determined by the author. We discover them and it is a mental kind of discovery. Significance is something we are masters of. We are masters here.

Meaning and Implications, the author is master. The reader here is the master of significance. And this involves not so much the mental, but the volitional. Not the mind,

but the heart. It is our decision as to what to do with the meaning and its implications. It involves yes or no. I will or I won't.

Sometimes people use the term, meaningfulness, but I won't use that for significance, because we are using meaning here again in a different way but the meaningfulness of something, sometimes people refer to that and we would use the word significance because it is a different root altogether. How you and I respond to a meaning of a text. The volitional aspect, the decision of what we need to do. The decision as to what we will do.

You hear a Gospel message, talk about the need of repentance, the specific meaning of repentance for you and what that entails may be different than someone else but the significance is yes or no. Will you or won't you? Obedience or disobedience? Significance, we are the masters of significance.

Subject matter – this refers to the "stuff" talked about in the text. The stuff talked about ... and there's lots of stuff in the text. The Bible is just a vast world of subject matter. If you study the Bible for anything but meaning, you are dealing with the subject matter. You want to study the Bible and learn about marriage in Biblical times the Pharisees, Genesis 1 to 3, Hebrew poetry, the history of the life of Jesus, Paul's conversion, the history of Judah in the 6th century, military tactics of war in Joshua, Judges, I mean you can do any of this material.

That's subject matter. You are not interested so much in the meaning of the subject matter, but the subject matter itself. And you can learn about all sorts of things in the Bible that way. And by the way, a lot of people study the Bible for its subject matter. When you want the meaning, all you have to do is put this in front: "I have told you this..." about marriage, about Jesus, etc. because and now you are dealing with the meaning of that subject matter. I, the Biblical author have told you this information because...

You have a paper like that in which you are going to deal with the meaning of an account. Not the information about it, not what happened. You want to learn about the life of Jesus, ok. Its fine. But if you want to know the meaning you say "Why does the Biblical writer tell me this about Jesus?" I have told you this because ... and then you are dealing with meaning. Lots of subject matter being discussed. And the temptation many times is to study the Bible for its subject matter, especially when we are dealing with historical passages of Scripture.

One of the things you have to remember is, there is a difference between a description and prescription. You may read things in the Bible that describe, but do not prescribe. In other words, you may read about marriage customs - about marriage in the Bible, in the form of marriage. That is descriptive. It doesn't mean that the Biblical writer is prescribing this kind of a custom. So we have to be careful between what is the Bible prescribing and teaching us to do and what it is simply describing in some way.

You can read parts of the book, the Old Testament, you can read about Samson. A lot of that is descriptive stuff. It is not prescribing these for us in some ways. So subject matter alright, now understanding. Understanding refers to the correct mental grasp of something. Correct mental grasp of what the author meant. It is mental. The minute it leaves the mind it becomes something else. But a correct mental grasp and next week we are going to talk about whether an unbeliever can have grasp of the author's meaning or must one have the Spirit to do so.

But understanding as we are defining it is a correct mental grasp. If you and I have a correct understanding of a Biblical text, they are identical. Our understandings. Yours may be more complete than mine. Mine may even be more fragmentary. But they are the same.

A correct mental grasp means you understand what the author intends and if you understand that correctly and I understand it correctly, we have the same understanding. Let me go to the next definition because here is where things change.

Interpretation is the verbal or written expression of our understanding of the author's meaning. At this point it is most likely that our interpretations will be different. Our understandings may be correct, but our interpretations can be very different. Listen carefully.

Let me say that in another way. Alright, now. Is what I am saying now the second time – the interpretation is different – but is it describing the same thing? Sure. Let me give you another example. I am trying to express my understanding, but I am using different examples. But the understanding being explained in both examples are the same. Translations, an author may be working for a thought for thought translation team. He may also be working for a word for word translation team.

He comes to the same text, he has the same understanding. But he words the one differently than he does the other. The understanding is the same – the understanding of the author, assuming it is correct. The wording, the verbalization may be different. So understanding will be mental and it is – if it is correct – the same.

Interpretation is verbal and will tend to vary and be different among different people. Jesus said, the Kingdom of God is like ... Does He have another parable that begins that way? Well it's the same Kingdom. Did He somehow change His understanding of it? No, I think he had the same understanding but the interpretation is different so that an interpretation may vary. Different interpretations – they don't have to be identical can convey the same meaning or understanding. Meaning – the understanding [Hard to Hear] meaning. The understanding in the mind – not verbalized yet. Interpretation, the verbalization of that.

And one of the things that of course interesting is that the minute you express your understanding, it is no longer your understanding. It is your interpretation. The minute it leaves your mind and it forms words or vocal sounds and explanation, it is now an

interpretation. But they can vary. So you can interpret a Biblical text and you can interpret the exact ways as someone else – very unlikely. You could have the same exact understanding, quite possible, but your interpretations tend to be different. Tend to express it differently.

Mental acts - the experiences that a writer goes through, when writing. The mental acts are those experiences that a person has that they are going through when they write. You know it is at this point that I would like us to turn attention to the C.S. Lewis article, "Fernseed and Elephants".

I had you read this because of its relevance to mental acts. He has a lot of great things to say. He writes so well. I think it is kind of fun to read somebody that is enjoyable. He has a number of things to say to a critics, when people for instance talk about the Bible being full of myths, he said, "I spent all my life as a professor at Oxford, teaching studying myths, how many have you read?" because the Gospels are not like this.

And we will later on talk about the difference of the word myth being understood as a genre and the Gospels and the Bible are not myths. It's a genre. I mean where do you come across in Jesus' life, a one eyed monster, a unicorn or something like that. You don't. Myths are like that. Some people mean by myths, not historically true. But that's no longer a genre, that's a historical judgment.

And you have perfectly the right to say that "the Gospels are not historically true". I think you are totally wrong in this, but you might say that. But you can't say they are myths, because now you are using a term of genre – a literary form – and they don't have that literary form. A good distinction here, [Hard to Hear] later goes on and talks about the sheep of which he is – the shepherds rather of which he is one of the sheep and he ends the book in a very humble way.

Such are the reactions of one believing laymen to modern theology. It is right you should hear them. You will not perhaps hear them very often again. Your parishioners will not often speak to you quite frankly. Once the layman was anxious to hide the fact that he believed so much less than the vicar. He now tends to hide the fact that he believes so much more. Missionary to the priest of one's own church is an embarrassing role though I have a hard feeling that if such mission work is not soon undertaken, the future history of the church of England is likely to be short.

And if you see what's happening to the Church of England especially in the English speaking world of America, Canada, Australia, England, he is quite right. If there is any hope it comes from the Anglican Church in Africa which is still very – for the most part faithful to the Word of God and coming back to "you taught us the Bible, let us tell you what you have been teaching us," and see what happens.

And what's really important as far as I am concerned is on page 114 and 15. This changed my life. When I read this, I put this book down and I said, "Well. That simply

means that 75% of all doctoral dissertations are rubbish.” It was kind of scary. But I think he is right. Listen to him. The 2nd full paragraph,

“Until you come to be reviewed yourself you would never believe how little of an ordinary review is taken up by criticism in the strict sense; by evaluation, praise, or censure, of the book actually written. Most of it is taken up with imaginary histories of the process by which you wrote it. The very terms which the reviewers use in praising or dispraising often imply such a history. They praise a passage as 'spontaneous' and censure another as 'labored'; ...

What the value of such reconstructions is I learned very early in my career. I had published a book of essays; and in the one into which I had put most of my heart, the one I really cared about and in which I discharged a keen enthusiasm, was on William Morris. And in almost the first review I was told that this was obviously the only one in the book in which I had felt no interest. Now don't mistake. The critic was, I now believe, quite right in thinking it the worst essay in the book; at least everyone agreed with him. Where he was totally wrong was in his imaginary history of the causes which produces its dullness.

Well, this made me prick up my ears. Since then I have watched with some care similar imaginary histories both of my own books and of books by friends whose real history I knew. Reviewers, both friendly and hostile, will dash you off such histories with great confidence; will tell you what public events had directed the author's mind to this or that, what other authors had influenced him, what his overall intention was, what sort of audience he principally addressed, why - and when - he did everything.

Now I must record my impression; then distinct from it, what I can say with certainty. My impression is that in the whole of my experience not one of these guesses has on any one point been right; that the method shows a record of 100 per cent failure. You would expect that by mere chance they would hit as often as the miss. But it is my impression that they do no such thing. I can't remember a single hit. But as I have not kept a careful record my mere impression may be mistaken. What I think I can say with certainty is that they are usually wrong. “

Now think if trying to reconstruct what was going through an author's mind – the mental acts of an author – if you are a contemporary of the author, raised in the same culture, had the same language, the same education, maybe even know the author and when you try to reconstruct the mental experiences of that author, you are almost always wrong.

What is the likelihood that you will be able to reconstruct the mind of the Biblical author, 2,000 years ago whose language was very different, Greek, whose culture was different, whose way of thinking was different and say you can reconstruct what was going through their minds. Or going back 3,000 years to a culture which was a different language, Hebrew and perhaps even more distinct differences from ours. What is the likelihood that you can reconstruct what was going through Isaiah's mind or Matthew's mind when they wrote?

Let it sink in. Remember he is dealing with contemporaries who knew him and his friends and tried to reconstruct what was going through their minds and what led them to write these things. You find people today writing about what was going through the Biblical author's mind and what the struggles, the community was going through.

Now sometimes, a biblical text will tell you, I am writing this because or he says what is happening in the church community. He doesn't mean that. That's no longer a mental act. That's part of understanding the text itself. But when the text is silent about these things and trying to reconstruct what was going on, if C.S. Lewis is right, there is no way. There is no way. Do you know what was going through my mind when I wrote, *A Basic Guide To Interpreting The Bible*?

Who cares? Alright. Leave that aside right? You say well, how would I know? Ok. How would you know that? We can understand what the Biblical author is trying to convey because we have his text. Can we know their experiences? Not unless they tell it and then it is part of the text itself. Much of the Biblical interpretation involves, trying to reconstruct what was going through the author's mind. I had come to the place where I had simply said, it is not possible.

I don't know how to shake what C.S. Lewis [Hard to Hear] in that article. When I put that down I began to think and it sank in. I realize that the job we have as interpreter are not trying to reconstruct what was going through Paul's mind when he wrote, but we are to try to understand what Paul meant by the words that he gave to us. And so I simply think [Hard to Hear] mental axe, yeah wonderful to know what was going Paul's mind when he wrote. But we don't have any access to it.

The C.S. Lewis article bears re-reading and I think any student who goes into doctoral work in Biblical study needs to take very seriously that article. It's a very popular article, but we should not let its popularity - the level of its popularity - and also the simplicity of what he is saying pass us by without seriously absorbing what he is saying here. It has great implications in that regard.

Alright couple more, norms of language. The norms of language are the range of meanings allowed by the words or the verbal symbols of a text. The best tools for the norms of language would be a dictionary that helps us understand the meanings of words and the like and try to understand.

But there are a lot of expressions even that - can mean several things. The love of my wife. Is that my love for Joan or Joan's love for me? The love of my wife. The norms of language permit either. "The love of Christ controls me" (2 Cor. 5:14). Paul's love for Christ or Christ's love for Paul? I think here he means Christ's love for him.

Now there is a great debate in Biblical studies when it talks about the faith of Christ. Is it Christ's personal faith or the faith of which Christ is the object?

My wife and I, we were driving one rainy night on a road that we had never been on before and we came to a sign that warned us that all vehicles over 12 feet must leave at the next exit. I said “Oh. Nuts. Joan we have to get off at the next exit.” She said why? I said “All cars over 12 feet have to get off.” And she said, “Every car is over 12 feet.”

I thought, yeah, that’s right. So if I’d have realized that it didn’t mean that our car, because it was over 12 feet had to get off, but if we had a car that was 12 feet high, we would have to get off because there is probably a bridge coming. You see the norms of language permit either. And as we drove the road got narrow and narrower. And they didn’t meet higher, they meant wide.

The norms of language permitted either. Unfortunately if you were a 12 foot or more wide truck, it was kind of late to learn it when that road got narrow because there was no way of getting out. All they had to put was 12 feet wide, but they didn’t. The norms of language though [Hard to Hear] 12 feet wide, high are wrong. The norms of language [Hard to Hear]

The context, “narrowing of the road” made it very clear later on what the sign intended, so the norms of language, the possibilities. Words have all sorts of possible meanings. And here is where a dictionary is helpful. If you want to know the possibilities in language, the word has to fit. One of those that’s found in the dictionary. If you want to use a word in a way that has never been used before that’s not a dictionary definition. If you want to be understood then you have to have an explanation and the Bible does that at times.

When it refers to Jesus saying, “destroy this temple in three days, and I will raise it up.” John says to his readers because the word temple is being used very unusually here, “This he spoke about His body.” So ... He is talking about His body as a temple. But that’s not within the norms of language. So John explains that to the readers so they will be able to understand that. The possibilities.

And here as I say a dictionary is be very very helpful. Now, the norms of utterance becomes the specific meaning that the author meant. What does he mean? Does he mean Christ’s love for us or our love for Christ? Now how do authors help us to go from the norms of language to the norms of an utterance? What do they provide?

A context. Sure. So the language allows us to narrow it down. If you want to look at the word love, and somebody uses the word love in a statement, you know that can’t mean hamburgers unless they define it, because that’s not one of the possible meanings of love. The only possibilities of love would be ... the 12, 14, I don’t know how many – would be listed in a dictionary. Those are the possibilities. It has to be one of those, because people using the word love want to be understood.

And if they want to be understood it has to fit the norms of language. Always know that. But if there are 12 or 14 possible meanings, how do you get from the 12, 14 to the one? Well, now you have a context in which is provided - the rest of the sentence is the most

helpful. Then the paragraph in which that sentence is found and the chapter and so forth and so on. So we have here then the norms of language, the possibilities. Here is where have a dictionary most helpful to the norms of utterance.

When I try to find out the specific meaning of a word, I start with the norms of language, I look up a dictionary or the lexicon if we want. Then if I want to go to the norms of utterance, the most useful tool for me here is a concordance. Where I can find where that same author uses that word elsewhere. Because most probably, the way he uses the word elsewhere will help me understand the word here, especially if it is used in the next sentence or the previous sentence or something like that. So a concordance is very helpful for the norms of an utterance.

Alright our last two definitions.

Literary genre - The literary form used by the author and the rules that govern that form. Literary genre – okay. The various rules governing that genre. Very important. We will look at that not so much next week. We will allude to it next week, but the following week after next, we will start dealing with various genres and we will be spending a lot of time on different literary genres. How to approach and understand these genres, the rules governing that.

Then finally the context. Now the context is defined here differently that most of us think of a context. Usually we would say the context of the words preceding and following the text. But wait a minute, words in a text have no meaning. Authors have meaning. So the context is defined here as the willed meaning an author gives to the literary material surrounding the text.

Because [Hard to Hear] the context is the willed context of the author and the meaning that the author gives and attributes to that context. Now here is the totality of a hermeneutical vocabulary. You need to know these meanings and in the long run the most valuable part of the course will be a mastery of this vocabulary and you are having a conceptual basis of that when you talk about hermeneutics, you can refer to what people are saying in this vocabulary.

Now one thing to be careful about – the world has not yet accepted our vocabulary definitions. They are back-wood illiterate people. The whole world. {laughter} We are the elite. We only have this definition right? So if somebody says understanding, they may be referring to an interpretation or meaning or something.

What you have to do is to say now I know they are using this word, but what they are really referring to – and then put it in your conceptual framework so that you can understand what they are talking about. Please remember, our definitions are precise. Others have different kinds of definitions. That's fine, but what we have to do now is to use our understandings so that we can translate what they are saying into our vocabulary.

I have some material from Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard. Some statements that help us to discuss what is meant by meaning here. "Our goal remains to hear the message of the Bible as the original audiences would have heard it or as the first readers would have understood it."

Now,

"Our goal remains to hear the message of the Bible as the original audiences would have heard it or as the first readers would have understood it."

Now that is very different than the way we define meaning. Our definition and this definition are in conflict with one another. Our definition is what the author consciously willed by the verbal shareable symbols that he uses. The pattern of meaning the author consciously willed by the shareable symbols that he uses. Here they have "Our goal is to hear the message of the Bible as the original audiences would have heard it or as the first readers would have understood it."

Is this – Isn't this radically different? Ok. Now why do people often define the meaning of a text as something like what the original audiences would have understood by these words? Alright now why would they have understood it? Alright now what word in our definition of meaning brings in the audience? Shareable – right?

And when we talk this way, we generally mean this. Since the author would have used shareable symbols intending for the readers to understand it, it is worded for this audience more than any other audience to understand. So what they would have understood is more likely to have been the correct understanding than anyone else. Unless you simply say that the New Testament writers were just terrible communicators.

I think you generally say, he consciously wrote for this audience" and since we know how this audience would have understood these Greek terms in this context and grammar – if we understand how they would have understood it, then we understand the author's meaning, because he wrote particularly for them and used shareable symbols that were clearly understood by them.

So this is one way that authors define simply define meaning but do you see any problem with this? I want to change this "would" to "should". You see sometimes Paul's audience misunderstood him.

Thus 1st Thessalonians requires 2nd Thessalonians. So hypothetically yes, but practically I want to say, how the author intended these - his audience to understand this but I can see what he is getting at and it is helpful since we can understand how they would have thought and read. Now in 97, 2/10ths of the way down, he writes

"We are convinced that the goal of hermeneutics is to enable interpreters to arrive at the meaning of the text that the biblical writers or editors intended their reader to understand."

A little more close to what our definition is in our wording, but I think we can accept that. I think that is very close. We talk about shareable symbols. We add that in there. It is not there, but their definition of meaning and goal of understanding is very very close to how we would want to go. Next page,

"We presuppose the goal of hermeneutics to be the meaning the biblical writers 'meant' to communicate at the time of the communication, at least to the extent that those intentions are recoverable in the texts they produced."

Ok. Fairly similar again to our definitions here.

"Though a given passage may be capable of being understood in several ways, our goal is to determine what (of those various possible meanings) ..."

Dr. Stein: - various possible meanings – terminology we use, norms of language, the possible meanings that this language here permits.

"... the text most likely would have meant to its original readers because that is why people communicate: they intend for what they communicate to be understood as they communicated it."

Now here he comes and explains the previous statement about trying to understand what the original authors would have understood the text. Because they are the ones most likely to have understood it. The biblical writers intended to communicate to them. To be understandable they used shareable symbols and more often than not they understood it correctly.

There were exceptions to this which means that we can't simply say the goal of interpretation is to understand how the early – the original audience understood the text. If you say should have understood the text, yeah but not how they understood the text is not specific enough. And then one more.

"The meaning of a text is: that which the words and grammatical structures of that text disclose about the probable intention of its author/editor and the probable understanding of that text by its intended readers."

Now they bring it both together. We will stick with just our one defined definition and we will use that consistently throughout the semester. Leave it at that instead of using several.

End of Lecture 9

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [The Role of the Holy Spirit \(Part 1\)](#)

For the past two lectures we dealt with the issue of hermeneutics. We dealt with the components of hermeneutics. We talked about the author, the reader and the text and I have tried to argue as strongly as I could that the one that determines the meaning is the author. And that our task as Biblical exegetes is to find out what the Biblical author who was inspired by God sought to convey by the shareable symbols or words that he used. Last week we looked at the basic vocabulary that we were seeking to master.

Now the one thing we haven't talked about yet was what role if any the Holy Spirit has in this. Now what is interesting of course is that we don't seem to be very spiritual in our task of interpreting the text. We haven't talked about where does the Holy Spirit fit in this whole process. Now let me read to you what some people say about the process of interpretation - J. Robertson McQuilken, *Understanding and Applying the Bible*,

“Although God desires to communicate to all people, not just anyone can understand Scripture. The Bible is very clear on that point. Faith is the prerequisite for truly understanding God's Word. A person who reads without faith may understand some revealed truth, but he cannot expect to fully understand any truth revealed in Scripture. There are several aspects of faith, all of which are essential for the student who would interpret the meaning of Scripture.”

“Regeneration – Initial faith is necessary, for the unbeliever cannot understand the things of the Spirit. Regeneration is essential. This is explicitly taught in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 and 2 Corinthians 2:15-18.”

“The thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received ... the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God ... But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. . . . For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.”

The Holy Spirit is the great Interpreter. Without Him all our efforts at fully understanding His Word are doomed to failure.”

According to this, apart from the Holy Spirit we – no one – can truly understand the meaning of Scripture. Apart from the Spirit no one can truly understand Scripture. Then he goes on,

“We cannot expect to fully understand Scripture apart from the Spirit.”

Millard Erickson in his monstrous tome on Systematic Theology deals with this issue and he says,

“the objective word, the written Scripture together with the subjective word – the inner illumination and conviction of the Holy Spirit constitutes authority for the Christian. The Reformers from the Reformation on speak very much about the illumination and conviction of the Holy Spirit in the process of biblical interpretation. It is a combination of these two factors that constitutes authority” Erickson writes.

“Both are needed. The written word correctly interpreted is the objective basis of authority. The inward illuminating and persuading work of the Holy Spirit is the subjective dimension.”

So I think a synonym for the conviction is “persuading”.

“This dual dimension prevents sterile, cold, dry truth on the one hand and over-excitability and ill-advised fervor on the other. Together the two yield a maturity that is necessary in the Christian life. A cool head and a warm heart. Not a cold heart and a hot head. As one pastor has put it rather crudely, ‘If you have the Bible without the Spirit, it will dry up. If you have the Spirit without the Bible, you will blow up. If you have both, the Bible and the Spirit together you will grow up.’”

“At the moment in which one becomes convinced of the truth, illumination is taking place. Human nature ...”

Again, reading from Erickson,

“Human nature including reason has been adversely affected by the Fall. Man in the natural state has been unable to recognize and respond to divine truth. When regeneration takes place however, the spectacles of faith vastly improve one’s spiritual eyesight. Even after regeneration however there is need for continual progressive growth which we call sanctification. In addition, the Holy Spirit works internally in the life of a believer witnessing to the truth and countering the effects of sin so that the inherent meaning of the Bible can be understood.”

Now another work, The Westminster Confession of Faith,

“The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word”

Then more recently, James DeYoung, Sarah Hurty, Beyond the Obvious:

“Since the Holy Spirit, not the human author is the ultimate author of the Scripture, meanings of the text unknown and unintended by the human authors are possible to

discover through the continuing direct revelatory work of the Holy Spirit to believers both in their reading of the Bible and apart from the Scripture.”

That scares the daylights out of me. Unintended meanings of the author we can discover. Whose meaning are we seeking? You say well, “The Holy Spirit’s meaning.” But how do you detect the Holy Spirit’s meaning from reading our meanings into this? What is the objective situation?

Well here we are then. Apart from the Spirit we can’t truly understand, fully understand savingly and we have reference to the need of the Spirit for illumination and the convicting persuading work. Now in our vocabulary, is there something – some term we have that can make conviction and persuading fit our categories.

Significance – through the work of the Spirit – I think that would be the way my friend and former colleague would understand this – that the convicting persuading work of the Holy Spirit is in that area of significance where now we value things differently.

Now let us deal with the question – can an unbeliever understand the meaning of Scripture? Can an unbeliever understand the meaning of Scripture?

How many of you have some non-Christian friends and have a pretty good Bible knowledge? Yeah. Do they understand the meaning of Scripture? Do they understand the meaning of Scripture? Let us give a hypothetical question.

Supposing I was also teaching at the University of Louisville and teaching the same course in Hermeneutics and we have a class of graduate students at the University of Louisville who have identical IQ’s as everybody in this class and they are assigned a paper. “What is the meaning of Paul or what the author’s meaning – What does Paul mean by Romans 4, verse 1 through 5. You do a paper as a class, they do a paper as a class.

I grade both papers. What will the curves be like? Will the curve of this class be significantly higher, far more A’s than that class?

No? Yes? That’s about the only two possibilities we have right? {laughter}

Alright one thing I didn’t share with you was that, when the Billy Graham Crusade was here in Louisville, they said somebody was in charge of the counseling program, but they really weren’t. I was. And I noticed that a couple of weeks, before the Crusade that we were short something like a 120 counselors that we absolutely needed to have. And so I put this ad in the daily Louisville University newspaper saying

“Counselors are needed for the Billy Graham Crusade. Training on site. Faith not necessary but parenthesis (But if you believe in God it won’t hurt). We will train you.” And they came and I told them “Look, when a person comes forward and they want to make a decision, what you do is to say ‘First you have to recognize that you have sinned

and fallen short of the glory of God.’ And then you point out to them that, this verse that says ‘All have sinned and come short of the glory of God’ in Romans 3:23. And then you say that Christ died for our sins and that God loved us and He gave us His Son to be our Savior and that if we believe in Him, we will be saved. And you have them read John 3:16 and then you say, ‘Now if you are willing to repent and invite Jesus into your life, you can be forgiven.’ And you read to them John 1:12 and then you ask them, ‘Do you want to invite Christ into your life?’ and if they say ‘Yes’ you have them pray this prayer and you should memorize this. ‘Lord I know I have sinned. I believe Jesus died for me and as best as I know how, I receive Him into my life.’ When they prayed that prayer, you take him to one of these people wearing a badge and introduce them and that person will take over from that point on.”

Now my question is this: Can these people understand what I just said? Can they lead these people to Christ? Needless to say I was fired very quickly when that ad went in that paper – from that position.

Can a person understand? Now let us look at a couple of passages. One in particular is interesting. 1 Corinthians 2 verse 14. This is the passage that most people argue about with regard to the need of the Holy Spirit being present to understand Scripture. There Paul says using the RSV,

“The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the spirit of God for they are folly to him. And he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”

You see the unbeliever can only think of these things as folly. He doesn’t understand these things. It is foolishness to them. You see they can’t have a mental grasp of this. Well what does that mean?

One of the things that we want to do from going from the norms of language and the possibilities of what this word “foolishness” means is to take a concordance and see where does Paul use this word “foolishness” elsewhere in his letter and I happen to do that and I have some references here. In 1 Corinthians chapter 1 he uses this word and he uses it in its verbal form, but there he writes

“20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has God not made foolish the wisdom of the world?”

Now does that mean God does not understand the wisdom of the world? Is that a cognitive thing that he can’t figure it out. Or is this a value judgment in which he declares this as foolishness. It looks like it is a value judgment. And if you turn to chapter 3, the next chapter after 2 verse 14. In verse 19 we read,

“19 For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written ‘He knows the thoughts of the wise are futile.’”

Does that mean God does not understand the wisdom of this world? Well in both these instances foolishness is a value judgment. For instance if you attended a lesson on nuclear physics and you didn't understand what was going on - would you say "This is foolishness."?

You can't say something is foolish unless you understand and are able to pass a judgment on it. And when we get back to 1 Corinthians 2:14,

The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the spirit of God for they are folly – or foolishness to him. That is a value judgment. They are saying, "This is stupid. This is dumb. It is nonsense. It is foolishness." But it is a value judgment. It has nothing to do with understanding.

Now the next thing we have and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. Here the word "understand" is being used, but is it being used in the same way that we are using it in our technical vocabulary. In our technical vocabulary, how do we define meaning?

It is a correct mental grasp. Can an unbeliever have a correct mental grasp? I don't mean can he truly understand or fully understand or saving-ly understand or completely understand or thoroughly understand?

I mean can he understand? Can he have a correct mental grasp? That's the issue. That's the issue. There is a passage in Mark chapter 8 ... actually chapter 9, verse 32, which uses this word, the word for "understanding" – in verse 31, Jesus teaches the disciples saying "The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men and they will kill Him and when He is killed after three days, He will rise."

"But they did not understand the saying and they were afraid to ask him."

Now if you were present and you said "Peter, what did Jesus say and mean?" Well you say "I haven't the faintest idea what He means." Well would he say, "He is talking about being killed. He is saying He is going to Jerusalem and He is going to die." Or would he say, "I don't know what He means at all by these words."

Does this word mean that the disciples do not have a correct mental grasp of the words He said? Or are we using "understanding" in this other sense that they don't truly understand. They don't understand how this plays a part in the role of God. They can't figure it out. I think if you ask Peter what did Jesus say, he would respond this way, "??? This crazy language about going to Jerusalem and there dying. I wish He would stop that silliness."

He knows what He is saying. But he doesn't accept it. And I think when we are talking about truly understanding, we are not talking about correct mental grasps. We are talking about being able to accept the truth of what is being said. Peter knows what Jesus says. He doesn't accept it.

The unbeliever in His judgment of foolishness knows what is being said but doesn't accept it. Many unbelievers have a pretty good outline of the Gospel. I mean if they were taking a objective exams on how a person can be saved and they have gone through the Campus Crusade lessons they would score very well. You can understand.

You say well, "I am not sure do unbelievers – can they repeat the Gospel to you and say 'According to the Christian faith, they argue the following – that Jesus is the Son of God. He died for the sins of the world. He paid their penalty and therefore the penalty of sin doesn't have to be paid by the individual and if they believe in Jesus they will be forgiven of their sins and go to Heaven forever.'"

Do you think they could come to that understanding? But they might add, "But it is foolishness." In the text they give you the example, by the way – that is an imaginary example – there is no German professor known as Professor Kupdissen. Kupdissen means head knowledge in German. And so we are talking about Professor Kupdissen and he really knows Paul. He knows Paul real well. His wife can't explain Pauline theology. That is not her area. But when she says it, tears come into her eyes because she believes him. The difference is not correct mental grasp. It is one understands the truth of this which for us is not understanding, but significance.

The professor doesn't – has a different significance. He think its "foolishness".

One of the things that I love the story of I think it was John Stott – was it? – where he was asked by a mother to speak to her son who had gone away to the university and lost his faith and when the son came, he said, "Well. You know I no longer can believe in Christianity. I believe in evolution. I believe that the Bible is not the Word of God. I think there are errors in Scripture and so forth and so on."

And John Stott heard him out – I think it was John Stott, it might have been someone else. Excuse me if it is. And after the young man had finished, he said to the young man, "If I could explain to your satisfaction all the questions you have, would you then repent and turn your life over to Jesus?"

The young man put his head down and shook it and said "No." There is a difference between significantly accepting what is true and having a head knowledge. All we are talking about in understanding is having a correct mental grasp.

I think if we had that paper, the curves would be identical. There would be no significant difference between them. You say "Well. We are Christians and we want to do a good job because of our love for Jesus Christ." That might be a factor and yet tragically I want to confess that there are some students who are not Christians, who are more dedicated to getting good grades than we are in serving Christ. So they may work hard on some level. I hope not, but some of them might.

End of Lecture 10

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [The Role of the Holy Spirit \(Part 2\)](#)

The fact of sin does affect us sometimes, especially when we have existential involvement in texts. For instance, some people might not want to understand what Paul's clear meaning in Romans 1 is about homosexuality. That might get in the way. So unbelievers may have an axe to grind that keeps them from the willingness to see the text. But that's not one sided. You have Christians who are so prejudiced to their way of an interpretation that there is no way that any text can open their minds. You almost need an axe to do that. They are so set in their ways.

You have therefore the problem of sin that affects probably – I don't know the percentage – you can say, but it works on both sides. But think for a minute. You non-Christian friend that you explained the Gospel to. When you prayed for them, what are praying? Are you praying that they may understand the Gospel or that the Spirit of God would bring conviction of their need of the Gospel and open their hearts so that they can receive it? It's the latter isn't it?

At a Bible study when you come together and say you are all Christians – what do you pray before you start the Bible study? Do you pray "Heavenly Father, we have had no time to look up a dictionary or a commentary and say 'We don't really know what these words mean but we pray through your Spirit you would give us this meaning'" or do you pray "Lord. Help us to see how this text and its meaning applies to our lives." We usually tend to pray about those areas which we would call implications and significance. We assume that the meaning is fairly clear and open.

Now let us go to this other issue. For instance, supposing the next paper would be for the same two groups. What are some of the implications involved in what Paul means in Romans 4:1-5? Would there be a significant difference with respect to the grading of those papers? I'm not sure about that either because I think hypothetically they could work out, you know, Paul's doctrine of justification by faith as correct. That would mean that there is no thing that people can do to earn their salvation. In fact any attempt to do so would be itself sinfulness.

I think in the abstract level of hypothetical implications – be not drunk with wine, some of them would come up "Uh. It probably means not to be drunk with whisky," even though he didn't know what whisky was. I think they can arrive at that.

But there are some areas where apart from the Spirit I don't think we will ever know. Those areas would be personal implications. Not broad specific general kinds of things, but that specific one. So an unbeliever could very well be able to look at Acts 1:8, "But you shall be my witnesses – after the Spirit has come upon you, you shall be my witnesses, in Jerusalem, in Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth" and then you

could say “It means that for a Christian they are to spread the Gospel throughout the world. But that means that some probably are going to be missionaries. Some will be pastors. Some will be teachers. Etc.”

But as a Christian prays about this and asks God for how he or she will fulfill that command in their own lives, we start finding that specific kind of implication that God wants us to be a missionary. Not just a missionary in general but a missionary to Africa, to a particular country in Africa or to South America or to the inner city and the like. And so specific personal implications, I think are something that only the Spirit can give to us. General implications – yes anyone can have an idea of that but not the specific.

And then the significance in which we respond and say yes. That is something given by the Holy Spirit. And when we put these together, we have another word that is not in our vocabulary. We looked at it once before. Personal implications and significance – application. So it is in this area that I think the Holy Spirit is especially guiding and giving us direction. Now that brings us back then to the definition that the Reformers gave about the role of the Spirit in providing illumination and conviction.

Conviction fits very nicely in what we are saying. But illumination is something else. Remember a number of times meeting with Millard Erickson as he wrote these things. Colleague of mine and friend and asked him to explain what illumination meant. And for him it somehow had to do with understanding. And specifically and I say “How does the Spirit provide understanding for a believer and not an unbeliever as they read this text?”

And I’m sure he would think that he had explained it adequately and maybe he had, but I didn’t understand at all what he meant by that. It was a very fuzzy word and time and time again it looked like illumination started to be equated with significance or conviction. And in fact in one of the quotations, he does say that say that illumination takes place when we are convicted of the truth of what is being said. So I think really for a lot of people, illumination and conviction meld together and involve the general area in what we call significance in that regard.

If you want to redefine understanding and qualify it as truly understanding, fully understanding, a saving understanding, an authentic understanding, a real understanding, a deeper understanding, and so forth and so on. No problem with that but notice that there is always a qualification. And that qualification indicates something and I think it indicates that an unbeliever can understand. It all depends on what we mean by the word understand. And again I remind you we are talking about a definition which means that understand – which says that understanding is a correct mental grasp.

That is all mental understanding is. We have a separate word for the conviction of the truthfulness of that. Significance. And that simple sense in which we use the word understand and unbeliever can do that. Now if you say that should not be the right definition of understanding. For me understanding means not only to have a correct mental grasp but to know the truthfulness of something. That’s what I mean by understanding.

Well then I would have to stop putting a not in front of all of these. Not truly understanding. Not fully understanding. Not savingly understanding and so forth and so on for the others. So its how you define it in part. There are times when sin begins to affect a person so much that what is so evident and clear, they refuse to see and almost refuse to understand.

I know that. That is true for a believer and for unbelievers many times. I think for instance on some of these politically correct issues everybody want the Bible to support them. So if you are practicing a homosexual lifestyle, you really don't want to have to say, "Well. You know I know the Bible says that this is a damnable thing and that it is going to be judged by God and it is not approved by God."

No one is especially eager that – there are some people however who come and say, "Let us not kid ourselves. That is exactly what the Bible says and that's why I hate that Bible so much. Its prejudicial. Its narrow minded viewpoint." And some people who practice a certain lifestyle will say, "This is the way I live. The Bible teaches otherwise, but I don't care about the Bible." So they understand. They just reject it.

Let me read for you something from Martin Luther as he writes to Erasmus. He use different vocabulary which will translate into ours but notice what he says.

"To put it briefly, there are two kinds of clarity in Scripture, just as there are also two kinds of obscurity: one external and pertaining to the ministry of the Word, the other located in the understanding of the heart. If you speak of the internal clarity, no man perceives one iota of what is in Scriptures unless he has the Spirit of God. All men have a darkened heart, so that even if they can recite everything in Scripture, and know how to quote it, yet they apprehend and truly understand nothing of it. They neither believe in God, nor that they themselves are creatures of God, nor anything else. As Psalm 14:1 says: "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no god.'" For the Spirit is required for the understanding of Scripture, both as a whole and in any part of it. However if, on the other hand, you speak of the external clarity, nothing at all is left obscure or ambiguous, but everything there is in the Scriptures has been brought out by the Word into the most definite light, and published to all the world."

There is an external clarity. Anyone who reads the Bible can know what it teaches about what they need to do to be saved and what is in general a life pleasing to God and how it is to be lived out. However to be convicted of the truthfulness of this, only with the Spirit of God can that take place.

And so we are talking here, whether you talk about irresistible grace that brings that about or prevenient grace that brings it about, everyone is convinced that it's the grace of God who through the Spirit of God brings the person to know that this is true and brings the divine enabling that somehow allows them to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus.

Alright now let me show some quotations that come out of the Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard text, with regard to the role of the Spirit in this whole process. I think every now

and then I find statements that look like they don't agree with one another. Here are two on the same page,

"If the Bible is God's revelation to His people, then the essential qualification for a full understanding of this book is to know the revealing God."

Don't try to copy this down. Just put page 82, 2/3rds down – 2/10ths down to 3/10ths down.

"Only the one who believes and trust in God can truly understand what God has spoken in His Word. This makes sense, for how can one understand a text from the Bible that purports to be a word from God if one denies that there is a God or that the Bible comes from God?"

This looks like that apart from the Holy Spirit, a person cannot truly understand the meaning of Scripture. There is footnote on that page however,

"The difference between the findings of unbelieving versus believing scholars is often one of volition ..."

Significance.

"... not cognition."

Understanding – mental.

"... through their careful work, both may come to the same understanding of a text's meaning. But due to their different faith commitments, only the believer can perceive the text's true significance and be willing to obey the truth conveyed."

So here you have – unless you start putting the word, "truly understand" or something like that they are saying that a believer and an unbeliever both can understand the meaning of a text. But apart from the Spirit there is no true understanding and that true understanding involves a correct mental grasp plus a conviction of its significance.

Some other comments and quotations from them,

"We cannot genuinely understand what a text meant without it impacting our lives."

Another adverb that we hadn't come across so far.

"Regardless of the pre-understanding, the addition of faith to the interpreter's pre-understanding allows her to see new meanings in the text."

"From the position faith the interpreter can see that the Bible records the words and activities of the transcendent God in human history."

I'm not sure exactly what is meant by "new meanings". If they are talking about, well, what might they be talking about? Well, significance – yeah maybe I was thinking of implications. Now that might be true. But I am unsure as to exactly what "new meanings" in the text and how that should be understood and interpreted.

Then he goes on,

"Illumination does not provide data or information. The Holy Spirit does not provide further revelation to the interpreter. Nor does illumination guarantee a correct understanding of the meaning of the passage. Given the spiritual nature of the Bible only a spiritual interpreter can accurately assimilate its contents. All other will simply miss the spiritual dimension. They may even ignore it altogether whether consciously or unconsciously."

So here I think we are going further than simply a correct mental grasp when you are talking about assimilated contents, we are dealing with the area of significance again in that regard. So I think we would have a lot in common with the Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard for the most part.

Let me be overly simplistic. I don't want to be disrespectful but I want to be as simple as I can. If you what this word means in the Bible, don't say anything out loud please. Matthew 6:24 in the King James Version reads,

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

Now – don't anybody if you know what the word means, say it.

Alright now we all have King James Bibles and we don't know what the word mammon means. So we are going to divide up into teams. We are going right down the middle and you can choose which side you want according to your spirituality when I define the sides ok.

This group over here will be the prayer and fasting group. And you as a group are going to go to the Alumni chapel and you are going to pray. You are all going to pray that God through His Spirit will help you to understand what the word mammon means. Ok?

I'm on this side over here and we are not a very spiritual group. We are going to Baskin and Robbins and getting hot fudge sundae and as we go, I want you to bring our Bible dictionary with you and after we have eaten our first hot fudge sundae and we are ordering the second, we will look up in the Bible dictionary the word mammon.

Now who will have a correct mental grasp of the text? The spiritual group or the unspiritual hot fudge sundae group?

Now you are going to open the Bible dictionary and you look up the word mammon and it will say, an Aramaic word meaning things. Ah – Jesus says you cannot serve God and at the same time serve possessions.

Now what about our group over here?

We are praying and we are asking God through the Holy Spirit to give us wisdom as to the meaning of that word. Now I don't believe that it is impossible that as you are praying a voice comes from Heaven and it says, the word mammon is an Aramaic word and it means "things or possessions".

No – really – I don't think that's impossible. A voice could come from Heaven and also could say, "Go to Baskin and Robbins. They have got a Bible dictionary over there. They know what the word means."

{laughter}

Excuse me.

Now knowing what the word mammon means, what about you as a group as you pray and you speak and share with one another, what that means in my life. What does it mean that I cannot serve God and things?

And you begin to reflect on what might be the things that are keeping you from serving God fully. We are simply having hot fudge sundaes. Is it not true that the Spirit of God will honor that concern and bring an understanding to you as to implications – personal implications – of what that means in your life? The work of the Spirit is very important in showing how texts personally apply in bringing significance and causing us now to repent and remove those idols in our lives – those things – that mammon, that's keeping us from serving as we ought.

Here we are only interested in the academic – yeah we know what it means – it means things and so what? That's where the Spirit is active. And I think to note this - what we have here and never get to the desire to see how that applies specifically in our lives and if anything its worse than nothing to know when not to care.

An example in my own life, I was a Christian at the time and what I understand to be the role of the Spirit in the interpretation of the Bible. I was a junior in college at Rutgers University. It was spring in New Brunswick, New Jersey and we have a meeting across town on the women's campus at Douglas College and so I was walking there early. And as I was walking some Bible verses were coming through my mind and John 3:16 came to my mind,

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."

And as that verse came into my mind, something convinced me of the fact that that meant God really loved Bob Stein. And I became convinced that God personally loved me as I walked through the town. And the blue of the sky became deeper and richer and the sun became more golden and I think we would have here what I would call, that personal implication of the text that the Spirit brought to me that day.

But if you asked me does John 3:16 mean that He loves the whole world, before that day, I would have said, "Of course."

And you say "Are you included in that?"

I would have said, "Of course."

I knew. I had a correct mental grasp of John 3:16, but there was something about the personal implication of that and the deep conviction of the significance that I had not had before. But it was not in the area of the cognitive as much as the recognition in the heart that the Bible really says "God loves me."

God loves me and I came to be convinced of it. I think some of you have had experiences like that where something which academically you may have known now the Spirit of God brought home to you and you were convinced of it. I think that's what I would call one of the major works of the Spirit interpretation.

End of Lecture 11

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Miraculous in Scripture](#)

I would like to share with you one of the areas that involve a great deal of implications in regard to how one interprets the Bible and it has to deal with the miraculous that occurs in Scripture. We are going to talk about the various approaches to the miraculous that have occurred in the history or scholarship. There will be essentially three main approaches that we will look at.

The 1st is the Supernatural Approach. This is the traditional approach of Christianity through the centuries. According to the Supernatural Approach, the events recorded in the Bible really took place. If you were there, you would have seen this happen. And the event happened just as it is recorded. So if you were there, you would have seen it and you would record it the same way it is in the Bible. The event happened just as it is recorded.

Now this text proclaims that this is a divine event in the Bible. Not a natural event. It is not the normal course of life that has this. This is a divine event and as a result since God performed it, all searches for a natural cause are irrelevant. There is no sense to it whatsoever. Alright so the traditional approach to this is that an event – a real event took place. The event happened just as it is recorded. The text provides a divine event and since it is a divine event, God performed, the search for a natural cause is irrelevant.

You know when I was a young Christian, I remember reading an apologetic book which tried to defend the historicity of the Bible and it was intriguing that this event talked about how that at the Fall of Jerusalem /Jericho, what took place was an earthquake in which the walls fell outward and that God worked an earthquake and supposedly this to ??? help me understand and to accept the supernatural nature of the event. But think with me for a minute. Are we saying that when Joshua crossed over and saw Jericho, he was a natural born geologist and he saw that Jericho lay on a major fault-line, and that if the people would march around rhythmically with the same beat this would set up vibrations that could be disastrous to the walls and on the 7th day they did this 7 times and they blew the trumpet and they all jumped up and they caused this earthquake to take place.

If God does something, there is no natural cause. If it is an earthquake how come it was at that time, at that specific moment, on that specific day when that trumpet sounded? When you talk about miracles you can't explain them. You say "Well. If I can't explain it and understand it, it can't happen." Well, I am sorry. God is not limited by your ability to understand these things. He does things and that's it.

So the Supernatural Approach says when you start looking for natural explanations from it, it is basically foolishness. God has done this. It is a miracle. You can't explain it. You can't explain how bread multiplies in the feeding of the four and five thousand. It is a miracle. You accept it.

Now note here the idea that history is a closed continuum of cause and effect is denied. There is a cause for this that lies outside of creation. It is God and according to this view, history is open to God's activity and cause and effect in the normal sense in which we understand it is violated here. God would not like the word, "violate". He created this. The laws are His. If He wants to step in and do something, He doesn't violate anyone. Simply does what the Sovereign God can do.

Now notice also here that the intention of the Biblical author is maintained. The authors believe that this is a miracle. This understanding is in harmony with the author. What the author intends to say is that this particular event is a miraculous event and that is exactly what the author is trying to say. That is exactly what this interpretation does.

So this approach – the Supernatural Approach – the one that churches used for all its centuries is one that takes seriously the event, takes seriously the description of the event, ??? claims that it is a miracle and does not look for a natural cause. It denies the attitude that history is closed to God and that God cannot enter into it. History is open and what

the author, the Biblical author intended by this is maintained. That is the supernatural/traditional approach.

The Rationalist Approach is different. It starts out with the presupposition: the events described here could not have taken place. How do you prove that? You don't have to prove it. This is your presupposition. Miracles do not happen. Therefore this couldn't take place. It is a miracle. However they see behind this a real event in history. But of course it has to be different than recorded because it is a miracle in the record and we know miracles don't happen, but something happened. There is some event out there but it is different.

That means that behind this text is a natural event. If you were there, something really took place. If you were there at the feeding of the 4 or 5,000, there were 4 or 5,000 and they were fed. But it was not a miraculous feeding. There must be some other explanation behind this and this other natural cause of the event can and should be learned.

And so what happens at the Feeding of the 5,000 is that we have a little boy who comes forward and says to Jesus, "I know everybody is hungry here. I haven't much that my mother sent me but here – here is what I have. I will gladly share this with all."

And then as people saw this and the report of what had happened took about – came about – Abraham and Sarah were convicted by this and they said, "Sarah. You know this Oxford Barbequing here. It is really more than we two can eat. Why don't we share this with others? And then there were some who had come with these large buckets of Kentucky Fried Chicken and they said "Really. We got more than we can handle here. Why don't we share." And the word went around and everybody began to share and when they shared they found there was more than enough to go around. And all the people were full and satisfied.

You see – there is a real event. But it is an event that can't be supernatural. It is a natural event in some ways. Let us try to figure out what lies behind this event. The Rationalist Approach. There are all sort of different approaches when you talk about Jesus walking on the water. He was walking along the shore and in the mist that was rising from the sea, Peter didn't understand that and he said "Well. If Jesus can walk on the ocean, so can I." But he sank just like a rock, like his name because he was trying the water and Jesus was on shore and Jesus dragged him on shore and saved him.

Or some of the extreme ones. Jesus was walking on a floating raft and Peter misunderstood this. Now notice this affirms that history is closed to the supernatural. There is no openness here. Openness in history is being denied.

As a result the intention of the text – what the author was seeking to teach by this is being violated. What the author meant is not being accepted. It is being rejected outright.

The Rationalist Approach: Real event but not like the Bible records. Not miraculous and affirms that history is closed. Closed continuum of time and space is maintained. No openness to the supernatural and what the author intended is clearly violated because the author is trying to teach that this is a miracle that Jesus performed this great wonderful miracle and showed His glory.

The Rationalist Approach – dominant in the 1700s till about the middle of the 1800s. Very dominant approach. The Rationalists.

The third approach is the Mythical Approach. Now this has similarities surprisingly enough with both the former approaches, I'll show them to you.

First like the Rationalist Approach, the presupposition is that this event could not have taken place. Why couldn't it have taken place? Because it is a miraculous event and miracles do not happen. You say well how do you prove that? That's the presupposition you start with. Now I hope you can see that if you start out with the presupposition "miracles do not happen." That kind of affects the way you judge the events being recorded in the Bible, because the Bible is loaded with miracles.

Now this recognizes however that the text does proclaim a divine event having taken place. The mystical approach says, "This is talking about a supernatural event – a miracle." And because of this, the search for a natural cause is irrelevant.

David F. Strauss in his work, *The Life of Jesus*, 1835, - this book was a bombshell and it presented this Mythical Approach. He looked at all the Rationalist attempts to explain the miracles and show how desperate and how impossible they were.

Floating rafts? Walking on shore? People sharing food? And you have all of these absurd kinds of explanation and he said, "They just made no sense to him." This is a miracle. The result of this is that there is no supernatural cause. There is no natural cause. What the text is proclaiming is a myth. Later on when we talk about the interpretation of historical narrative, several weeks from now, we will deal with this a little more fully and explain this in more detail.

The event could not have taken place just like the rationalist said, but the event proclaims a divine event like a supernaturalist proclaimed. A search for a natural cause like the supernaturalist is irrelevant and since there is not a divine cause and since there is not a natural cause, it must be mythical. Now like the rationalist approach, a closed continuum of time and space is maintained. There is no openness to the possibility of God entering into history.

But now this approach says, the deeper intention of the text – the subconscious meaning of the author, that which was welling up in the author's soul which gave birth to this myth – that's what we are after.

So meaning is traced to the author, but not to the author's conscious willed meaning, but to the sub-consciousness of which he was not aware that gave birth to this kind of myth. We will look at that more in detail later on in this semester but please note here why I have defined meaning as involving what the author consciously willed by these shareable symbols. That avoids this subconscious meaning of the author of which he was unaware which the mythical approach tends to emphasize.

Today I would suggest that probably of most of the interpretations by unbelievers involves this mythical approach. The rationalist approach simply ran out of steam and by the 1850s, people began to say, "No. This doesn't seem likely or possible."

I have just one page from a work by a man named Eugene B. Borowitz that I want you to look at at this time and want to share it with you. The author is Eugene B. Borowitz, published by Paulist press in 1980. And he talks about contemporary Christologies and I just want to share some of this with you because I think here is a person who is not an evangelical Christian in any sense of the term and he describes very well the basic issues involved.

Turn with me to the first paragraph on page 40, and he talks in the second sentence, first paragraph, page 40:

"Traditionalists feel validated by their sense of authenticity in the received doctrines of their faith."

We are traditionalists in that sense. Now skip the next sentence. Three lines down.

"Liberals on the other hand, authenticate their spiritual stance in the integration of their belief with the general human knowledge of their time."

Alright skip the next sentence. Next three lines.

"In our time, the central issue dividing the two groups is whether God or humankind is essentially the creator of religion. Conservatives say that religion is God given. IT comes down from heaven. It is revealed. The liberals say 'No. Science, our wisdom and knowledge is the author and origin of our religion.'"

Next paragraph. Page 40,

"Traditionalists and liberals have different standards of truth. From a philosophical point of view theirs' is an epistemological disagreement."

Skip the next bracketed four lines.

"Within a religion, as between religions, the debate between traditionalists and liberals, ultimately reduces itself to a disagreement over how one is to know what is true. Is tradition, centered about God reasonably independent of modern thought. Or does contemporary experience centered about human experience, science, tests, experiments

and so forth – does contemporary experience fundamentally determine what we should believe.”

Last line.

“For a liberal of one faith – that is me Borowitz – to criticize a traditionalist of another faith such as Karl Barth or vice versa is properly speaking, not have an interreligious discussion at all. It is rather to criticize a faith being described in terms of one epistemology by a different epistemology.”

Next paragraph.

“In the case of the resurrection, there is as good as no difference between liberal Jews and liberal Christians in evaluating the adequacy of traditionalist Christian arguments for its historicity.

And then the very - last four lines of that paragraph.

“The disagreement of the liberal Jew with traditional Christians is not essentially because the Judaism of the liberal Jews but because of their liberalism. That is their human oriented epistemology. Orthodox Jews and conservative Christians can have religious discussion. Liberal Jews and liberal Christians can have religious discussions.”

But the liberal of one cannot have a religious discussion with a conservative of the other, because their discussion ultimately and fundamentally is an epistemological one. How does one know truth?

So if you want to talk about the resurrection of Jesus, if you are talking to a conservative Jew, you can talk about the evidence for the resurrection. You have a discussion as to whether that evidence is convincing or not. But for a conservative Christian to talk about the resurrection of Jesus to a liberal Jew or to a liberal Christian is not a religious discussion at all. Because they have already determined apart from any evidence that there was no resurrection. They start out with that. So if you want to interact, you have to interact with that epistemology.

So many times, I think we are trying to have an apologetic and our apologetic is trying to deal with the historical evidence for a resurrection which can't happen in their mind. You need an epistemological discussion. How do we know truth? What does it require to take for you to accept a miracle? For instance if a person said “There is no evidence in the world that would convince me of a miracle.” Well then don't try to convince him of the resurrection. It doesn't make any sense.

What you might say then – “It is amazing how fundamentalistic you are. I am much more liberal than that. I am open to look at historical evidence and the irony of this is that as a conservative Christian I am really more open minded than a radical liberal, because I would say, “Let us talk about the resurrection. Maybe it happened. Maybe it didn't.” Let

us look at the evidence. You are not willing to make that conclusion. You start out, “It didn’t happen.” There is nothing in the world that can ever convince me it happened. Now which sounds more open minded?

I think we as evangelical Christians are much more open minded in that area. Now remember, this is being said by a liberal Jew. And he words it so well. If you want inter-religious discussions, they are by people who start out with the same presuppositions. If you want a philosophical discussion on epistemology, then you deal with the presuppositions that you bring to your study.

I asked you to read the Rudolph Bultmann article on Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible? It is a question. How does he answer? Yes or no? The answer is both ways, that’s right.

Yes, it is possible if you don’t presume the results of your outcome. No if you mean that you simply approach it neutrally and you don’t have any presuppositions with it. There are a number of things he says in the article that are interesting. He refers to 1 Corinthians 9:9 where Paul quotes an Old Testament passage which says, you shall not muzzle an ox as he treads out the grain and says, that refers to ministers being able to receive and live off the Gospel they preach and Bultmann says, “No. It doesn’t talk about ministers. It talks about oxen as they are grinding out the grain.”

Well, I wonder if Paul might see something that Bultmann was not seeing and that is that the meaning of that statement may have implications. And the meaning of a statement like that I think is clearly that if animals work and should deserve some of the labor of their works, how much more should those who are God’s servants live off this way. And so his ridiculing of that I think loses sight of the fact that this is a legitimate kind of implication.

Now he says “Yes. We have to have presuppositions.” Do you have a presupposition or any presupposition when you interpret the Bible?

It is true. Ok. What else?

God exists. Alright?

Language is intelligible – that the events recorded in Scripture are true and took place. You can understand it. That we should aim for the author’s intended meaning.

No text. When you open the Bible, just remember I want to be interpreted by what I said originally by this word. You don’t hear that. That is something you bring to a text. Now he brings some presuppositions and we need to know what the presuppositions are and here we go back to Borowitz and his view of the liberal.

He says it belongs to the historical method of course, that a text is to be interpreted according to the rules of grammar and the meaning of words. Exactly. In other words a

text is to be interpreted in light of – let us use one of our expressions – the _____ ... we should interpret the text according to the norms of language and then specifically the utterance right?

No problem with that. You are right on. Well there are a lot of people who don't do that. They are not interested in an author's meaning, they allegorize, they read into text meanings and so forth.

So here is a traditional approach that I think all of the Reformers would say "Absolutely." And the rules of grammar and the meaning of words mean the rules of the grammar that they use and the meaning of the words in their day. Alright. That's fine.

Now he also says that we need to apply this Historical Method but here now is the definition of the Historical Method that parts the waters. The Historical Method includes the presupposition that history is a unity in the sense of a closed continuum of effects in which individual events are connected by the succession of cause and effect. This closedness means that the continuum of historical happenings cannot be rent by the interference of supernatural transcendent powers and that therefore there is no miracle in this sense of the word.

Such a miracle would be an event – an event whose cause did not lie within history. Now that is the presupposition that Bultmann sets forward. It is the presupposition of all liberal approaches to the Bible. He says you must start with this before you open the text to the text. This is what you start with. Now if you start with this, should it be surprising where you come out. It is predetermined.

Now that was the dominating view in Germany in the 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s – it is still the dominating approach. We have here last year, Dr. Peter Stuhlmacher who had retired here from Tübingen. He was the disciple – finest pupil of Ernst Kaseman who was a leading Bultmannian. When Kaseman retired, his chair was given to Peter Stuhlmacher and Peter Stuhlmacher then gave as is traditional in Germany, his opening address as to his conception of what he waNew Testaments to do in occupying this chair. As the tradition was Ernst Kaseman walked down and sat in the front row.

Peter Stuhlmacher stated in his address, "I believe we need to take an approach to the Bible, an approach of openness to the text. Kaseman stood up and walked out."

There is a world of difference. Two totally different worlds. If you are open to the supernatural, you are in one camp. If you are closed, you are in another. It is like taking two radical forks on the way and this is the fork of the presupposition you take. And if you are over here and you talk to someone over there, you are not talking to one another. If you want to talk to each other, you have to talk back here and you talk about your presuppositions.

Remember what Borowitz said and remember what Bultmann said. Ok.

End of Lecture 12

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Implications of Genre](#)

Reading from C.S. Lewis on Christian Marriage.

The Christian idea of marriage is based on Christ's words that a man and wife are to be regarded as a single organism — for that is what the words 'one flesh' would be in modern English. And the Christians believe that when He said this He was not expressing a sentiment but stating a fact — just as one is stating a fact when one says that a lock and its key are one mechanism, or that a violin and a bow are one musical instrument. The inventor of the human machine was telling us that its two halves, the male and the female, were made to be combined together in pairs, not simply on the sexual level, but totally combined. The monstrosity of sexual intercourse outside marriage is that those who indulge in it are trying to isolate one kind of union (the sexual) from all the other kinds of union which were intended to go along with it and make up the total union. The Christian attitude does not mean that there is anything wrong about sexual pleasure, any more than about the pleasure of eating. It means that you must not isolate that pleasure and try to get it by itself, any more than you ought to try to get the pleasures of taste without swallowing and digesting, by chewing things and spitting them out again.

As a consequence, Christianity teaches that marriage is for life. There is, of course, a difference here between different Churches: some do not admit divorce at all; some allow it reluctantly in very special cases. It is a great pity that Christians should disagree about such a question; but for an ordinary layman the thing to notice is that the Churches all agree with one another about marriage a great deal more than any of them agrees with the outside world. I mean, they all regard divorce as something like cutting up a living body, as a kind of surgical operation. Some of them think the operation so violent that it cannot be done at all; others admit it as a desperate remedy in extreme cases. They are all agreed that it is more like having both your legs cut off than it is like dissolving a business partnership or even deserting a regiment. What they all disagree with is the modern view that it is a simple readjustment of partners, to be made whenever people feel they are no longer in love with one another, or when either of them falls in love with someone else.
~ Christian Marriage by C.S. Lewis

Let us pray.

Father in Heaven we are thankful for this gift you have given to us and to your creation in general – the gift of marriage. We pray especially as Christians that we will honor, that we will treasure this great gift. For those of us who are married, we pray that we will dedicate ourselves to a love affair with our beloved that will last for all this lifetime and will continue into eternity. Protect our marriages our Father. Give us in times of difficulty

the kind of love that remembers the oath and promise we made that we will be true until death us do part. We pray our Father then for our families. We pray our Father for those in our midst that are about to be married in the near future that you would bless them in this, that indeed we will exemplify to the world this great gift that you have given to us for we ask in Jesus name. Amen.

The material by G.B. Caird which we tried to have the copyright permitting us to duplicate. That has not taken place so that you have not been able to read Caird. Is that right?

Students: ??? on the website.

Dr. Stein: It was on the website. Ok. So some of you have but let me just make a few comments about Caird here about some of the things that I think are especially important. In chapter 2 in this book, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*, he talks about meaning in different ways.

He talks about meaning with an 'r', meaning with respect to referent.
meaning with a 'v', meaning with respect to value.
meaning with an 'e' with respect to entailment.
meaning with a 's' in regard to sense.
meaning with 'i' in regard to intension

Now he says that this is the way that this word is used and to distinguish the various differences and nuances involved in this word, he puts a letter with it. Now with regard to meaning with respect to referent, he has an interesting comment and I think it is absolutely right on.

He says, "the distinction between sense and referent is so indispensable to any discussion of meaning and so self-evident once it has been pointed out that it is a shock to find learned writers ignoring it."

Now he is absolutely right on. There are professors who teach and when it comes to meaning there is great confusion for them as to the meaning with respect to the sense or the meaning with regard to referent. Now with referent he is referring to what we call the subject matter.

Meaning with respect to what is ??? referring or talking about - the subject matter, the stuff, the event – if you talk about historical materials.

Meaning with respect to value, we have a separate word for. When you value the meaning we are talking about significance. So we will use the word significant.

Meaning with regard to entailment points out that sometimes when we talk about a word, we are talking not about what it means but what this word entails. We have a separate word for that which would be implication. The implications of something.

Meaning with regard to sense would be our simple meaning as such and meaning with regard to intension, I would say is also what we would call meaning if the author is competent. Okay? He makes a separate issue there because sometimes it also might not be competent to do what he is writing. We agree.

But here he has these different ways of expressing meaning – different ways the word is used and he defines these different ways. We fortunately have a vocabulary in which all of those separate aspects have a particular term. It is easier to refer to subject matter than meaning referent. Easier to talk to significance than talk to meaning value. It is easier to talk about implications than meaning entailment then so forth and so on.

But much of what he says in the chapter is very valuable if we translate into our own vocabulary it makes a lot of sense.

Student: I thought that was really interesting. I thought ???

Dr. Stein: Yeah. Well, we will look at some of that and later on in the rest of the book, he deals with some of that. He is a moderate in the sense that he is not the radical British scholar but he is not a where we are either. He is in between that way. And so for him if there are mistakes in the Bible it is not quite as big a problem as it is for us.

Student: ???

Dr. Stein: We will come across one thing about prophesy when we talk about that later today. Let us hold off on that.

Now he has a couple of places I just want to refer to what he says because it is helpful for us. Page 39, two-tenths of the way down there is a new paragraph and it reads this way.

“In our attempt to analyze the meaning of meaning we shall have to discriminate between the public meaning which is characteristic of language and the users meaning which is characteristic of speech.”

Our vocabulary – let us translate that. We must distinguish between public meaning which is characteristic of language and the user’s meaning which is characteristic of speech. Yeah. The norms of language versus the norms of the utterance. So ok.

Seven-tenths of the way down:

“To understand why a speaker says what he does is not the same things as understanding what he is saying. Many times in the Bible we will know what the Biblical author is saying but we are just wildly guessing as to why he may say that. We may notice that a Biblical writer – James – is emphasizing the importance of good works with regard to the Christian faith. Why does he emphasize this? That is part of the mental access that we don’t have access to. Sometimes the writer will tell us why he is saying it. Well that is no longer the mental access part of what he expressly states, but to understand why a speaker

says what he does is not the same as understanding what he is saying. We can understand what he is saying much more easily than why he or she may be saying that.”

Then in page 40, right in the middle of the page at the end of that paragraph there,

“The most we are entitled to say is that any speaker who wishes to be intelligible will take account of the capacity of his audience so that our judgment about what they are likely to have made of his words provides one possible clue to his intention.”

“Here is why if we say the author is competent, he is using shareable words, how would his reader have understood this combination of words? If we can understand that and we can then we have a good idea of what the author is trying to say. Then...”

Two more references and then we will leave Caird.

The one I have read already. 61

“In dealing with the words of the Bible, we are bound by evidence. Literary critics have wisely warned us against the intentional fallacy – the error of supposing that a writer meant something other than he has actually written.”

We get very spiritual about that too. We have a deeper meaning than what the apostle meant, that the Holy Spirit has given us or something like this.

“We have no access to the mind of Jeremiah or Paul except through their recorded words – a fortiori – how much more. We have no access to the Word of God in the Bible except through the words in the mind of those who claim to speak in His name. We may disbelieve them – Paul or Jeremiah – that is our right. But if we try without evidence to penetrate to a meaning more ultimate than the one the writers intended, that is our meaning, not theirs or God’s.”

I want to read that again. I like that.

“Literary critics have wisely warned us against the intentional fallacy – the error of supposing that a writer meant something other than he has actually written. We have no access to the mind of Jeremiah or Paul except through their recorded words how much more. We have no access to the Word of God in the Bible except through the words in the mind of those who claim to speak in His name. We may disbelieve them that is our right. But if we try without evidence to penetrate to a meaning more ultimate than the one the writers intended, that is our meaning, not theirs or God’s.”

Very good material from G.B. Caird.

We are going to start now to talk about the genres of Scripture. We have talked about our understanding of what our goal is. We want to know what the author meant, but the

author uses literary forms and therefore we must understand what these literary forms are seeking to teach.

I used as a subheading to the book, A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible: Playing By the Rules. When the book was first published, the person in charge of the final editing was one who also drew some of the pictures and illustrations. I wasn't too excited by them. It happened to be the owner of the publisher's companies' son – vice president, so I liked it better after I found out who he was. But he changed the title to Playing by The Rules: A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible.

Later on they changed it back because they found out that they were being located in Sports sections in libraries, in bookstores. They thought it was a game book. And Playing By the Rules – it was not a – and finally they realized that somehow the label of the title was misleading people away and so they switched it back to a basic guide.

But the fact is, you can't interpret a game unless you know the rules of the game. Now, I don't want to sound irreverent like studying the Bible is a game, but the analogy is a good one. If you have somebody for instance who has all his life has lived in Europe and they are familiar with football which is soccer in American understanding and he comes to watch American football, it is just incomprehensible – because these guys are holding the ball with the hand. You can't do that in football and you find that only one person ever kicks the ball. Everybody kicks the ball in soccer that way and so you have people going out of bounds and throwing the ball back in out of bounds in soccer.

You can't understand the game. You have to know the rules of the game. So any game has rules associated with it and in a similar way, any literary form has rules associated with them. Now we are going to look at one literary form and that has to do with Proverbs. Proverbs – proverbial literature.

I'll give us an illustration – a very familiar one. "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." And I remember back in Minnesota, one of the pastors preaching a sermon on that and telling the congregation, he knows his children will grow up to be Christian, because they are being raised as they should in the fear and admonition of the Lord and when they are old, they will not depart from it.

And I thought "What a dumb thing to say!" from the pulpit. I mean that's really foolish. For one thing of those devout people in your congregation who have sought through prayer and all their lives sought to raise their children to know and follow the Lord and one of them is a prodigal and it breaks their heart. They don't need to hear that. They don't need to all of a sudden be given a guilt trip in addition. God has been very good to my wife and I. We have three children. They all love the Lord. They married fellow Christians who love the Lord. They are raising their children to know and love the Lord.

But the last thing I would ever say would be that the reason they all are following the Lord is because their father raised them perfectly. I am just thankful that despite my foolishness and errors at times, God in His grace won my children to the Lord. So no one

is going to be able to say, “I have raised my children perfectly.” And there will be people who are more devout and more godly than you and I who did their best and they have a child, daughter, son who isn’t following the Lord’s footstep.

There are godly people in the Bible, Eli who has two rotten sons. He knows it but no one has ever blamed Eli. He is a very devout man in the Old Testament. So it happens.

The second dumb thing about it was that think of the pressure you put on the kid. I mean if he comes out as a good Christian, it is all his dad’s doing. The only way he can be an individual is if he decides that - not do what his dad wants him to do. In other words to go the opposite direction. But what really is silly as far as we are concerned is that it completely misunderstands what a proverb is.

Now proverbs are short pithy sayings often in poetic form that express a general truth. There can be exceptions. And if you go through the bible there are all sorts of verses that clearly indicate there are exceptions to this. Now let us look at a few of them. Proverbs 3:9 and 10,

9 Honour the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your produce;
10 then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.

When I first graduated from seminary, I was a pastor in North Dakota, so all I would have to do is drive along the country roads and look who had good barns and I’d say, “These people ??? Lord.” And a barn disrepair, “Sinners here” and go on that way.

Now the fact is, you and I know that there are some godly people, things haven’t worked out for. And there are also ungodly people that everything seems to work perfectly. It is not always like that, but it is a general rule. It allows for exceptions. But in 10:3 and 4,

3 The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry, but he thwarts the craving of the wicked.
4 A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.

There are some exceptions to that. There are some people who work very very hard, so have two jobs, full-time and they are trying to keep things together so that their family can survive. They are not slack in their work.

But isn’t it generally true that people who work hard do better than people who are lazy?

Wouldn’t you want to tell your son and daughter, “If you work out, it will work out, you will do alright?” One of the great things about our country, if you work hard, its alright. You will do well. Now there can be exceptions, but that does not destroy the general rule.

Proverbs teach a general rule. 13:21, we will look at the other side in a minute.

21 Misfortune pursues sinners, but prosperity rewards the righteous.

Its generally true. Lifestyles do affect what happens to people, but there again are exceptions.

15:1,

A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

That – generally true as well. Sometimes a soft answer doesn't do any good. Generally good.

22:6, still up there. You can actually look at verse 4 as well.

4 The reward for humility and fear of the Lord is riches and honour and life.

Ah for some, it doesn't quite turn out that way. Then you have,

6 Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray.

Generally true. You know it's a tragic thing to see as a pastor and as a friend, people who are botching up raising their children and you just know ... you are not keeping your word to them. You say you are going to discipline them, but the discipline is never forth coming. Or you promised them to do something, you don't do something. You know this is going to end up disastrously and it does. You just worry about that. Train them in the right way and generally come out real well.

22:16,

16 Oppressing the poor in order to enrich oneself, and giving to the rich, will lead on

There are some people that do very well oppressing the poor, but general truth. Now you have in the teachings of our Lord also Proverbs. He uses proverbs in numerous occasions. Matthew 6:21,

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart will be also.

Now isn't that a nice succinct way of saying it. You can have sermons for 30 minutes on tithing or something like that. Doesn't quite hit it like this proverb. Where your treasure is, that is where your heart is. That's the problem with a lot of love of money. Very succinct. Very well put.

26:52,

52 ... for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.

Ahh... some people have done well as mercenaries or something like that. But if you read that in a church after World War II in Germany, how many people do you think in the congregation would have said "Nah. Its not true." Wouldn't they have said, "Yes. We took the sword and perished by it"? It happens. And that's the general rule.

There can be exceptions occasionally, and that's the general rule. There can be exceptions occasionally but that's the general rule. Luke 16:10,

10 'Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much.

Great. I have one I haven't put up here. I want you to read. I want you to teach your young people in church – if you are working with young people. 1 Cor. 15:33,

33Do not be deceived: 'Bad company ruins good morals.'

33Do not be deceived: 'Bad company ruins good morals.'

One of my close friends and colleagues in Minnesota had a teen age son and he was hanging around with bad company and so his friends said, "I know where there is a warehouse. Let us steal some skis." They broke into the warehouse and stole some ski equipment and they said to him, "Your father has a bigger garage than ours. Why don't we store it in your garage?" He is not only not wise in choosing friends, he is not too bright in some ways. Well it was discovered and the interesting thing was, the other two kids were minors and they were essentially dismissed. He had to appear before the judge and the judge said "This is the first time this has happened to you and so I am going to put you on a year probation and so many hours of community service."

And then he looked at him and then he said, "But I want to tell you something. If you don't get some new friends, you are going to get into serious trouble." The judge knew that bad company ruins good morals. And he was hanging around with bad company.

So what is a proverb?

A proverb is a short pithy saying that expresses a general truth. A general truth. There can be exceptions but it is generally true. The exceptions do not refute it. It is true despite the exceptions. The exceptions – but exceptions that prove the rule.

Now these proverbs generally come from wise people who have observed carefully the world around them. And that's why a proverb is not limited to the Bible. There were Egyptian proverbs, Greek proverbs. Every society has a group of proverbs. They are handy ways of teaching basic wise rules for life that have been passed on down through the families.

Have any of you heard proverbs from your parents? Can you think of it?

Student: One bad apple spoils the bunch.

Dr. Stein: Yeah. One bad apple spoils the bunch. A penny saved is a penny earned – something like that.

Student: Nothing good happens after midnight.

Dr. Stein: Nothing good happens after midnight. Alright.

Student: One apple a day keeps the doctors away.

Dr. Stein: An apple a day keeps the doctor away. Ok. All sorts of proverbs like that.

My mother shared a proverb in German with me. ??? What one doesn't have in the head, one must have in his legs. I remember that every time I come to a class like this and I realize I left something in the office. I say, if you don't have any brains, you have to make it up in your legs that way.

The unfortunate thing about the proverbs is that when your mind is clear and you don't need your legs, you have good legs and when your mind is going, then your legs are usually going. So it doesn't always help that way. So – short pithy saying. General truth.

Student: ???

Dr. Stein: Sure. Sure. They are general rules for life as to wise living. And many of them have a general aspect that anybody can find access to. If I were a pastor today I would have in my bulletin, things every week I'd have a proverb from the book of Proverbs. Probably have a catechetical question and answer or something like that. I'd do a number of things. But I think I'd regularly have a proverb in there. They are great ways of teaching people.

Having said this, what is the difference between a proverb in our Bible and a proverb in the Egyptian book of wisdom or in the other wise observations made in the world? What I would suggest is that the difference between a biblical proverb and a proverb that is not inspired is that the biblical proverb has been formed by wise people who filter their observations of life around them through the filter of Scripture and the Word of God, so that they bring with them a God-given sense of reality in the world around them and as they observe they observe the world through that God-given filter. A so they have a better understanding and thus a better proverb results.

For example, years ago when Alexander Solzhenitsyn was finally released from Russian in the gulag in which he had been a prisoner for years, he came to America and was involved in a series of lectures. And after one lecture somebody in the group said to him, "Professor Solzhenitsyn, have you ever heard the proverb 'Better Red than dead'?" And Alexander Solzhenitsyn looked at him and said, "That's a terrible thing to say. We also have a proverb in Russia, 'Better dead than a scoundrel.'"

I would suggest that the second one is filtered more through the biblical understanding of reality than the first and the writers of the proverbs in Scripture bring with them that understanding of Scripture that helps them observe nature in light of that.

Now one of the books that I have had trouble in understanding for many years was the book of Job and the reason I have problems with this book was that I know Job's comforters are not doing something right. But every time I read them they seem to be saying good things.

What they are saying – yeah – I mean they are quoting proverbs, who can argue against these proverbs?

Job 4:7-9, this is Eliphaz.

“7 ‘Think now, who that was innocent ever perished? Or where were the upright cut off? 8 As I have seen, those who plough iniquity and sow trouble reap the same. 9 By the breath of God they perish, and by the blast of his anger they are consumed.”

Right on Eliphaz. You are right on. 5:15,

15 But he saves the needy from the sword of their mouth, from the hand of the mighty.
16 So the poor have hope, and injustice shuts its mouth.

Yes. He is right on Job, listen to Eliphaz here. 8:3 and following...

3 Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty* pervert the right? 4 If your children sinned against him, he delivered them into the power of their transgression. 5 If you will seek God and make supplication to the Almighty,* 6 if you are pure and upright, surely then he will rouse himself for you and restore to you your rightful place. 7 Though your beginning was small, your latter days will be very great.

Yeah. Alright – Bildad, you are right on. Now what is the problem in all this?

What they are doing is quoting good proverbs . . . The problem however is that – and here is where for instance I disagree with G.B. Caird. He has kind of a lower view of proverbs and says that the book of Job is an attempt to refute this. I don't this is a refutation of Proverbs. I think it's a refutation of interpreting proverbs as being universal and never allowing an exception.

What the problem is, they are applying a proverb to Job and Job is saying, “Yeah. But that doesn't fit here.” What you are saying is true and I agree with it but it doesn't apply to me. I am not the one that the proverb is talking negatively about in this regard and so here you have an example of proverbs that have been universalized without exception. And all Job is saying, but that's not true in this instance.

He is the exception. He is the person for instance who has raised his child up in the fear and admonition of the Lord and yet that child has become a prodigal. When somebody blames him and says “Well. That's not right. I have tried to raise him in the fear and admonition of the Lord.” It doesn't fit here. It just doesn't work.

The problem of Job's comforters is that they universalize the general truth-like nature of a proverb and that's where their failure comes in. And for the person for instance in the church who has raised their child as best as they have known how and they have drifted away somehow. Instead of clubbing them with a proverb and bringing more guilt upon them, what you say is you know the one thing that you gave to your children that they can never lose. They know where to turn. They know where home is.

And like the prodigal of old, when their world collapses, they at least know how to how to come back to their father. They know the way to the Lord that you taught them and they will never lose that. Lets pray – why don't we pray together? I'll pray with you each week that God in his mercy would bring them to turn around and that they will come back and remember what they have been taught.

Try to encourage them that way by the proverb rather than using it as a club or something like that and hurt them even more.

Simple rule for Proverbs. Proverbs teach general truths. They allow for exceptions. Remember teaching a Sunday school class and some of the people said – you know its always bothered me and it makes perfect sense. Now I understand – yeah. That makes good sense. Sure. Sure. Its is a simple rule.

When you utter a proverb, you don't list the exceptions. You don't say, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it, except in the following instances of course." That's not the way proverbs work. They are short, pithy, general statements that are very useful. Now you can of course make a proverb in a form that it will be universal but lots of time you must allow for an exception.

Student: ??? if we universalize ???

Dr. Stein: It would still be a proverb yeah but. For instance if you say, everything that goes up comes down. Now that's a ... very few exceptions to it.

Student: The reason I ask is ???

Dr. Stein: Yeah. There is no exception to that but there is an exception that all who take the sword shall perish by the sword. Yeah. So that ... as long as you allow for the possibility. Now if the exceptions of the rule - its not a proverb anymore so it's a miscommunication, so generally yeah. That's what happens.

If Proverbs are wise observations about life it shouldn't be surprising to any of us that there would be proverbs in other religious groups in other parts of the world that are very close to what - what we have as well. But I would say that all the proverbs that we have, I would except as being wisdom from godly people who are led by the spirit to record it. I wouldn't say that about all the wisdom in the other groups. Sometimes though – they can observe that. Sure.

There is a general understanding of life that Proverbs deals with. Wise people can look back and make wise observations.

Student: ???

Dr. Stein: Yeah. I think you could say that. What Job's friend is saying is a very good proverb. It is a general truth. The danger of course is that it may not have fit Job in this instance.

End of Lecture 13

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Hermeneutics for Prophecy \(Part 1\)](#)

Alright now we are getting into a little bit more touchy here area. And it has to do with prophecy.

Another genre, Prophetic literature. I have over the years enjoyed starting with an example in the book of Jonah, which indicates something about the way a form of prophecy works and the rules associated with it.

In Jonah 3, you remember the story of Jonah, called by Lord to go to Nineveh to preach to the city and he runs away, goes on board a ship, tries to escape and there is a great storm and they throw him overboard. He is swallowed by a fish and he is regurgitated later on and eventually he goes to Nineveh.

In chapter 3, verse 1,

The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, 2'Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you.' 3So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. 4Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, 'Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!'

Ah but we find in verse 10,

10 When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

Here you have a prophet predicting a prophecy that is not fulfilled. Is Jonah a false prophet? If we were there, should we stone him? Penalty for false prophets. Interesting. Well, Jonah and the people of Nineveh all knew something about prophecy that most of

us did not know – at least I did not know for a long time. And that is that one of the rules of prophecy is that when you preach judgment, if the people repent, the judgment will not take place.

Even when not stated a judgment prophecy assumes that if people repent there will be no judgment. In the Caird book, he has a reference to this. If I can find my reference very quickly I would like to read it. It is very good. Page 56 in the G.B. Caird text.

“Readers of the book of Jonah” – Its about the 6th line at the bottom of the page – “have commonly been preoccupied with problems of marine biology to pay attention to the much more important theological difficulty that Jonah is ordered to prophecy something that does not happen.

“In forty days, Nineveh shall be overthrown.” Chapter 3, verse 4 as McGurney – another writer – has put it. Many things were foretold precisely that they might not come to pass. What we have to decide is whether the prophecy was intended as a prediction or as a warning. If it was a prediction, the plain statement of fact about the future was absolute and was falsified by the event.

If it was a warning, it carried an unexpress condition clause, “unless you repent.”

Now in a later chapter we shall see that it is characteristic of Semitic style to express ideas absolutely and to leave the listener to fill in for himself the implicit qualifications. Now the nice thing about this is that elsewhere in the OT, in another prophetic book – this rule is explicitly referred to. In the book of Jeremiah, chapter 18, verses 5 and following.

5 Then the word of the Lord came to me: 6Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done? says the Lord. Just like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. 7At one moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, 8but if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will change my mind about the disaster that I intended to bring on it. 9And at another moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, 10but if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will change my mind about the good that I had intended to do to it. 11Now, therefore, say ...

And so forth. So you have here explicitly a statement that judgment prophesies if people will repent, will not take place and we find this in Jonah itself. Verse 10 of chapter 3, we read, Let me read it again.

“10 When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.”

“4 But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. 2He prayed to the Lord and said, ‘O Lord! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing.’”

Here we have the reason given why Jonah flees from the Lord. He doesn't go to Nineveh. Why? Not because he is afraid to preach. It is because he knows that if he goes to Nineveh and preaches this message, they may just happen to repent and they won't be judged as a result and frankly he wanted the people of Nineveh to go to Hell. It sounds harsh, but that's what he really believes.

Now please understand – the people of Nineveh, capital of Assyria was a brutal nation. They were the Nazi's of their day. Terribly brutal people. And Jonah believed this nation should experience the wrath and judgment of God because they are evil.

Now if God said to Jonah, "Go and tell the people, 40 days and they will be destroyed and if he knew that there was no possibility, that even if they repented that would be, that would be undone. He would not have fled away. He would have run all the way to Tarshish. He would have run to the city walls, climbed up and said, "40 days from now, you are going to be destroyed and there is nothing you can do about it and it makes me happy."

But he knew there was this was this rule in this game of Prophecy and that is repentance undoes the threat of judgment. I mean why tell people anyhow that you are going to be destroyed unless implicit in that is, unless you repent. Why tell people judgment is coming if in some way there is nothing they can do to avert it." It assumes that possibility.

And Jonah was frightened by the thought, not frightened but maybe unhappy with the thought that if he went, they might repent and judgment would not take place. And therefore he did not want to go. Now there are other examples of this. In the Book of Micah 3, verse 12, we have another example of this kind of thing taking place. Where we read, a prophecy

12 Therefore because of you Zion shall be ploughed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height.

And that does not take place because the people repent. And you have another example at 1 Kings 21:21-29. So a basic rule of prophecy: Prophecies of judgment assume whether stated or not, if the people repent, judgment will not take place.

Let me just ask you. How many of you did not know that before class? Well people in Jonah's day knew that. So you don't have to repeat that. It is understood this way. But we have to relearn some of the rules involved in this kind of literary form of a judgment prophecy.

Alright let me just stop there and see any comments or questions so far.

Student: Are they all this category?

Dr. Stein: I would think you could say that. Yes. Any judgment prophecy assumes that if you can repent, that if you repent, it won't take place. There may be instances however in which the Prophet knows from God that the people will not repent, therefore the judgment will come. But hypothetically if they repented which they won't, the judgment will be stayed nonetheless.

Student: So as an example, the book of Nahum,

Dr. Stein: Tyre, Sidon sure. Sure. And the – the great apocalyptic end of the world, “Jerusalem! Jerusalem! How often would I have gathered you into my arms, but now judgment has coming upon you.” Yeah. If they still repented in time it would not have taken place. In the mind of God, now if you argue from the mind of God, He knows if it is conditional or if it is absolute, but we don’t. Many times a prophet may not.

Although I think Jeremiah has a pretty good idea that the judgment is coming because the people will not repent. But hypothetically if they did repent, it wouldn’t come.

Student: Same thing holds true for [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: You would also have to start pressing the language that God really is repenting at this time. So it is not a matter of His knowledge, but His morality that is coming to play here or something like this.

I think what you have to do is to look at the language and say from “What we are doing is that we are interpreting what God is doing from the perspective of how we would look at things. He changed His mind or something like that.”

Student: Does God’s mind really change or is it just the action of the people [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: Depends on if you know God is omniscient and knows all things which I believe. So I think that what we have here is the length – how do you describe God and how He acts except by analogy with how we understand things. So from the description you would say, “Huh. He repented. He changed His mind.” But what simply happened was that the prophecy which He knew was open, people repented as He knew they would and it looks like now by not having the judgment, God changed His mind from our human perspective.

Alright, well lets look then at another rule of prophecy and this has to do with the language of prophecy. The language of prophecy. In the book of Isaiah 13, I want to read verse 9 through 11. Now don’t bother following at this point, just listen to this and try to think what are we talking about here.

9 See, the day of the Lord comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the earth a desolation, and to destroy its sinners from it. 10 For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light. 11 I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pride of the arrogant, and lay low the insolence of tyrants.

Now if you read that in your church Sunday, how would the people who heard this understand it? What would they be thinking of? It is a prophecy about what? The end of the world right? Now why would they come to that conclusion? Lack of it sometimes yeah. The cosmic language right?

You have here “the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light.” But that doesn’t look like a daily occurrence. “The sun will be dark at its rising. The moon will not shed its light.” I mean these cosmic kinds of things involve the end. It has to be the end of history as we know it.

Well. Now the question comes up. If you look at the context, there are some things about this that are very very different, because the chapter opens,

“The oracle concerning Babylon that Isaiah son of Amoz saw.” Its about Babylon here supposedly. Not only that, you have in verse 19 once again,

19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the splendour and pride of the Chaldeans, will be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them.

Now let me ask you something. When Isaiah spoke and mentioned the word Babylon, what would his readers in the norms of language have understood Babylon to be? Babylon right? Not a cold [Hard to Hear] but Babylon. The kingdom up north. Later which Nebuchadnezzar will come down from and so forth on a Tigris, Euphrates rivers and so forth.

Further more in verses 17 and 18,

17 See, I am stirring up the Medes against them, who have no regard for silver and do not delight in gold. 18 Their bows will slaughter the young men; they will have no mercy on the fruit of the womb; their eyes will not pity children.

Medes – what does that refer to? A people in modern day Iran, who are enemies of the Babylonians. Furthermore they were noted for their archery, their bows and that’s particularly referred to.

So I think that Isaiah’s readers would say, this is a prophecy about the Babylonian Empire. But that raises a problem and the problem is this cosmic language. What are we going to do with that? What are we going to do?

Well. As I was working my way through this, I thought, “Aha. Let me look up a concordance and see where the expression, “sun not giving its light, the moon turning to blood, stars falling from heaven” – that kind of language is found in the Bible.

I want to see how do the Biblical writers use such language and understand it. So I got my concordance. I looked up passages and I began to find lots of places where the sun is turning to blood, the moon is not giving its light, the stars are falling from Heaven. It seemed to be a fairly regular occurrence in the OT, and so as I looked them I found passage such as Jeremiah 4. Jeremiah 4 verses 23 to 28, read this way,

23 I looked on the earth, and lo, it was waste and void; and to the heavens, and they had no light. 24 I looked on the mountains, and lo, they were quaking, and all the hills moved to and fro. 25 I looked, and lo, there was no one at all, and all the birds of the air had fled. 26 I looked, and lo, the fruitful land was a desert, and all its cities were laid in ruins before the Lord, before his fierce anger.

27 For thus says the Lord:

The whole land shall be a desolation;

yet I will not make a full end. 28 Because of this the earth shall mourn, and the heavens above grow black; for I have spoken, I have purposed; I have not relented nor will I turn back.

Well now if you look at the context of this in chapter 4, we have verse 3,

3 For thus says the Lord to the people of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem ...
Verse 5,

5 Declare in Judah, and proclaim in Jerusalem, and say ...

Verse 11,

11 At that time it will be said to this people and to Jerusalem ...

What we have here is a description of Jeremiah's prophecy about the destruction of Jerusalem. But you have that same language once again.

The earth is becoming black. Stars and heavens, mountains shaking and so forth and so on. Now we haven't talked yet about poetry. We do so next week. But notice that in this passage in Jeremiah in my Bible, you have a lot of broken [Hard to Hear] not solid black. Right? And in the Isaiah was it the same way? So what we have here is poetry.

And we have to realize that what the prophets are, are poetic prophets as they speak. This is the language of the prophets – the language of poetry. Notice that there are other kinds of examples of this cosmic terminology, going back to Isaiah 24, verse 23, you have another kind of. Here you have Isaiah talking again about, verse 24, 1 now

1 Now the Lord is about to lay waste the earth and make it desolate,

It occurs after the prophecy or oracle concerning Tyre. And then in verse 23 you have that same language again.

23 Then the moon will be abashed, and the sun ashamed; for the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his elders he will manifest his glory.

Back to Jeremiah 15:9. Here you have Jeremiah, verse 5,

5 Who will have pity on you, O Jerusalem, or who will bemoan you?

Then it says verse 9,

9 She who bore seven has languished; she has swooned away; her sun went down while it was yet day; she has been shamed and disgraced. And the rest of them I will give to the sword before their enemies, says the Lord.

Here again you have that cosmic language.

Ezekiel, chapter 32, verses 7 and 8. Here you have context, verse 1,

In the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me: 2Mortal, raise a lamentation over Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say to him: You consider yourself a lion among the nations, but you are like a dragon in the seas; you thrash about in your streams, trouble the water with your feet, and foul your* streams. 3 Thus says the Lord God: In an assembly of many peoples I will throw my net over you; and I* will haul you up in my dragnet. 4 I will throw you on the ground, on the open field I will fling you, and will cause all the birds of the air to settle on you, and I will let the wild animals of the whole earth gorge themselves on you. 5 I will strew your flesh on the mountains, and fill the valleys with your carcass.* 6 I will drench the land with your flowing blood up to the mountains,

Now historically, one of the hopes of Jerusalem was that when Babylon was coming down to invade Jerusalem, they would be rescued by the Egyptians – the Egyptians led by Pharaoh Neco were leading an army up at this point.

Let me have an aside for a minute. In the Mediterranean world – that's Greece by the way. Here is Egypt. Here you have. People of Israel hate the name Palestine, because that means the land of the Philistines. But here is Israel by the way. And over here is Babylon. Tigris. Euphrates River.

Other times there was Assyria and so forth. Usually Egypt was powerful and there would be a powerful northern kingdom of some sort. In between the powerful north and the powerful south, there is this land of Israel. Now if you have a powerful north, you want to control Israel because any enemy from the south has to go through Israel. So why don't they just come over here?

Over the centuries people have learned to like to drink water once in a while and that's not the way to go. This is the great desert of Saudi Arabia, so all travel has to go this way. And there are limited number of valleys that you have that are passable and if you control that area, you can put fortresses on those – on the mountains over those valleys and you know – they may not have been as smart as we are, but they knew that if you were in the top of the mountains throwing rocks down, it was better than throwing rocks up.

And so you wanted to dominate them. And so if Egypt was strong, it wanted to dominate here and what happens now is Babylon is powerful and is coming down this way and Egypt – we are not let them come all the way down to Egypt before we fight. We are going to fight them in the valleys where we can defeat them.

And what happens is, the people of Israel, of Judah in particular during the time of Nebuchadnezzar are looking for help from Pharaoh Neco and this prophecy is about the destruction of Pharaoh Neco - Pharaoh, King of Egypt, verse 2.

In the particular passage, notice the language that's used to describe this in verses 7 and 8, verse 6,

6 I will drench the land with your flowing blood
up to the mountains,
and the watercourses will be filled with you.
7 When I blot you out, I will cover the heavens,
and make their stars dark;
I will cover the sun with a cloud,
and the moon shall not give its light.
8 All the shining lights of the heavens
I will darken above you,
and put darkness on your land,
says the Lord God.

Again cosmic language being used to describe this event. Two more references and then we will have a break. The Joel passages – well we will look a little more at a different time later. Amos 8:9, notice the cosmic language used here in this judgment prophecy.

9 On that day, says the Lord God, I will make the sun go down at noon, and darken the earth in broad daylight.

Finally back through 11 there are others, but this will do.

Habakkuk 3:11,

10 The mountains saw you, and writhed; a torrent of water swept by; the deep gave forth its voice. The sun raised high its hands;

11 the moon stood still in its exalted place, at the light of your arrows speeding by, at the gleam of your flashing spear.

12 In fury you trod the earth,

And so forth. So you have again cosmic kinds of language. Now what I am going to suggest and we will take a break and we will discuss it at that point. I want to suggest that what the prophetic poet is trying to say when he uses language like this is to say, the God of Heaven and Earth – the God who controls the planets, the stars, the sun and the moon, this God is going to act. These are signs that this God of the Heavens will bring judgment upon the nations. His readers all understood that this was the use of poetic language – symbolic language, but it had a truth – judgment, horrible judgment was coming.

The description of that judgment might use apocalyptic cosmic language. It might use this poetically – shouldn't be understood literally. But what it is indicating should be understood literally and that is God is bringing judgment. Judgment is going to take place.

End of Lecture 14

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Hermeneutics for Prophecy \(Part 2\)](#)

Turn with me to Exercise and vocabulary, number four. We are using the terminology found in Stein and Basic Guide to interpreting the Bible, Chapter 2. Describe what people mean when they say the following:

1) The form of this verb means that this sentence is either a statement in the present tense or a present imperative.

The norms of language deals with a form of the Greek verb which form-wise, the present tense and the present imperative in a second person plural is identical.

2) The name Caesarea Philippi in the same must be part of the tradition before Mark wrote this account in his Gospel. Subject matter right? What was the tradition like about this material? Has nothing to do with meaning, implication or something of that nature.

3) Not to commit adultery means not to lust. Implication.

Student: [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: I would have to think about that. Interpretation, I could see where you are coming from. I had in mind implication however.

What man meant by you cannot serve God and mammon is that a person cannot serve God and things. Interpretation. You are expressing your understanding of what Mark meant by these words. What Jesus meant by you cannot serve God and mammon is that a person cannot serve God and things.

Student: Subject matter

Dr. Stein: Subject matter. Good. Ok. We are getting pretty good at that aren't we?

Student: Just a [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: Alright

Student: What is different then about 5 and 4?

Dr. Stein: 5 and 4 deals with the author of the book. 5 is a character in the book.

6) It is expected that at point in this letter, Paul would give a thanks giving or a prayer.

Genre. Literary genre. Good.

The principle which Paul ... which Peter seeks to teach here is that if Christians are to suffer, it should not be due to their own sins. Interpretation. You are interpreting what Peter meant.

I know what the word means, but I just don't get it.

Student: [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: Understanding would be the one I am thinking of. I don't get it. I don't understand it. I know what the word means, but I don't understand what it means in combination or something.

Let me try to say this in another way. Interpretation, you are giving another verbal expression of your understanding. Interpretation.

This event took place in the context of the great political upheaval of the 1st century.

Student: Subject matter.

Dr. Stein: Subject matter – yes or no?

Alright that is a volitional issue – significance.

Is swearing allegiance to the flag part of giving to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar?

Student: [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: Implication.

13. As a Jew and former Pharisee, Paul must have thought that the death of the Messiah was absurd.

Dr. Stein: [Hard to Hear]

Student: [Hard to Hear]

When people say I just don't get it – aren't they expressing that they don't understand it?

Student: Wouldn't a guy that says "I understand that Jesus hung on a cross, but I just don't get why that a ..."

Dr. Stein: My mental axe [Hard to Hear] as I was writing to save him. What I am thinking of is somebody saying, I know what this word means in a sentence, but I don't understand the sentence. See that that's what I was thinking. The exam examples will be clearer than that, be assured of that. Don't put that too far away, we may have time to do number five later on.

How about questions with what we talked about so far in the cosmic terminology? Is it make sense to you? Yes?

Getting wired up so much nowadays that one of these days my nose is going to glow from radioactivity or something like that.

Hopefully - this will do a little better? OK. I will talk a little more loudly too. Alright, any comments, questions on the use of cosmic language?

Now if somebody were to say to me, "Are you saying we shouldn't take these words literally?" Well the way the Reformers talked about the literal sense of a text, they meant,

what the author meant and that absolutely I want you to take literally. What the author means by this language, but he doesn't mean the language to be taken literally but what the language is expressing – God's judgment for instance on these nations. That you need to take literally. Ok? Yeah.

Student: [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: Misinterpretation or something like that.

Student: That's not always the case that it [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: Yeah. You might say wooden literalism. Some people might say something like that. Again you are trying to understand what the author meant. You have to understand how does the author use this language. Needless to say when Paul argues in Romans, he uses language very literally. But we are going to look at later on, some of the language of Jesus.

Jesus very seldom seems to talk very literally. So [Hard to Hear] have to use very picturesque poetic language. "If your right eye offend you pluck it out." I don't think there have been many Christians that – who have taken that very literally over the centuries. I have never known of a Christian group be known as the left-eye-followers-of-Jesus or something like that, you know.

{laughter}

So common sense helps you on some of those things right.

Student: Dr. Stein, you think then considering our culture, the interpretation of the Bible has become more difficult for our nation and our culture [Hard to Hear] technologically and informative writing ...

Dr. Stein: Yeah. Absolutely.

Student: You know we deal with people in the congregation that have had no training in figurative languages at all and they are bombarded day in and day out like technical language...

Dr. Stein: We are not in the world of the poets any longer. We are in the land of scientific terminology and exactness, precision, literal terminology and so forth and so on. That does create problems and some of bring with us a view of inspiration that causes the problem. That is a scientifically accurate record.

Well. I think it is accurate in what the author means to say, but it is not a scientifically written account using the language of today's scientist. So that we have to say what the author meant, that I take as the word of God without error. When he talks about the four corners of the earth, that is a figurative expression. What he means is all over. The

gathering of the lost sheep of Israel from the four corners of the earth means, from all over the world they will be coming in. It is not trying to make a scientific statement.

So I am afraid that we tend to read scientifically this material and lose sight of the fact that you ought to read it more like a poet would read it, because these are poets and in those sections where we had poetry of course.

Let me just give a general warning to you. If you ever see a book on Hermeneutics written by an engineer, don't buy it. I say that. My two sons are engineers, by the way. But I am just saying that there is a different mentality that engineers bring to their work than that Isaiah and Jeremiah wanted to bring.

And when we talked more about the kind of language, we talked about affective language versus referential language. Referential language is passing on information but the other kind of language seems to appeal to our emotions and scientific language doesn't do that very well. Poetic exaggerated figurative language does that very very well.

Just think for a minute, describe you love to somebody using just pure scientific terminology. You are dead. Dead in the water. You need something like the language of the poets, the language of the prophets and so forth.

Alright now let's look at another passage – group of passages near. I want us to look at Isaiah 11:1-9. It's a beautiful passage, one that has been read many times.

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
2 The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
3 His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;
4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
5 Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

Dr. Stein: Now pay attention.

6 The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,

and a little child shall lead them.
7 The cow and the bear shall graze,
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
8 The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
9 They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.

Now when we get to chapter 35, that idyllic scene is described somewhat differently. 35,
1 and 2

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus 2 it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.

Verse 8

8 A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveller, not even fools, shall go astray.
9 No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.
10 And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Then one other reference here that I don't have listed, and that is chapter 65, verse 25,

25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,
the lion shall eat straw like the ox;
but the serpent—its food shall be dust!
They shall not hurt or destroy

on all my holy mountain,
says the Lord.

Dr. Stein: I got a question for you. In this blissful paradise, are there going to be lions there or not? Well. In 11 they are there. But they had been domesticated. In chapter 35, they are not there. In chapter 65, there has been a revival and they have come back again.

Now what is going on here?

Well. Here is a scene, a picture. What is true in all three instances is each picture is showing the same reality. In the first picture, the reality of the peaceful bliss is being described by saying, the wild animals will no longer be wild. They will be domesticated, so lion and lamb can lie together. You could put your hand over the cobra's den and you don't have to worry about it. The bear and the cow, they graze together. Peace, killing and death no more.

The next picture shows peace – tranquility, because all the wild animals are removed. That is another way of describing it. And then you go back to the original picture in 65, same thing, now you have wild animals are domesticated again. What each of these scenes is portraying is identical. There is no conflict between them. It is not like you have three different authors of Isaiah and the first one liked the wild animals, that's what we are going to have in glory. The other one says I don't like any animals. There will be none in glory. I am allergic to them or something like that and the next one, the third one says, I do like animals, there are going to be animals there and they are confused.

Hey look. I don't care if there are 65 Isaiah's that wrote it. The last person who put it together had enough brains to know, that these either conflict or don't conflict and he didn't think they conflicted with another. He understood that they portray the same scene. The author's meaning in all of them are the same.

Peaceful bliss in the hereafter. How you describe it? Free to do it in various ways. The literal meaning, they agree. Identical. Different ways of describing it. Different ways of describing it.

Now let me go on to some other material on prophecy. And let's talk a little about first of all the book of Revelation. Let me turn to the 21st chapter of the book of Revelation, which has this wonderful picture of the glory to come. In chapter 21,

“I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.”

I like lakes and the shore. The sea was a terrifying thing in the ancient world. A storm at sea in the fragile wooden boats that they had was a nightmare so it was always a threat. You won't have a sea to worry about anymore.

2I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Now as we have this description, notice in verse 17, here you have the angel measuring the walls, the city's four square, nice even, geometrical pattern and you say the city was 1,500 miles and the length and width and height are equal.

And he measured the walls, a 144 cubits by human measurement. Alright well two hundred and thirty feet or so. Two hundred and thirty feet, why does he say that the wall is two hundred and thirty feet think? What is being portrayed by this? Security.

Have you ever looked at ancient walls? I mean if you had a 10 foot wall. That's pretty good. If you had a 20 foot wall – this wall is 230 feet thick. You think you are going to batter your way through that? No way. You don't have to worry. Heaven is peaceful. It's safe. It has great thick walls. Now in verse 12 and 13, it talks about there being 12 gates. That's strange, because the gate was always the weakest part of the city.

It's why they had special gates to try to fortify it but the walls were much harder to breach than the gates and somehow having 12 of them, it might be nice to have the names of each apostle on it or makes it a little less secure to me but then in verse 25,

25 Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there.

What in the world is the value of 230 wall if you leave the gates open all the time. It makes no sense. Well. It makes no sense if you are thinking like a scientist or a military strategist. But if you are thinking about what the author is trying to teach from, it makes perfectly good sense. Each one of them teaches the same thing. If you have thick walls, you have security. If you leave the gates open all the time, you have security. So all of them reinforce the same view of the security of Heaven. You don't have to worry about invasion. There is peace. We are safe with God. We have thick walls. We don't even need to have the gates closed each time.

So you have the writer using different images to get the same point across. And you have all of this kind of imagery used and ... you say well, "What do you make of these?" Well. [Hard to Hear] The streets are made of gold.

Why does he say that?

Well. It is because the streets are made of gold. No. Actually, the streets in Heaven are made of aluminum, but we don't have any of that in this planet. It is much better than gold.

How can you describe that which is other-worldly except by this worldly terminology?

How do you describe the preciousness of Heaven? If you had a few gold coins, that was a treasure for you. “Hey. Where I am going, we pave our streets with that stuff.” The preciousness of Heaven is being described.

So you have the symbolic use of all of this imagery, not to describe actually for an architect, the plans and the building material ... actually gold is a lousy substance to have on streets. Its very soft. Aluminum though is real tough.

So, you have this way of describing things here. Let me give an anecdote. The Dean who hired me to teach for my first job at Bethel College was Virgil Olsen. Later on Virgil Olsen became the executive secretary of the Foreign mission board of the Baptist General Conference.

Oh about. Must have been about 25 years later after he had hired me, he and I met each other at the cafeteria. He was eating and he said, “Come on over Bob.” And we sat down and talked. He had just returned from Ethiopia. At the time Ethiopia was a communist dominated country and the church was a persecuted minority. Great persecution of the Christians in Ethiopia at the time.

So I asked how things were going and over there and he was excited ... said there is a vibrant church. Persecution seemed to actually help the church to grow. Like one of the early church Fathers said, “the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.” And then he talked a little and he said, “Hey Bob. You know. I asked somebody there, ‘What were their favorite two books of the Bible?’” And they told me that their favorite two books of the Bible – “Can you guess what they are Bob?”

And I said “Well, probably one of the Gospel or probably John would be one and they need something with good theological basis – Romans. How about John and Romans?”

And he said, “No. You are wrong.”

“They are Revelation and Daniel.”

And I gulped and that was exactly my reaction. So I asked them, “Why are these your favorite two books?” They told me, “We like these books because God wins in the end.” Then I knew that they had a much better understanding of Revelation than most of these TV preachers.”

God wins at the end. That’s what you find in the book of Revelation, not charts of the End Times. God wins. And for people like the book of Revelation who perhaps are going to die for their faith, they want to read that God wins in the end and if you endure and are faithful, you will live with them. They are not saying as they are lining up to be shot, “By the way, do you have pencil and paper? I want to chart out these events, I am just reading about.”

[Hard to Hear] And I think we need to emphasize that in that in the book of Revelation. God wins. That's important. So that's the heart of the book of Revelation. Very quick survey of it I gave you.

Let me go now to a couple of passages in the New Testament that talk about prophesy, that raises a different kind of problem. One of them is the book of Acts, chapter 2, Acts chapter 2. These events take place on the day of Pentecost as 2:1 says. The Spirit of God comes upon the church as Jesus had promised in 1:8 and they speak in foreign languages, people are saying they are drunk. Others are saying, no that's not true. And then in verse 14 and following, Peter explains this event,

“14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: ‘Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say.
15 Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning.’”

Now what he is not saying is “You know if had been 6 pm, we might be drunk but its too early.” But [Hard to Hear] saying “You know it can’t be that. Its too early in the morning for drunkenness. It has to be a different explanation.” Technically that would be an ad hominem argument or something like that.

16 No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

17 “In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.

18 Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;
and they shall prophesy.”

If he had quit at that point, most exegetes would be very happy but he goes on.

19 And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

20 The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day.

21 Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Now. I have seen a number of commentaries, Bible footnotes and so forth that say something like, “In verses 17 and 18 about the coming of the Spirit, that was fulfilled. Verses 19, 20 and 21 will be fulfilled in the future, in the end times.” There is a problem with that, because what Peter is saying is not this is kind of like what the prophet Joel said. This is the fulfillment of what Joel said. And you say well I can understand 17 and 18 taking place, but what of 19 and 20.

Well, 19 and 20 are the kind of cosmic language that again talks about God acting. God acts in history and he is acting now in a new era. He is bringing about in a new way, the Promises ... a new covenant is begun. A major leap has taken place in salvation history. And God now is bringing His Spirit to all flesh in fulfillment to what Joel has said. And the cosmic signs here that are associated with it, simply indicates God is bringing this great thing about.

If you have trouble in understanding that, and saying it has to have a literal fulfillment, the question is wait a minute. Some would say, "Well. There is a double fulfillment. There is a double fulfillment because verses 15, the earlier verses that [Hard to Hear] verses 17 and 18, they were fulfilled in Peter's day, but in verses 19 and 20 and 21, that will be fulfilled in a later day."

In some ways verses 18, 19 and 20 have to refer to what is going on in Pentecost. He doesn't jump and say well, "Yeah. But also sometime centuries later, this other thing is going to happen." This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel and He reads all five verses here. I think for Luke these promises, promise of Joel, is the fulfillment of what is taking place at the Day of Pentecost.

Once again you have this kind of cosmic language being used to describe God acting in history. There are other kinds of prophecies that Luke the author also gives, that have to be interpreted this way. Let us now turn to His Gospel in chapter 3 verses 4 through 6,

Here John the Baptist is speaking,

'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

"Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight.

5 Every valley shall be filled,

and every mountain and hill shall be made low,

and the crooked shall be made straight,

and the rough ways made smooth;

6 and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." '

This is His explanation of what His mission is right now. Now right away you know that there were no major geographical changes that took place in the land of Israel. It didn't become a flat Manitoba plain. There are still valleys and hills and so forth. But you have to understand the language. What it means when it says, "... make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low..."

Make straight means make it easy. Every valley being filled means the path is easy to travel. Every hill and mountain made low, well there is of a language in which he uses that same terminology. Keep your finger back here but turn to Luke 14:11,

11 For all who exalt themselves will be made low, and those who humble themselves – those who become low - will be exalted.'

Same word is used here. And then you go to Chapter 18 verse 16, once again you have the same thing.

14 ... this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be brought low, but all who bring themselves low will be exalted.'

Its picturesque language and he says, "Every valley shall be filled, every mountain and hill shall be made low..." There is a turning around. The meek, the low and the poor being raised up and the exalted are being brought low. "the rough places made smooth, the crooked places made straight" and so forth and so on. This is poetic language for what's happening. The world is being turned on its head.

Those you expected to enter the KOG are not. And those that you always counted are entering. The poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, the meek, they are entering. The publicans, and the sinners, the tax collectors and all. Those who you did expect, the religious elite, they are not entering and this is the language that the poet uses to describe that kind of thing.

Turn with me to chapter 4, verse 18 and following. Here is Jesus' speech as He begins His ministry.

18 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives – Now think of that – release to the captives,

the recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
19 to proclaim the year of the Lord.'

Now "release to the captives," do you know anything in the ministry of Jesus in which prisoners are liberated from prison.

Let me read to you the other places where this word released is found. It is found in 1:77

to give knowledge of salvation to his people
by the release of their sins.

The word is "forgiveness" there.

In 3:3,

"... He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the release of sins."

24:47,

"...and that repentance and release of sins - or forgiveness - is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem."

Acts 2:38, Acts 5:31, Acts 10:43, Acts 13:38, Acts 26:18 ...

In every other instance, the word means forgiveness.

So when you get back to our verse here, I think what the expression "release to the captives" means forgiveness of sins to those who are the oppressed of sin. When you go to recovery of sight to the blind, here I think is one miracle of healing a blind person in Luke, but that expression is used elsewhere. In 1:78,

"By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace."

In 3:6,

"and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

Now in Acts 26 written by the same author who probably thinks very much like the author of Luke. In Acts 26, Paul, in verses 15 through 18 says, when he talks about his conversion,

15 I asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The Lord answered, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 16 But get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you. 17 I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles — to whom I am sending you 18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."

I have sent you, recovering of sight to the blind, the forgiveness of sins, three of those terms found here in Acts 26:15 to 18 are found in Luke 4:18 to 21. So what we have is the use of metaphorical language to describe the mission of forgiveness, making easy the way of the Lord and the like.

I think again, it is a very useful way of speaking and interpreting the message of God. Figurative language. Figurative language. Think for a minute whenever you see that, how would you explain it in non-figurative language and you would find that even if you could, it would be very drab and very blah to say the least. That's the strength of this kind of language.

Alright I am pretty much all prophesied out as to my wisdom. Its about all I really know. Questions. Yes. Way back.

Student: [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: Alright. Let me give one example that I think I have worked out because the others I am not too sure of. Lets see. Ok. Now where is it – Out of Egypt I have called my Son. Yeah. Here it is. In Matthew 2, “14Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, 15and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, ‘Out of Egypt I have called my son.’”

Now, in Hosea, this prophesy, “Out of Egypt I have called my Son” I think is a clear reference to the Exodus under Moses. How can that then be a prophesy as to God calling His Son Jesus out of Egypt and bringing Him back to the Promised Land? Might I suggest this – that Matthew saw in the Promise, God made to His people, the following pattern of meaning. That God had promised His people, a land called Canaan.

And when under Joseph and Jacob, they went down to Egypt, that promise was such that he knew that he would have to – that they would come back. That God would lead them back. Egypt would not be their permanent home because God has promised this land so that out of Egypt, God would call His Son.

Now if that’s true about the children of Israel, how much more would it be true that if His only begotten Son went to the land of Egypt to escape not famine, but the threat of Herod. How much more would it be true that He also would be brought back. So I would try to say that in what Matthew sees, He sees an implication of the prophesy that was originally referring to the Exodus. That’s the kind of approach I would tend to want to make.

To see if I can see a possible implication. Now there are a lot of them I don’t know. I am really not an Old Testament expert in any sense with regard to some of these Old Testament prophesies, but what I would try to do is to see just as in 1 Cor. 9:9, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it is grinding out the grain” means that oxen should be able to eat from their work, so if that’s true of them, how much more would it be by implication true of those who preach the Gospel living off the Gospel as well. That would be the way, I would try to explain these things.

End of Lecture 15

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Hermeneutics for Prophecy \(Part 3\)](#)

Now sometimes, people raise the question of what they call, a *sensus plenior*. Is it possible that there is a deeper meaning w.r.t. a prophesy that the prophet was not aware of and that the New Testament writer was aware of.

I have two responses to that. The first is that may be true of a New Testament inspired writer, but if so it is always after the fact and it is useless for us to try and do it, because you and I are not inspired. And furthermore without the New Testament writers we would have never interpreted any of these passages that way. So if you realize how the New Testament prophet understands this Old Testament passage and you think you can do that, there is no way. No way I would have come to those conclusions. So it gives me a warning not to try a *sensus plenior* this way.

But the other thing and I think this is even more important. If you talk about a second meaning in Acts 2, that not only the coming of the Spirit but the end time, the cosmological signs refer to something else, the one thing you have to say is that those cosmological signs must at least also in some way apply to the present situation in which the writer Luke and Peter the preacher talks about this being fulfilled now on the Day of Pentecost.

If you once say this passage can in some way refer to what is happening in Pentecost you don't need a *sensus plenior*. The *sensus plenior* is usually to bail us out and say this [Hard to Hear] apply to that. Once you have agreed that in some way it does apply to this but it has a deeper meaning later on, you don't need the later on deeper meaning at all.

Does that make sense? No. Okay.

Alright. I didn't think it might. Makes good sense to me. I think it is brilliant [Hard to Hear] personally.

Alright let me try one more time.

Many times you talk about a *sensus plenior*, a deeper meaning that the Biblical author was not aware of, so that in Acts chapter 2, when Peter is quoting the fulfillment of Joel, he talks about the Holy Spirit having come in fulfillment of Joel and that's true. No problem with that.

But these later cosmic signs he is not aware of, has a deeper meaning where we [Hard to Hear] aware of it that will take place in the end time. However in some way we have to admit, since we are a *sensus plenior* type of people, that those verses do have some relevance for the day of Pentecost. And once you have admitted that, then you say this can be interpreted in light of the day of Pentecost, you don't need a *sensus plenior* for those verses right? And every time you do that, the *sensus plenior* doesn't seem to have any necessity anymore.

Dr. Stein: Your hand has been up.

Student: This is a similar question [Hard to Hear] a verse like 2 Chronicles [Hard to Hear] It seems to me [Hard to Hear] America theologically assumes that this is God's land. [Hard to Hear] It looked to me that things are going to be a lot worse before they get better, [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: I think you are right. It refers primarily back then to that people. But let me suggest that there could be an implication for that. If any time a nation repents and turns to the Lord, the Lord will heal that land. I just think that God was willing to do that with Israel, because it was His people, but I think He would do that for anyone, so that if any nation ever gets to the place where as a nation, they turn to God in this way, I would think that, that would take place. But I think we use that rather flippantly and I am kind of pessimistic about that for my own country.

Sorry but I am.

Student: What do you do with passages in the Old Testament that appear to be pointing to Christ but New Testament authors don't make that connection for you. Are you saved in this [Hard to Hear] that the church has always held or [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: Tend to be very conservative and say that if the New Testament writers lived by the Spirit don't make these clear, I am not so sure that I am right.

Student: And there doesn't appear to be any historical connection. I'm thinking of passages like Isaiah 53 and [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: Yeah, I tend to be conservative on that. I think for instance that Jesus is probably quoting Psalm 22 at His crucifixion, not necessarily that this is the fulfillment of a prophecy, Psalms are not always often that prophetic. I think it reflects His experience and He can identify with it and the implication of what that - the Psalmist experienced, He too is experiencing. That's the way I would look at that.

I think there was a hand here now.

Student: Going back to your [Hard to Hear] Revelation.

Dr. Stein: Goes against everything I had learned when I became a Christian. Not everything but a lot.

Student: Let me give you a scenario and then [Hard to Hear] On a spectrum, one side meaning, this passage means there will be peace in Heaven and this meaning there will be literal walls this thick, and somewhere in the middle meaning there might be a gate in Heaven. How do we understand this? It would seem like if it were just peace in Heaven, commentaries on the Book of Revelation would be 10 pages long and it would serve its point.

Dr. Stein: It would be nice wouldn't it? I tend to be on the extreme that there is peace in Heaven. I think all of the description is an attempt to use emotive language to try to draw us into an understanding – I think Heaven will be the fulfillment of all of our hopes and everything that is good we want, will take place. God has placed something within our hearts that long for this and it will find its fulfillment and then some in Heaven.

Other places talk about the Beatific Vision that you will see God. Faith to turn to sight and so forth. So I think the Book of Revelation is primarily a – an impressionistic painting of what Heaven is going to be like.

I use that illustration by the way in the book, that the Prophets, when they paint pictures for us are not using Kodak 35 mm cameras with very exacting film and showing us a picture. If you go to the old museums in Europe and you go to 16th century art, it is amazing, the detail of the art. You can see this man down the road and he is two miles away and say He is missing a button. I have been told that some of the artists had brushes of a single hair so that be so detailed in it.

Now when you get to the end of the 19th century, art is not like that anymore. Maybe it is because with cameras you don't need to try to simply reduplicate that kind of thing. And there is an impressionistic painting and if you get real close to a 16th century art piece, you can see fine detail, but if you get real close to an impressionistic painting, you see just clumps of paint and you need to get back and look at the impression of that piece of art.

I think prophecy is much more like this impressionistic art than the Kodak 35 mm camera.

Student: What about the Lake of Fire and the New Heaven and the New Earth? Why is he switching back and forth? What you say about the [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: Alright you have the Lake of Fire that is dark. Dark fire. Right away it doesn't fit. What you are doing is talking about the horrors of Hell. And how – a lake of fire portrays that horrible situation. Darkness is bad. So you have a heap of these things. If our idea of Heaven that we have now doesn't match what takes place, what takes place will be a lot better. And if our understanding of Hell doesn't correspond, it will be a lot worse.

So not being able to visualize it exactly doesn't mean that there is no reality out there that we need to be aware of. We need to very much in aware of that. Uh. Your hand in here.

Student: My question [Hard to Hear] in that last slide you have what prophesy means, then you went through those Scripture reference[Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: What I was trying to point out – it didn't mean literally, animals or no animals admit the peace, no less than tranquility of Heaven.

Student: With regard to apocalyptic prophesy you have got groups that say that all of the Book of Revelation or most of it was fulfilled within the year 70 A.D. Then you have a more Dispensational crowd that would say that it is all yet to come or at least when after John is done addressing the churches and then much of 1924 is also futuristic. Given the way the New Testament writers interpreted certain prophesies as near and far fulfillment or a greater or lesser such as the prophesy with Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz and the birth of [Hard to Hear] sign in Isaiah 7. Is there not room for – and later on Matthew uses that to apply the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, where you have got a historical fulfillment in Isaiah's time and then a fulfillment in [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: Are there two separate sensus plenior? Is there something of an implication flowing out of that? I am not an expert in Isaiah now. I would be just talking from the top of my head on those things. I don't have an answer to every prophesy. I am trying to give you something of an overall understanding of the figurativeness of the language. Give you a rule for instance about judgment prophesies that even when they don't say "repentance will nullify that prophesy," it is there. You use some introduction to this kind of genre of prophesy.

If you are asking me to give you an answer to every specific prophesy, you are disappointed. You are doomed that way at this point because I don't know it. It is not my area of expertise. I am just giving you a feel and hopefully you will have some of that.

Now let me - if there is a last question, I will try to entertain it but – yeah. I made no pretension of being an expert in this area.

Why this language? Sun being darkened, moon turning into blood and all these prophesies of judgment. I don't there is an answer you can be dogmatic and say, [Hard to Hear] this way, but let me tell you a little story.

My wife and I when our children were little took a train ride from Minneapolis to St. Paul, all the way across the Rockies to uh, Seattle. And we thought it would be a good experience for the children to do so. Then we took a ferry from Seattle over to Victoria on Vancouver Island and spent some time with my wife's sister and family. On the way back, we took the ferry back, and as we were sitting aboard the ferry, I heard some women on the deck further over talking in German so I went over and I introduced myself to them.

And they said, "Well... what kind of ... what are these things out there?" and there were some porpoises jumping around and we told them about that and so forth. So we began to talk. I said "Where do you come from in Germany?" She said, "I come from Hamburg." And I said, "Oh. Were you in Hamburg in 1943 when the city was bombed so badly?" Hamburg was bombed for one week steady. A 1,000 British bombers would come at night and during the day, a 1,000 American bombers and that went on for 7 days.

And the city experienced what was known as a firestorm which they had never seen before. People would run out into the streets to try to escape the building and the streets

of asphalt were on fire and they would get stuck in it and they would just burn death that way and over a 100,000 people died in the city.

She said, "Oh. Yes. I was there. We lived out a little outside the city." And then she said this, "Do you know that for two weeks, we never saw the sun?"

Is it possible that the scene of judgment on a city is due to the burnings of the city in which the sun and the moon turn to blood when you look at them? And so you have maybe the scene of a war in which a city is destroyed becoming now part of that imagery being used of judgment that way. So, maybe that way, I am not sure. I wouldn't put too much of an emphasis on it. But seemed to have made sense to me in that time.

Alright we have time for using terminology. Five. We will do that and then we will call it a day. My voice is just about shot. Appreciate your bearing with my voice at this time. Thank you.

Alright once again, using terminology in the basic guide. What do people mean when they say the following?

1. Probably Ezekiel was not thinking of this but it seems to be applicable. Implication. Ok.

Paul evidently teaches by these words that even though the Roman Christians were ruled by an unbelieving emperor, they should obey him.

Student: Interpretation.

Dr. Stein: Interpretation. Yeah. Interpretation, not implication. Now why?

Student: [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: Yeah. You are talking about a situation back then. If you were saying something like, "Paul evidently teaches us by these words, I would even if we are ruled by an unbelieving government, we should obey them - that would be an implication. But this is really an interpretation of the words for that specific meaning back then.

The problem with what Paul says here is that it is not very relevant today. Ok. Significance

What does this passage in Acts teach about the early church? Subject matter.

Everyone knows what Paul meant by these words. The problem is what he means by this today. Everyone knows what Paul means by these words. Understanding. Good.

The problem is what he means by this today.

Implication

Another way of saying what James means here is that... Interpretation.

What the Biblical author of this passage tells us is that Jesus is also able to forgive me of my sins if I put my faith in Him.

No. That's subject matter. Implication right.

Notice that we are not talking about what the Biblical author meant for his reader back then but we are getting in to how this relates to us which is an implication.

I know that Paul saw the Lord on the road to Damascus, but how exactly did he see him?

Yeah. Talking about the event.

We are not talking about what Luke is trying to teach by it, we are talking about the event itself. Using the present context this word can mean any of the following.

Student: Norms of language.

Dr. Stein: Norms of language.

Should the following story be interpreted as a myth or as a historical narrative? Genre.

Is the following story really a myth or did it really happen? That's different. Yeah. Could be that. Significance I also have here because it is a value judgment as to its truthfulness.

It wouldn't be one that I would put on an exam however so relax.

What I am seeking to discover is what the author meant by his use of these words.

Understanding, anyone have meaning. I would accept meaning here too, but understanding is the better one.

How are you doing? Doing pretty well? No. Still having troubles huh?

I have a feeling, for a lot of you it seems to be going well. Alright. Thank you for bearing with my kind of raspy voice.

We finished our discussion of prophecy last week and I was not trying to give to you an answer for every prophetic passage in the Bible or even explain to you all the ones that are difficult. What I was trying to do was give you a feel of how to go about interpreting prophecy. Trying to understand the genre and what the prophet expected his audience to bring with them in the interpretation.

So what I was trying to convey in our discussion of prophecy was the idea that prophecy has certain expectations on the part of the biblical author and that was that prophecies of judgment, if we assumed that you would know if a person repented that prophecy would not take place. It makes perfectly good sense, so we [Hard to hear] not aware of that until we looked at examples of that where it is specifically stated.

But it makes sense to tell people about judgment coming because it gives people an opportunity to flee the judgment coming or to repent. And the other thing we looked at was the language of prophecy. Notice it is very poetic. Very much using the kind of language that looks like end of the world terminology, but this end of the world terminology occurs time and time again on non- end of the world prophecies.

So rather than also saying well it must also refers to the end of the world, what you would essentially say is that this language should be understood as language in which the prophet reveals God as acting in some way.

Now there is a sense in which any prophecy will have implications that can refer to if you talk about prophecy of a good king, well any good king has characteristics, which the goodest king of all would be like Jesus. Is it a prophecy of Jesus Himself. No. That is not a prophecy of Jesus Himself. It is a prophecy of about what it means to be a king and if you have the greatest king of all coming who is perfectly righteous, he will exemplify those good qualities.

If you have prophecies of judgment, it shows that God hates sin and He is going to judge sin. Of course, it implies that at the end of history there is going to be a great judgment in which God judges sin. But that doesn't mean that the specific prophecy refers to the end of the world on that judgment of sin, so there may be implications that carry this out.

I asked you to look at Mark chapter 13 because there is a lot of that same terminology used there and I had resisted for a long time, attributing the same understanding of Old Testament prophecies that used this language to the New Testament.

But let me just make some comments real briefly about Mark 13 as I understand it, and then I will allow some time for questions, and then we will go on to the next literary form. The 13th chapter of Mark begins with the disciples telling Jesus, "Look. What wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings."

The temple and its complex would have matched almost any of the 7 wonders of the world. If the 7 wonders of the world had been written at the time of Jesus rather than centuries earlier, the temple could very well have been one of them. It was a magnificent temple. It was the largest temple complex in the world. Not the largest temple but largest complex in the world. The stones involved were magnificent and it must have been truly a wonderful site but Jesus said, "You see these, there will not be left here one stone upon the other that will not be thrown down." Talking about the judgment of Jerusalem.

Then as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked in private, “Well. Tell us when will this – when these stones will be thrown down – when will this be? And what will be the sign when these things are all to be accomplished?”

Probably an example of what we call synonymous parallelism where the same thought is being repeated. Tell us when this will be and what is the sign associated with this. And Jesus began to say, “Take heed that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name saying that ‘I am he! and they will lead many astray.’”

7 When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place first, but the end is still to come.

Ironical that people would say rumors of war indicates the Lord's return is near at hand. It's just the opposite here, right? That's part of ... It's going to continue. Don't get excited by it. These things will take place. The end is not yet.

8 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

These things will go on. Don't get excited about those things.

9 ‘Take heed to yourselves, they will deliver you up to councils; you will be beaten in synagogues; and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear testimony before them. 10 And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. 11 And when they bring you to trial and deliver you up, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say; but say whatever is given you at that time, for it is not you that speak, but the Holy Spirit. 12 Brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; 13 and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

There is nothing unusual about this that says, “Uh. End of history kinds of stuff.” This is what you face in being my disciples. Now in verse 14 talks about something that looks like it's the fall of Jerusalem,

14 ‘But when you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be

- then Mark says, hey you who are reading this understand, now the desolating sacrilege is referred to in the book of Daniel and it seems to have taken place in the period of the Maccabees, when on December 7, 167 B.C., Antiochus Epiphanes, the Syrian king profaned the temple and desecrated it. There is some debate as to whether it involved sacrificing to a pig on the Jewish altar, which would not be the most devout thing for a Jew, needless to say or whether he had build and put a cult stone, an idol on the altar or a combination of both of these, but he desecrated the temple. Jesus seems to be saying, when you see something like this happening again, beware.

- let him who is on the housetop not go down nor enter into his house to take anything away; 16 let him who is in the field not turn back to take his mantle. 17 Alas for those who are with child and those who give suck in those days! 18 Pray that it may not be in winter.

Now this does not look like end times. When Jesus comes, it doesn't say flee into the mountains. Don't go down and take your cloak or something like that, not that that's going to matter when Jesus comes. Furthermore its exaggerated language anyhow, because if it refers to the Roman armies or the legions as they were called, coming to Jerusalem in A.D. 67-70, the Romans didn't practice blitzkrieg. That was not known until the Nazi armies attacked Poland in 39 and so forth and so on. Blitzkrieg was not the Roman method.

The Roman method was steam roller. They would just grind up everybody in the way. And they would grind up the neighboring villages and they would grind up any of the castle towns and fortress towns and they would eventually come to Jerusalem. Now there is lots of time to run, when you see the legions starting to come down from Syria, so. Pray that it may not happen in winter. When the Lord comes to judge the world and you are an unbeliever is it better in summertime? No. It looks like you are talking about the desolating sacrilege where Jerusalem will be destroyed.

But then He uses this language. "For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will be."

Now if you take that as a scientific statement then you probably are going to think, it has to be the end times. But if you take this as part of the use of commissive language to describe the horror of what is going to go on, then it fits very well with what happened in A.D. 70. If you ever want to read about that, Josephus has, who is a Jewish historian, wrote about it in a book called, The Jewish War. It tells about the terrible times. The people fled into the city where Jesus said "Don't go in the city, but get out of there," and when the city was surrounded, there were three groups in the city, of Jews and there were warring against each other, surrounded by the Romans who were going to kill them all. They would raid each other's food and water supplies and kill each other. And the Romans are outside about to destroy everyone.

Jews that tried to escape this were caught and crucified. And Josephus using exaggerated language said there was no longer a tree within twenty miles of the city. They had all be cut down for the crosses and there was no longer room on the hills to put crosses. As many as 500 jews were being crucified each day. Doesn't that fit that language of the horror that these... nothing quite like this before. Well. Was there something like this before? This is not a scientific statement. It is a very effective commissive statement.

There is a story for instance that they... these food shortages in Jerusalem and the people are looking for food and if anybody has any food they will kill him and grab their food to eat it. And they – Josephus said – they smelled food in the home and they broke into the

home and they all ran out when they did that because they saw a mother cooking her own child, because the famine was so great.

I mean this is the horror of A.D. 70. It can't be overstated.

“20And if the Lord had not cut shortened those days, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days. 21And then if anyone says to you, “Look! Here is the Christ!” or “Look! There is he!”—do not believe.”

Don't get screwed up with Messianic pretenders coming at this time.

22False christ's and false prophets will arise and show signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. 23But take heed; I have told you all things.”

Now verses 24-27 are the difficult verses. But in those days – in those days of A.D. 70? Or is this a specific designation for the final days?

24 " In those days – technical term for the end -, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, 25 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. 26 And you will see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory. 27 And then he will send his angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

To me that looks like the Second Coming. However the language – we have talked about the language – we have talked about that language haven't we? In all the Old Testament instances whether it was the fall of Babylon, the destruction of Pharaoh Neco's army, the fall of Jerusalem. That language was impressionistic language. Should we imply that this is also impressionistic language or has it switched now to scientifically technical language? Do you see the problem? I have always resisted this but I thought “Well how can you do it with the Old Testament if you are not willing to do it here as well.”

Then in 28, He seems to refer back to the fall of Jerusalem.

28 "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. 29 So also, when you see these things taking place, ...”

These things referring to verses 14 through 23, not 24 to 27.

“...you know that he is near, at the very gates. 30 Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away before all these things take place. 31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”

Here I think this refers to the fall of Jerusalem. And then in 32 to 37, it goes back to the Second Coming, so I have some real questions as of how to interpret those. If 24 to 27 would have occurred after verse 31, it would have made my interpretation very easy and

nice. I don't know why Mark simply – because he is inspired by the Lord – writes this way instead of making it easy for me. But maybe I have to start being more open to what Mark is saying here.

I have some difficulties. But here is my question. The language used in the New Testament to describe the Lord's Return. How scientifically exact is this? When the trumpet blows at the Second Coming, what is Paul trying to say in 1st Thessalonians? Is there one super trumpet that is really big, that is going to blow and anybody in the world will hear it? Will it be on radio and everybody will be listening to it?

Or is this a way of saying Jesus is coming. The trumpet call means the time has come. Now He returns. Whether there is a trumpet or not, I don't know. When you announce something, you announce it with a trumpet. Now the Son of Man comes as been announced in the past and He reveals Himself.

Are the stars falling from Heaven, the powers in the Heaven are being shaken so forth? Are these literal or are these again, the kind of language that says, Jesus is coming and God is going to act and everybody will know in that day, God is bringing history to its end when Jesus returns. Some of these questions you kind of have to wrestle with, but I hope that you have seen enough in the text of the Old Testament to see how some of this language is used in figurative ways – what they intend to teach, we take literally. God is acting. He is bringing His promises to conclusion and so forth.

Whether the language is literally correct, we have seen in the Old Testament, that [Hard to hear] meant that many times it is impressionistic, but what it says literally came true. These nations were judged and God brought judgment as He said.

Is this language going to be that way? I just know that when Jesus comes you will know. I'll know. The world will know. But to get all the details, trumpets blowing, God announcing with a trumpet sound or stars falling, I don't know if that language is part of a prophetic language of God revealing Himself in the coming of Christ or not.

Student: Do you think Mark's original audience would have clearly understood this passage?

Dr. Stein: I think they were more familiar with prophecy than we were, we are. And you have to remember that we are an unusual generation. Since the 1800s, we have become a kind of scientific generation and no generation before ever thought that way – with that kind of precision.

In fact, if the writers of the New Testament, Old Testament wrote with our scientific precision, no one would have understood it till the 1800s probably.

So I think we have to go back to their mindset and they see things much more figuratively and that's one of the things I wanted you to get with regards to prophecy. They see things in figurative terminology. What is said is true, and the literal meaning of

the author is not the literal meaning of the words but what he wants to teach by those words. And that's true, I believe.

End of Lecture 16

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Hermeneutics for Poetry \(Part 1\)](#)

What we are going to talk about in regard to poetic literature will to a certain extent reinforce some of the things we have said with regard to prophecy. There is a difference between prose and poetry and we are really very fortunate that in the Bible and two instances and this was not only an aid to teaching, but an aid to understanding, there are two accounts of the same event placed side by side.

One of them is prose – narrative. The other is poetry. Let me show you. Chapter 5 over here. I don't know if you can see the broken type, that is the poetic rendering of this account. Chapter 4, followed over here and if I turn the page, followed here again, the narrative.

So translators to help us understand the difference, four in a kind of solid block form to show that it is narrative and chapter 5, you find this material, not in narrative but in poetic form. Now if you read chapter 4, it is a story about Sisera, the enemy who has come to do battle against the people of Israel, and you have Deborah and Barak, live by the Lord to lead the people of Israel against Sisera. Actually it is more Deborah than Barak. She kind of takes his hand like a child and leads him to do what he needs to do. And she seems to be the leader in this. Now Sisera gets all of his chariots, 900 of them together, they go with him to do battle and beginning at verse 14 of chapter 4, Deborah says to Barak,

“For this is the day which the Lord has given Sisera into your hands. The Lord is indeed going out before you. So Barak went down from Mt. Tabor with 10,000 warriors following him. And the Lord threw Sisera and all his chariots and all his army into a panic before Barak. Sisera got down from his chariot and fled away on foot, while Barak pursued the chariots and the army to Harosheth Hagoyim. All the army of Sisera fell by the sword. No one was left.” No one was left. I bet there was one left somewhere. I just have a funny feeling some guy got away.

“17 Now Sisera had fled away on foot to the tent of Jael wife of Heber the Kenite; for there was peace between King Jabin of Hazor and the clan of Heber the Kenite. 18 Jael came out to meet Sisera, and said to him, ‘Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; have no fear.’ So he turned aside to her into the tent, and she covered him with a rug. 19 Then he said to her, ‘Please give me a little water to drink; for I am thirsty.’ So she opened a skin

of milk and gave him a drink and covered him. 20He said to her, ‘Stand at the entrance of the tent, and if anybody comes and asks you, “Is anyone here?” say, “No.” ’ 21But Jael wife of Heber took a tent-peg, and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, until it went down into the ground—he was lying fast asleep from weariness—and he died. 22Then, as Barak came in pursuit of Sisera, Jael went out to meet him, and said to him, ‘Come, and I will show you the man whom you are seeking.’ So he went into her tent; and there was Sisera lying dead, with the tent-peg in his temple. 23 So on that day God subdued King Jabin of Canaan before the Israelites. 24Then the hand of the Israelites bore harder and harder on King Jabin of Canaan, until they destroyed King Jabin of Canaan.”

Now I mean as you read this, there is nothing that is difficult to understand, it reads pretty much straight forward. You have pretty much a realistic account, in using terminology. It is easy to understand and I don’t know anything here that I would say, You know I think its exaggerated. I think it is figurative language. It looks like it is all very literal. It is not quite the military report of a general and U.S. Army giving of the battle, it wouldn’t be that technical, but it looks pretty much straightforward.

Now chapter 5 however is prose and at the very beginning, the author is telling us something,

“5Then Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying:”

This is a song – not prose. It is a ballad. It is the kind of thing you sit at your campfire and you strum your guitar and you make a song of it. I mean that is a little different than telling a prose account of what happened. You are ready for a song and you are ready for some kinds of exaggeration. Let me share with you some of the songs and choruses that we sing.

Here is one.

“You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace.
The mountains and the hills will break forth before you.
There will be shouts of joy, and all the trees of the field will clap, will clap their hands.
And all the trees of the field will clap their hands,
the trees of the field will clap their hands. The trees of the field will clap their hands.
While you go out with joy.

Come on now. Trees clapping hands. Doesn’t make a lot of sense to me. But it is a song. You can do that in songs. You can do that with songs. You have other songs like, “You are Lord of Creation, Lord of my life. Lord of the land and the sea. You are Lord of Creation before there was time, Lord of all Lords you will be.”

How can He be Lord of the Creation before there is a creation?

You say, “Come on Stein, don’t be ... these are songs. Get with it. You see. That’s just the point. Isn’t it? They are songs and you have to kind of get with songs and accept things like that.”

I remember one, my wife and I attended a Christmas concert of the Bethel choir in Minneapolis, St. Paul and at the end of the song, the choir sang, thanking God for this glorious myth of the birth of Jesus.

And my wife looked at me and I looked at her “Glorious myth?” Now I knew Bob Berland the choir director. He is very conservative. He certainly believes literally the virgin birth stories. There is no question about that. And I don’t think anybody in the choir who sang it didn’t believe in the virgin birth stories. But why were they talking about this glorious myth and then somehow I remember the verse before and I noted that to make it rhythmic, they needed a single word and it had to end with kind of a “-ith” sound to it.

And you know when you are writing songs, you don’t have an awful lot of words available. You are kind of limited and don’t we talk by the way in poetry of poetic license. What’s poetic license mean? It means that sometimes you have to use a word that is not the exact one that you want because it has to fit the rhythm and you have to fit the rhyme if you are using rhyme. And so he had to use the word, the song writer of this particular hymn – “myth” – glorious myth.

Now for me, I dislike the word “myth” for the Biblical story so much that I would have rewritten the whole bloody thing and have avoided that. But I can understand how a hymn writer can use that, because this is a ballad and here we are singing a ballad, Deborah and Barak sing this song. So now, when they describe this great and glorious victory, how do they describe it?

In verse 4,

- 4 ‘Lord, when you went out from Seir,
 when you marched from the region of Edom,
the earth trembled,
 and the heavens poured,
 the clouds indeed poured water.
5 The mountains quaked before the Lord, the One of Sinai,
 before the Lord, the God of Israel.

You don’t read anything about earthquakes in the prose section. If you read chapter 4, nothing is said of earthquakes, nothing about mountains quaking. But this is a poet describing it. How do you describe God leading people in battle? You do it this way:

“When God led His people out to do battle,
The earth shook, the mountains quaked because
God was with them.”

Well. This is figurative language which described the certainty of God being with them. You really don't want them to say,

“When the Lord led them to battle,
He increased the accuracy of their arrows through 12.86 % which was decisive in the battle.”

Or that somehow they were able to throw their javelins an extra 10 feet, which was critical. I mean that's not the way you sing ballads. You say, ““When the Lord led His people, the earth shook, the mountains quaked because God was with His people that day.” That is the way poets describe it.

Nothing wrong with that. In fact it is very effective, because God did lead His people into battle and to victory. So what the author intends to understand by this, I take very literally. That day, when Sisera led the armies of Syria, God led Deborah and Barak and his people and He was with them and He gave them a great victory. And the victory would be the Lord's because it was His doing. It didn't try to explain their archery competence having increased or anything like that. It just said, “God was with them.”

Then it goes on, verses 19 and 20,

19 ‘The kings came, they fought;
 then fought the kings of Canaan,
at Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo;
 they got no spoils of silver.
20 The stars fought from heaven,
 from their courses they fought against Sisera.

Now if you look at any of the 17th century commentaries on this passage, they will talk about this probably refers to God having sent meteor showers upon the enemy. See, they did not know about poetry in the OT in the 17th century. Their translations all had this kind of solid black type.

So you translate it like it was prose supposedly using sight of the fact that this is a song written in poetic form. In poetry, you can describe that. How do you describe God being with His people?

Where does God reside? He resides in Heaven, where the stars are.

From Heaven fought the stars is another way of saying, “from Heaven, God fought for His people.” And you take that understanding, its poetry, you would interpret it therefore differently. Ok. Now, let me stop there and see. Makes sense?

Student: [Hard to Hear] interpret it that way.

Dr. Stein: Alright. Good. Good question. For people who have a great ability in Hebrew, what do we have to go by? One of the things is good translations have people who know

Hebrew well. And they see this as poetry and they set it off for us. So modern translations unlike earlier ones, like the King James, set aside poetry for us, to tell us that. So we have a clue from the translator that's there, but how did the translators get this.

Well. As I said in the early introductory chapters, you can tell this by the use of frequent particles in the Hebrew language. You can understand it by the general length of the statements. In poetry, the stanzas or sentences or phrases if you want to use the word, but stanzas is the word used – tend to be the same length. All of a sudden, you go from a chapter on prose, Chapter 4, where the sentence are none. Some are short. Some are long. Some are medium size to a place where all of a sudden, they all seem to have a similar length. That's another clue that way.

Of course saying it is a song is a real clue.

Let us look at another example, Exodus, chapter 14, once again, chapter 14 is an example of prose. Notice the solid type. You don't have your own Bible? Then in chapter 15, broken type, lot of white space. Not a very technical way of describing it by the way, but hopefully is effective.

Now in chapter 14, we have the discussion of the crossing of the Red Sea and you know it pretty much straightforward. If you look verses 26 and following,

“26 Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.’ 27 So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. 28 The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. 29 But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.”

Earlier you have some reference to the struggle of the Egyptians, for instance in verse 23,

“23 The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. 24 At the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. 25 He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty.”

You get the sense that, they are getting caught in the mud and the water as the water comes back so. Pretty much straightforward and you say “What about the water being a wall on the left and the right?” Yeah. You have to figure that out on how literally you want to take it, but in general, you have the people of Israel walking through the sea, and the Egyptians following through, the waters begin to return, the chariot wheels become clogged. The water overcomes them in their heavy armor, they are drowned and so forth.

But when you get to chapter 15, the poetic one, it is spoken a little differently. Once again

“Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord ...” It is ballad time again. We are singing choruses. Ok.

‘I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously;
horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.

Here you have the language of God - the God of Israel - picking up the army of Pharaoh in His hand and throwing him out into the ocean to drown. Figurative language I assume. Then you go to verse 4,

“4 ‘Pharaoh’s chariots and his army he cast into the sea;
his picked officers were sunk in the Red Sea.”

Verse 7,

“7 In the greatness of your majesty you overthrew your adversaries;
you sent out your fury, it consumed them like stubble.”

Now tell me something here. What is the metaphor consumed them like stubble? What is the picture here? Of fire burning the stubble fields to make it easier to farm. Not a very good practice because it burns up too much of the material that you want to put back into the soil but burning of stubble, burning a field and a picture of judgment.

But they didn’t burn up did they? They drowned. I wonder if the author of this had read the rest of this story. I think he knew the rest of the story, right? What you have here is an image of judgment, burning up like stubble, which is being applied to what happens to them. They are destroyed. They are burned up like stubble even though they are drowned. They are not burned. It is a perfectly good judgment imagery that’s being used here.

It is not confusing. No one is trying to say that you should take these words literally, that they are being burned to death. What you need to do is, you say, what does this image refer to? It refers to judgment. That is right. That is what happened.

Verse 8,

“8 At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up,
the floods stood up in a heap;
the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea.”

Then verse 12,

12 You stretched out your right hand,
the earth swallowed them.

And then finally one more. Verse 21

21 And Miriam sang to them:
'Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously;
horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.'

Once again, you have that imagery. So what we have here then is a poetic description. It shows that poetry is a different kind of genre than prose. You have more room for freedom - much more room for the ability to use figurative language. Yes?

Student: [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: I guess what I would say would be if I was talking about the first example, I would talk about how God leads His people, and how joyously in song we celebrate this. And how do we describe God leading His people? I want to tell you, when God leads His people, the earth shakes, the mountains quake because once God is with you [Hard to Hear]

I think you can preach that quite effectively to the people. Remember we are not in any way denying the truth of what is being said. We are simply trying to point out what the author meant by this and what the words literally taken in isolation from the authorial meaning may be different. But words mean what the author intends them to mean and the author here is ascribing how God leads His people in great victory.

If I were preaching I might say "How else might you describe God leading His people in battle?" I had some other suggestions of that that would be poetic in nature, people would probably ... "Yeah, that's right. This is what God did. This is the way we can joyously sing." And then you go and you start talking about other examples of that. For instance I give to you an example how in song, we describe certain things and ways that if you pressed them literally, you would not accept them.

For instance when you say in the Christmas carol, "Hail. The heaven born prince of peace. Hail the Son of righteousness. Lighten life to all He brings, risen with healing in His wings."

"Lighten life to all He brings?" Is this a universalism? No. Its not. The guy isn't a universalist. What do you want him to say, "Light and life to all he offers. Risen with healing in His coffers?" or something ridiculous like that?

You don't worry about some of those things. This is a song. And you need a kind of poetic license to permit you to say things like that. But the meaning is the joy of Jesus coming and offering salvation to all. Not bringing salvation to all, because we know from the rest of the Bible that is not true, but in this hymn, you have to allow room or some of those kinds of terminology.

Student: Like Deborah and Barak sang this song on that day also is figurative language meaning they were plenty-pleased as evidenced by the emotion that [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: I would say Deborah and Barak composed this song whether it is that exact day or the next day or something like that I am not sure. [Hard to Hear] that day, Ok. Then it was that day if you want. My question is I don't ... the battle goes on for some time. There is not much room for the day left to sing something like that. I don't think that the writer of Scripture is really that concerned with that day ... Here that day might be after that they sang, this song, made up this song and celebrated.

Now I were preaching a sermon, I wouldn't preach that. Someone asking a question on Sunday School, you deal with that. I might just simply say, "After that they made up a song, and here is the song they sang, and the joy of knowing that God was with them and gave them this great victory, they celebrated.

Alright let us look at some more examples of the need for poetic license. In the book of Colossians, there is a hymn here that most translations of the Bible do not write out as a hymn. There are a lot of hymns in the New Testament that are not written out as clearly as hymns as in the OT. For instance, in Colossians 1:15-20, my Greek New Testament has it in poetic form. My RSV doesn't. I doubt that any of your translations have 1:15-20 broken down into poetry.

Do any of you have a translation that is broken down that way? Here is the problem. It says,

"15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; 16 for in Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities — all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 18 He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning, ..."

Dr. Stein: I mean... Stein what's your problem? I don't have any problems yet.

"... 18 He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He might come to have first place in everything. 19 For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through Him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross."

Reconciling all things to Himself. That looks pretty universalistic. Well, what have you got against that? Well, if my vote matters, I'll vote for it, but you know voting doesn't change anything. It's the problem that the rest of the New Testament and the Bible doesn't seem to speak about a universalism. It talks about a separation of the sheep from the goats, a separation of the wheat from the tares and of eternal judgment. Again, I want to remind you, we as Christians don't believe in eternal judgment, because we like it. If I had my way, there would be none. There would be universalism or annihilationism or something like that.

I have relatives who are not Christians. The thought of their perishing eternal doesn't make me happy. So if I had a chance I would vote this way, but I don't think God in

heaven is waiting for me to vote on this to make His decision right? So we are obligated to believe what the Biblical teaching is.

The problem I find is that this passage seems to conflict with the normal Biblical teaching. On the other hand maybe what we have here is a hymn that because of its very nature makes it difficult not to use universal language. I looked up some material about ancient hymns, and it is interesting that ancient hymns that speak about creation tend to use universal language. The word “all” appears in statements about creation or passages on that in very very frequent terms and the word “all” or “all things” occur four times each in this passage and what we have is a rhythmic passage.

Let me show you something. I have it in Greek, but don't worry about it. I just want to show you exactly. It says,

“Who is the image of the invisible God” Now you have to go down to verse 18b, and you start out again with another “who is”. Then you have “the firstborn of all creation” found in verse 15, “the firstborn out of the dead” found in verse 18.

Then you have “because in Him, all things were created.” Then you have later on, that would be up in verse 16 at the end. Here you have verse 19, “because in Him was pleased all the fullness of God to dwell.”

“All things were through Him and for Him. Through Him all things are for Him” at the very end. So you have repetition in the poetic meter of this song. It's a hymn probably something interestingly enough that Paul did not create but was pre-Pauline.

For those who say for instance that Paul is the one who deified Jesus – took the religion “of Jesus” and made it a religion “about Jesus.” Here he quotes something of the Colossians something that he did not create that already existed, which is very very high Christologically in its theology.

So it is in this context where it says “He did this for all... He did this for all... He did this for all... He did this for all...” What else you going to do when you come to the end of the hymn but to say to reconcile somethings ? but all things to Himself and you have that ... you are bound to continue that kind of rhythmic analogy here.

Let me show you some of that kind of rhythm also in other New Testament statements. In 1 Corinthians 15:22, you have a balance required here that makes a statement that if pressed literally is a problem.

“22 for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

As in Adam all die, 1 Corinthians 15:22, so in Christ shall all be made alive. There is a rhythmic balance to this. You can't change and say, "as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall some will be made alive.”

You need to maintain the balance. When you get to Romans chapter 5, in verses 15,17, 18 and 19, you have that same kind of thing. I will just read to you Romans 5, verse 18:

“18 Then as one man’s trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man’s act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for - ” [Hard to Hear]

You are going to have to have all men again right? You have “one man’s trespass led to an acquittal, a condemnation for all men. So one man’s act of righteousness leads to an acquittal in life for all men.” So the balance and the rhythm requires that.

Now, that indicates that when you find something in this rhythmic form, you should let the theology of non-rhythmic passages where you are not confined by rhythm in one way or the other, you don’t need poetic license to determine these kinds of things and its very evident from the rest of Romans that Paul doesn’t believe that everyone is made alive in Christ that only those who have faith in Him.

Dr. Stein: Yes?

Student: We are not suggesting that Romans 5 is [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: Yes. A balance statement is kind of like a rhythmic statement in the middle, “As in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive.” “As one man’s sin brought condemnation for all, so one man’s righteousness brings...”

And you can’t switch in the middle and say, “to some.” It breaks the whole rhythm of it. But I think the Biblical writer here, in Paul, certainly teaches elsewhere that he doesn’t believe that you should press that language to all all. But you know if you break it, Christ doesn’t come up as good as Adam. Because Adam does it for everybody, Christ only does it for some. You wouldn’t want to change in that way.

So rhythm here sometimes keeps you from having exacting statements, but what you have here instead are poetic statements which should be interpreted in light of the entirety of Christian and the like. Before I deal with the various kinds of poetry, let me just read to you the kind of poetry that the Psalmist refers to. Chapter 18 is a good one here.

1 I love you, O Lord, my strength.
2 The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer,
my God, my rock in whom I take refuge,
my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.
3 I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised;
so I shall be saved from my enemies.

No problems. Ok.

4 The cords of death encompassed me;
the torrents of perdition assailed me;

5 the cords of Sheol entangled me;
 the snares of death confronted me.
 6 In my distress I called upon the Lord;
 to my God I cried for help.
 From his temple he heard my voice,
 and my cry to him reached his ears.
 7 Then the earth reeled and rocked;
 the foundations also of the mountains trembled
 and quaked, because he was angry.
 8 Smoke went up from his nostrils,
 and devouring fire from his mouth;
 glowing coals flamed forth from him.
 9 He bowed the heavens, and came down;
 thick darkness was upon his feet.
 10 He rode on a cherub, and flew;
 and came swiftly upon the wings of the wind.
 11 He made darkness his covering around him,
 his canopy thick clouds dark with water.
 12 Out of the brightness before him
 there broke through his clouds
 hailstones and coals of fire.
 13 The Lord also thundered in the heavens,
 and the Most High uttered his voice.
 14 And he sent out his arrows, and scattered them;
 he flashed forth lightning, and routed them.
 15 Then the channels of the sea were seen,
 and the foundations of the world was laid bare
 at your rebuke, O Lord,
 at the blast of the breath of your nostrils.
 16 He reached down from on high, he took me;
 he drew me out of mighty waters.
 17 He delivered me from my strong enemy,
 and from those who hated me;
 for they were too mighty for me.

Here is David singing for joy, that when his enemies were against him, God heard his prayer and He shook heaven for him, to bring him deliverance. That's poetic language and it's very powerful language as such. David himself when he talked about the former king Saul and his friend Jonathan states in a eulogy towards them in 2 Samuel 1:23, the following

21 You mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew or rain upon you, nor bounteous fields! For there the shield of the mighty was defiled, the shield of Saul, anointed with oil no more. 22 From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan did not turn back, nor the sword of Saul return empty.
 Now listen,

23 Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely! In life and in death they were not divided; they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.

How do you do an eulogy in honor to these great heroes? You are going to use literal language? You say they ran a mile in about 4 and a half minutes. You say, they could bench press 275 pounds. You don't do that. You say, "they are stronger than lions, the mighty lions, they are swifter than eagles" and so forth. You use poetry. Perfectly legitimate. In fact delightful and impressive.

We are going to talk about specific kinds of poetry that occur in the Bible, but anything so far that we have questions about. Are we doing alright?

End of Lecture 17

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Hermeneutics for Poetry and Idioms](#)

Now I am going to talk about four specific kinds of poetry. One is synonymous parallelism. In synonymous parallelism, you have the same thought being repeated. You have it being repeated however in poetic form. The poetry would of course be in the Greek in the New Testament. But the poetry before it was in Greek was in Aramaic Jesus spoke. It is still in the Greek and it is still in the translation.

Listen.

"Ask and it shall be given you.
Seek and you shall find.
Knock and it shall be opened to you.
For everyone who asks receives
And he who seeks finds.
To him who knocks, it shall be opened."

Now I remember hearing a sermon one day from somebody who was saying, "There are really three kinds of prayer. The problem with some of us is that we are only at the asking level of prayer. We need to go to this deeper seeking level of prayer. And then if we have gone to that place we should strive further to get to the knocking kind of prayer."

Three points. You can't beat that can you?

The only problem is that its poetry. And the same thought is essentially being repeated because to ask means to seek and to seek means to knock and to knock means to ask. To find means to have it opened to you and so forth and so on.

The same thought is being repeated much like in a particular kind of song we have, of course:

“Lord, You are more precious than silver.
Lord, You are more costly than gold.
Lord, You are more beautiful than diamonds.
And nothing I desire compares to you.”

Is this to be understood as one person saying, “Lord, You are more precious than silver” and someone says, “For me You are more precious than gold.” “Well. He is more precious than diamonds to me.”

Or are we repeating the same thought? It is the same thought being repeated. But let me say, it sure is a lot nicer to say this than to say, “Lord, You are more precious than silver. “Lord, You are more precious than silver. Lord, You are more precious than silver.”
Alright?

So there is a variety where the same thought where the same thought is being repeated in rhythmic form. This can become helpful at times because if you did not know one of these lines, the other lines knowing it is in rhythmic parallelism, helps you to understand it.

For instance in Luke 6:27 and 28, we have an example of this kind of parallelism.

“But I say to you then – listen 4 lines – Love your enemies.
Do good to those who hate you.
Bless those who curse you.
Pray for those who abuse you.”

Do you want to know what it means to love your enemies? Well, it means to pray for those who abuse you. To bless those who curse you. To do good to those who hate you.

Notice these are all about actions. There is nothing about “emote” [Hard to Hear] towards them. It has to do with good actions. You want to know what love of enemies means. It means to do good things for them. To bless, to pray for and to do good to.

Another example of that is in the Lord’s Prayer. There are three lines in the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew which are synonymous parallelism.

“Hallowed be thy name.
Thy Kingdom come
Thy will be done.”

Then you have the expression, “On earth as it is in Heaven” which probably goes with all three of them.

What does it mean to have God's name hallowed on earth as it is in Heaven? To have His will done on earth as it is in Heaven? I know what the one line in between these three lines of synonymous parallelism means.

"Your kingdom come,
On earth as it is in Heaven.

I know what that means. Asking for history to come to an end. For Jesus to return. It is the same kind of prayer that the early church prayed when they said, "Even so come quickly Lord Jesus" or "Maranatha" as it is in 2nd Corinthians.

Well. If that's what it means, "Hallowed be your name on earth as it is in Heaven" looks for the day where we pray "Lord, we pray for that time when just as it is in Heaven, your name will be hallowed on this earth." Your will be done, we are praying Lord that just as your will is done and perfection in Heaven, we are praying for that day when it will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

So if you know one of these lines, it helps you to understand these other lines when you have this rhythmic synonymous parallelism. The opposite of that – we looked at one example, this last one in which you had four lines, the previous one had three lines, in which you had synonymous parallelism.

Now the opposite of synonymous parallelism would be antithetical parallelism. And here you have in all the examples however only two lines. One line and then the opposite line.

"Every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit.
A good tree cannot bear evil fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit."

Opposite being repeated.

Luke 16:10 – another example of this kind of this parallelism.

"Whoever is faithful in very little, is faithful also in much.
And whoever is dishonest in very little, is dishonest also in much."

Now a lot of the Proverbs use antithetical parallelism. You say "Well, what are they? Are they Proverbs or are they poetry?" Well, there is no sharp distinction. Some you could label both. You can have a proverb that is in poetic form. But almost all of Proverbs 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and half of 15 are all examples of antithetical parallelism.

"The wise son is a joy to his father but a bad son..." so forth.

Antithetical parallelism, the opposite thought is being repeated. Another kind of parallelism, is called step or climatic parallelism. In this, the 1st and the 2nd lines are not identical. They are not synonymous. But the 2nd line is not the opposite of the 1st. What

happens is that the 2nd line advances the 1st line a step further and are called therefore step parallelism.

Matthew 11:40, “Whoever welcomes you, welcomes Me. And whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.” If they welcome the disciples, they welcome Jesus and if they welcome Jesus, they welcome His heavenly Father Who sent Him.

Matthew 5:17, “Think not that I have come to destroy the Law and the Prophets. I have come not to destroy them, but to fulfill them.”

It rises a level up. Step Parallelism.

Now another kind of parallelism is called chiasmic parallelism. Here you have in the 1st statement, a A-B part. There is an A part and a B part. Now when you get to the 2nd part, remember, the key to all of these is parallelism or rhythm. The 2nd part reverses the order and goes from B to A.

Matthew 23:12, “Anyone who exalts Himself will be humbled. Anyone who (A) exalts Himself will be (B) humbled. Anyone who (B) humbles himself, will be (A) exalted.” A-B-B-A

Mark 8:35, “He who (A) saves his life will (B) lose it. He who (B) loses his life for my sake and the Gospels will (A) save it. Save-lose-lose-Save. Chiasmic parallelism

Now the key of all this is that poetry is here not so much rhyme, but rhythm. Well, you say, “But I thought poetry was rhyme. I mean Mary had a little lamb, whose fleece was white as snow. Everywhere that Mary went the lamb was sure to go. Snow, go, Rhyme. That’s poetry.

But think a minute.

Mary had a little lamb, whose fleece was white as snow... and everywhere that Mary went, the lamb was sure to follow ? No. One syllable ...go.

There has to be a rhythm to it. So rhythm is far more basic to poetry than rhyme, and Hebrew poetry especially is much more rhythm than rhyme in that regard. Even in English poetry is much more dominated by rhythm than rhyme. Though sometimes we have both present. Yeah. I have for instance in the Gospels, I have 48 examples that I know of synonymous parallelism. 48 times where Jesus used this form of poetry of synonymous parallelism.

I have a 138 examples of antithetical parallelism. 20+ of step or climactic parallelism and 16 of chiasmic parallelism.

So all together, when you put it together, let us see uh ... you have over 200 examples of that kind of poetry.

Dr. Stein: Yes.

Student: [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: Just in the Gospels, right. From Jesus lips. Why would Jesus want to teach them poetry? Our missionary talked about a non-cultural society, and not literal.

Student: [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: Sure. If you have a non-literal society, how do you teach them? You might say, “Well. Teach them to read and write.” That takes a while. But you can teach them in poetic forms, things easily memorizable. And the community can possess those and have them before they learn how to read. So you have this rhythmic teaching, it is very to do so.

I could probably ask most of you, right out for me the first verse of “The Church’s One Foundation.”

Church’s One Foundation
Is Jesus Christ Our Lord
She is His new creation

And you would sing it right? And the rhythm would come to you. And the rhythm would help you to remember it. And so by placing things in poetic form, Jesus helped His readers to retain His teachings. Other forms that we looked at are exaggeration. We haven’t looked at that very carefully. We will look at that more in precision later on. We will look at Parables.

If you hear the Parable of the Prodigal Son, how often do you have to hear it to be able to say it almost exactly? Twice? Parables of story helps you with that. Poetry. So these are very memorizable forms and we are dealing with a culture that essentially is illiterate, so they are useful and powerful forms as well.

Questions? Comments?

Student: [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: Alright I’ll tell you once again.

Synonymous parallelism: 48 examples.
Antithetical parallelism: 138 examples.
Step or climactic parallelism: 20+ roughly
Chiasmic parallelism: 16

That is just Jesus' teachings in the Gospels. Of course if you just went to the book of Proverbs, and you see all the rhythm there, which makes Proverbs easy to memorize is the rhythm, you would have hundreds of them literally. Hundreds and hundreds.

Anything else? Yeah.

Student: I was wondering if I could ask a question that goes back a couple of classes.

Dr. Stein: Sure if I could still remember that far. The older you get, you have short-term memory loss.

Student: [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: The Parables could be interpreted as saying Jesus taught so that the non-predestined would not understand. You have a real Calvinistic interpretation. The problem with that is that verse He quotes from Isaiah, the strongest possible portion of that verse that would really lead to that kind of an interpretation, He omits.

You look at the part of Isaiah that is not quoted, and that's really a strong Calvinistic kind of thought you might have, but He doesn't say it that way. Furthermore those who were not predestined understood the Parables pretty well. I mean after one of the Parables, they wanted to go out and crucify Him. Do they say, "I'm tired of not being able to understand the Parables. Lets crucify a guy like that."

{Laughter}

So they understood the Parables pretty well. And I think we have to wrestle with sometimes, the Parables are used because when you talk about the Kingdom of God and Pontius Pilate is only interested in the Kingdom of Rome and any other kingdom you talk about it pretty dangerous. How do you talk about sensitive subjects? Well. You talk about it in parabolic form.

And the spies of Pontius Pilate come back to the Pilate and say, "We heard Him talking about the Kingdom of God." And He says, "Well. What did He say?" "Well. He said it was like leaven which a woman put in a batch of dough." "And then what did He say?" "It is about all He said." Oh. He said, it doesn't make sense in many ways.

So in some ways the Parables are not as obscure as you might think but they are in a form that would be very hard to find fault with in some of the areas like the Kingdom of God, very touchy subject. Same as what He does in the teaching about the Kingdom of God in parables, He does by talking of Himself not as the Messiah, but as the Son of Man. He can talk about who He is without evoking revolutionary kinds of things that would require Rome to interfere immediately to try to crush the movement.

So that's one of the reasons He talked about. But we are going to spend time on the Parables and go into it more at length that way.

Now Faith, in the sense in which I am here using the word, is the art of holding on to things your reason 'has once accepted, in spite of your changing moods. For moods will change, whatever view your reason takes. I know that by experience. Now that I am a Christian I do have moods in which the whole thing looks very improbable: but when I was an atheist I had moods in which Christianity looked terribly probable. This rebellion of your moods against your real self is going to come anyway. That is why Faith is such a necessary virtue: unless you teach your moods "where they get off," you can never be either a sound Christian or even a sound atheist, but just a creature dithering to and fro, with its beliefs really dependent on the weather and the state of its digestion. Consequently one must train the habit of Faith.

The first step is to recognize the fact that your moods change. The next is to make sure that, if you have once accepted Christianity, then some of its main doctrines shall be deliberately held before your mind for some time every day. That is why daily prayers and religious reading and church-going are necessary parts of the Christian life. We have to be continually reminded of what we believe. Neither this belief nor any other will automatically remain alive in the mind. It must be fed. And as a matter of fact, if you examined a hundred people who had lost their faith in Christianity, I wonder how many of them would turn out to have been reasoned out of it by honest argument? Do not most people simply drift away?

~ C.S. Lewis, On the Importance of Faith

Now we are going to look at two Idioms today. The first is the ... excuse me ... the first genre, we are going to look at two genres and the first one is Idioms. Alright, I had idioms in mind so I misspoke here. We want to look at Idioms and how to interpret idioms. The genre of Idioms being taught here by an idiot.

{Laughter}

Sorry. One of the problems with idioms is that they are difficult to interpret. You hear idioms lots of times and we don't realize that what is taking place is someone is saying something that makes absolutely no sense unless it is an idiom.

We have people saying things like, you sneeze, "God bless you!" Now think for a minute. That is an imperative. You are ordering God to bless me because I sneezed? Now come on Stein, that's an idiom. You don't take it that way. It means hope you don't sneeze again or something like that.

{Laughter}

Have any of you been in theatre of any sort or studied in the theatre? There is an expression when someone starts a new play. What is it? "Break a leg." What in the world? Here is something that has to be an idiom. Minors in Germany, when they go down to the mine, miners are told, "Goot Alf", Good up. Makes little sense and yet it is also idiomatic. Someone sees me in the hallway and they say, "How are you Dr. Stein?"

What happens if I say, “Well. You know I am having some trouble with my hands right now. I am getting some carpal tunnel problems.” I mean you look at me.

What in the world is the matter with that professor? They didn’t mean, “How are you Dr. Stein?” They mean, “Hi!” It is an idiom. And the one thing about it is that you can interpret idioms literally.

It is a good example by the way and I will emphasize it later that meaning is found in not the text, but what the author means by the text. Idioms are perfect examples of that. Idioms taken literally as words mean nothing. The author’s use of them as an idiom can make a lot of sense. We have all sorts of other kinds of idioms that are expressions in the Bible we have an expression, “Not a man was left” which is exaggerated terminology meaning that there is a great victory over the enemies or something like that.

1st John 3:17 talks about finding a brother in need – a person in need – and shutting up your bowels to them. So you have a fellow Christian who is in need and you become constipated. The RSV has “close your heart to them.” Really it says bowels, but its an expression. New RSV, “refuses help,” New NIV, “has no pity.” They are all translating for us what this idiom is.

We have, “as numerous as the sand of the sea” found lots and lots of times. One idiom that is found in the Bible is “faith to remove mountains.” It is found both in Matthew 17:20, Paul quotes it in 1st Corinthians 13:2. Matthew 17:20 if you put down 1st Corinthians 13:2. And its in the Rabbinic literature, quoted by the Rabbis in [Hard to Hear] 3b

How do you detect if something is an idiom or not? Well here is an expression that is found frequently? I remember one experience after being on Sabbatical, I came back and my friend John [Hard to Hear] said that there was a new restaurant that had opened and You ought to go there and take Joan with you, he said “Its really bad.” I looked at him, I thought, “What in the world?” and I didn’t say anything and later on TV, I saw on a talk-show somebody said “Yeah. It was great. Its really bad.” And it began to dawn on me. Here was an expression that had become some sort of idiomatic phrase during the time my wife and I had been in Europe.

And really bad had come to mean, really good. It was an idiom. I knew it was an idiom, figured it out, because it didn’t mean what the words literally meant and it was constantly said in that same kind of expression, so its repetition and the fact that didn’t mean literally what it seems to be. That all indicated that it was an idiom.

Now, there are a number of idioms in the Bible and one that I deal in the text at length is Malachi 1:2 and 3. The Word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi,

“2 I have loved you, says the Lord. But you say, ‘How have you loved us?’ Is not Esau Jacob’s brother? says the Lord. Yet I have loved Jacob 3but I have hated Esau...”

Right away when I see something like that I say, "God so loved the world, except of course for Esau, that He gave His only begotten..." You know there are other teachings in the Bible that make you start wondering about things like this.

I began to look and this is repeated by the way in Romans 9:13, "Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated." The clue for me came, I don't know if somebody pointed me to this or whether I read it by accident, in Genesis 29:30 and 31. In the RSV and King James it still uses the literal language of the text. It says,

"So Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. He served Laban for another seven years. When the Lord saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren."

"He loved Rachel more than Leah," the next verse, "When the Lord saw that Leah was hated."

Well, the very fact that they are next to each other means that they are referring to the same thing. He loved Rachel more than Leah. Leah is seen as being hated. Now you know the word hated can't mean literally hated. I don't know what their relationship exactly was, but they had some six children or so didn't they? Something is going on there that we don't usually refer to as plain hatred. Right?

Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah, and in the Hebrew understanding, if you love one more than the other, you love the one and you hate the other. Now what hate means is an idiom for being loved less. You have that in Deuteronomy 21:15-17. Here all of the new translations, translate the idiom according to its meaning, not according to its words, but let me ...I am reading from the New RSV, but I'll put in the words, the literal words, and tell you how they translate it there.

In Deuteronomy 21, verse 15,

"15 If a man has two wives, one of them loved and the other..."

Dr. Stein: the Hebrew is hated - the New RSV has "disliked."

"and if both the loved and the disliked ..."

Dr. Stein: or hated one literally,

"have borne him sons, the firstborn being the son of the one who is disliked..."

Dr. Stein: hated

"16 then on the day when he wills his possessions to his sons, he is not permitted to treat the son of the loved as the firstborn in preference to the son of the ..."

Dr. Stein: hated. Hated, loved, hated, loved. It really doesn't mean hated. In fact, it doesn't even mean disliked. It means you prefer one over the other. You love one more

than the other. But in that kind of an understanding, you love the one and you hate the other.

“No man can serve two masters for either he will love the one and hate the other.” It is an idiom for you prefer one over the... You love the one more than you love the other. And you have that later on in an idiom when Jesus says, “If any man would come after Me, he must hate his father and mother” Luke 14:26. The parallel in Matthew, same saying but translated thought for thought is, “If any man loves his mother and father more than me he is not worthy of me.” So here is an idiomatic expression. Proverbs – same thing. You love the one more than you love the other and so forth.

Idioms are a good example of the fact that the meaning of words is determined by the author. The fact that we have idioms destroys the idea that a text can in and of itself bear meaning, because it is just a collection of words. The words taken literally are quite different than the actual meaning.

If you learn a different language, then of course idioms become really a problem. My wife on our first sabbatical was studying German at the U.S. Army base at Heidelberg. There was a class there for learning German and she took it. And the teacher was a German woman and the first day of class all she did was speak in German; no English was spoken. And she always said at the end, “Now, try talking some German to some people.”

It was a great experience and ... my wife, I remember, after about 3 weeks or maybe even only 2 had bought a garment at a German store and it didn't fit right. She wanted to return it and she asked me to go with her. And I said, “No. You go. You go alone.” She was real mad. But she went, spoke some German. She came back very very happy. Proud that she was able to communicate and so forth and so on.

Well on one of the days, it was a very hot day – at the end of class, she said, “I know you always like to talk German but when you talk German today, don't talk to any people out there about the weather. Don't say something like “Ich bin heiß[Hard to Hear] ” Is there anything like that. Just don't say it. And everybody in class said, “Now. Wait a minute. You just can't say something. Why can't we say it?” She said, “Well. You don't need to know. Just don't say it.” And so finally they kept on saying, “You have to tell us why can't we say to somebody in this hot weather “Ich bin heiß” – “I am hot.”

She said “Well. You should say, “Mich ist es heiß,” “To me it is hot.”

So they said, “Whats the difference?”

“Well. “Ich bin heiß” is an idiom that describes not you physical temperature but you sexual temperature. You can just imagine all the Americans trying to learn German on a hot day in August and trying to strike up a conversation with people and saying something to somebody and the Germans just shocked and you realize they are

Americans and then they say, “Oh. Yeah. Mich ist es auch heib,” – “To me it is also warm” and walking away, turning the corner and then just rolling over and laughing.

It is always a problem. Someone told me, I had another thing happen to me in German which was idiomatic. We had some company in German. We had been there for some time and one of the person said, “Jetzt habe ich mir die nase voll.” Jetzt habe ich mir die nase voll. Literally, “Now, I have my nose full.” Jetzt habe ich mir die - my nose full.

So she went into the kitchen and got a box of Kleenex and came back and gave it to the person. He looked at her and then he just started to smile, because “Jetzt habe ich mir die nase voll” is an idiom. It means, “I have had it up to here with this stuff.” Does not interest me any more. I have ... have it up to here “Jetzt habe ich mir die nase voll” with this political situation or something like that.

There are lots of languages that have idioms and one of the things in learning another language is make sure you learn the idioms, because you can embarrass yourself rather seriously, if you are not careful. The Bible has those kinds of idioms, many times we see them, so that we have to understand, for instance, I have heard people say they have faith to remove mountains and to understand it very literally. It was never intended to be understood literally. Mean to have great faith. Faith that accomplish many things. It is not a challenge to sit next to the ... to Mount Everest and practice faith of mountain removal or something like that. It is not understood that way. It was never meant to be understood literally in that respect. So idioms – it goes pretty straightforward. I think you can read the chapter on that. I am not going to deal with it much more. You have any questions or anything like that? Yes?

Student: [Hard to Hear] Why do you think they chose [Hard to Hear] literal.

Dr. Stein: If you are committed to a particular philosophy of word for word translation, then like the King James you translate it word for word. Now, I don't know if the King James knew some of these were idioms. By the time you get to the RSV, they begin to know they are idiomatic and they begin to hedge on that. Now the question is, should you translate this word for word, when you come to, “the man has two wives, the one loved, the other hated.” Will that cause confusion to the reader, when you put a footnote this is idiomatic for the expression of preferring one wife over the other or you do that already in the translation? And you say, “the one loved, the other – the one loved more and the other less.” You have to make that decision. It is two different ways of translating, but my understanding would be I think it makes more sense to translate a passage like that, “the one loved more and the other loved less.” That makes sense. People can understand it.

They miss the idiom to be sure, but they don't get confused about the meaning, so that here you come to a place where a thought for thought translation is more conducive than a word for word, but the problem of course is that when you do that, you lose the idiom and so forth and so on, but I don't think that for the average person that is a great loss.

Student: Be careful in assuming that the idiom [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: The norms of language possibilities of an expression. If we have an idiom, they tend to continue that way quite a bit and change in expressions like that in Biblical times would be far far, less frequently than the changes in our language in say 50, 80 years or something like that. So if you knew this was an idiom, I think you could probably assume that, but the context always has to be the final determiner.

Student: [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: A sin to?

Student: [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: No, I don't think it is. I think what they mean by that is "May the Lord bless you in a general way, probably and ..." if you translated it, most people would translate it, "Gesundheit."

It is no longer so much "God bless you" but "good health" or something like that, "Hope you get over your sneezing" or something like that. Doesn't really mean that and it might be wise for us to be more careful when we use God's name, than to be more precise with it. I think we are very very casual in the way we use God's name much to much so. If anything, we could learn something from Orthodox Jewish people who have such a reverence for the name of God that they don't even repeat it. We use such things as that God is going to get you for what you did to me and using it in that lighthearted sense, I am uneasy about that.

End of Lecture 18

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Hermeneutics for Exaggeration \(Part 1\)](#)

We are going to use another literary form and the form – you know when you teach, you have to always be careful on how you word things. You don't want to word things in a way that causes difficulty. For instance, many people might have a problem with saying, "Jesus is exaggerating here," because for many of us, exaggerating has an air of dishonesty, lack of truthfulness.

So I would say, Jesus uses overstatement or hyperbole. And I'd separate overstatement and hyperbole. Hyperbole is literally impossible. Overstatement is to exaggerate, but it can be taken literally, so hyperbole is literally impossible. Overstatement is to interpret

something literally that is not meant to be interpreted literally. It is exaggerated. They are both forms of exaggeration.

But for many people, the use of exaggerated language has negative connotations.

(For some of you who have had me for Gospels, one ... this will be something of a repeat. I apologize for that.)

For instance when Mary turns in her books at 53rd Bank, and the bank examiner comes, do they say, "Oh. Mary's used exaggeration in the books again?" She is using overstatement. No. Here it is dishonest.

How do you know the difference between when this form of exaggerated terminology is acceptable as a genre and when it's not? I think it is real simple. If both parties know it's exaggerated language, it's perfectly legitimate. If only one knows, the one speaking, then it's dishonest. Then it is deceitful. But if both know the exaggerated nature of the saying, then it becomes a very powerful form of what we call commissive language.

There really is no way of expressing love to someone without exaggerated language. If you eliminate exaggerated language, you are in trouble in any courting, romantic relationship. "My dear Joan, the last time I kissed you, the stars began to explode in the heavens and my heart skipped a beat. Can't wait to see you Friday."

That's exaggerated terminology. Let's use more scientific terminology. "My dear Joan, the last time I kissed you, it was just like putting my lips on a piece of raw warm leather."
“

{laughter}

Well. Which is more accurate? Which is the one that is going to get you into trouble? You have to be able to use language like this to express emotions. And lots of Jesus' terminology and expressions are exaggerated terminology, but they are known and they are shared and they are powerful.

Now through the history of the Church, most people have been able to detect exaggeration on a kind of common sense intuitive way. Most people know it. There have been tragic examples however this has not been understood and people have plucked out an eye or cut off an arm and mutilated themselves because they misunderstood the nature of the saying.

What I want to do is to talk first of all about how you can detect exaggerated terminology and then after we have done that, talk about the strength and value of such terminology. Now one of the ways we can detect exaggerated terminology is if it is literally impossible. For instance if it is hyperbole, then you know it has to be exaggerated. No one would think of this literally.

Matthew 7 verses 3-5, after saying do not judge so that you be not judged, in verses 3 through 5, Jesus says, “Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbor ...” This is the New RSV’s way of avoiding sexist language. Brother right? How could you say to your brother – but makes it possible to apply to your brother or your sister. How can you say to your neighbor, “Let me take the speck out of your eye”, while the log is in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.

I remember years ago, seeing a Christian artist trying to portray that saying in the Bible. It was just impossible. Just no way. And the reason is you can’t get a log in a person’s eye. You can’t visualize it. There are somethings you can do with Art, you can’t do with rhetoric or writing materials. But there are somethings you can do with writing that you can’t do with Art. And here is an example of it. The fact is that you can’t get a log in a person’s eye.

On the other hand, this hyperbolic expression is very powerful. When Jesus said it, how did people respond to the? “Boy that’s dumb. Doesn’t he know that you can’t get a tree or a log in a person’s eye? That’s dumb.”

Or did they say “You know, isn’t it true how easy it is to see the little flaws in other peoples’ lives and miss the great ones in your own?”

But isn’t it so much more powerful than what my rewording of it in non-literal language – “Why do you see the speck in your brother’s eye – the piece of sawdust in your brother’s eye, but don’t see the great 2 by 4, the great tree trunk in your own eye?” There is a power in exaggerated terminology.

And the fact is, we do see the faults of others much more easily and readily than we see our own faults. I gave the example in a New Testament class of having taught one night and driving home as I was coming to this place, there was a woman driving ahead of me and she hit the brakes and started to turn and put her signal lights on. I was mad. “You put the signal on first!” Once you hit the brake, I know you are going to do something. The signal light is to tell me you are about to do something. I was really upset. So upset that I didn’t notice till a little later that I went through the red light at that corner. But that’s understandable. ??? lights – that happens. Not using signals, that’s right next to the unpardonable sin somewhere in 1st John.

It’s really easy to see other people’s flaws and not notice your own. But isn’t it more powerful to say, to see the little specks in other people’s eyes and not your own. Very powerful, but it’s hyperbolic because it is not literally possible.

In 6:2-4,

“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. 3 But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

This Sunday when you give your offering, as you are about to put it in left to your left hand and say, “Don’t look.”

How can your left hand not know what your right hand is doing?

When you think of it, how can you handle anything? Hands don’t know anything... So you are really saying, “Make a major attempt, not to know what you are about to do” – which doesn’t make any sense. But in the context it is very powerful hyperbolic language to say your giving is between God and you. Its not to be a show. It is not for others to see. When you give, its between you, God and the IRS...

{Laughter}

But it’s a powerful way of saying it. Much more powerful than saying, “When you give, do it quietly without people noticing it.” Something like that.

In Matthew 23, verses 23 to 24, you have another example of this,

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith."

Now the Pharisees not only practiced tithing on whatever they earned, but if someone gave them something or they bought something from someone, they would tithe on what they bought to because they did not know if the other person already had tithed. They wanted to be real clear about these.

And so even the little things like garden herbs they would tithe and yet they would rob widows of their houses, Jesus said. So you have this hypocrisy. Then Jesus goes on and says,

"It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat"

Unclean animal – you don’t want to swallow a gnat, because you become ceremonially unclean and you had to go through all this purification stuff.

"You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel!" Also unclean. Have you ever seen a camel recently. Again, it makes no sense literally. But people who said that didn’t say, “Oh. That’s dumb. Cant swallow camels.” But they said, “Yeah. It is so easy to become concerned about the minutiae in religion and not be concerned about the big thing – love and justice and mercy and the like.”

But hyperbole are examples in which the exaggeration is so great that its literally impossible. Another time, you know that a statement uses this kind of exaggerated terminology is when it conflicts with what Jesus says elsewhere. For instance in Luke 14:26,

‘Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple.’

You know, there has to be something that immediately comes to your mind, and you say, “He can’t mean this literally.”

Why? Because He says other things that violate that. In Chapter 7, He criticizes the Pharisees because they have a practice in which they say, “Well. You know, what I should do to take care of your mom and dad, I give it to the temple instead.” And they were really impressed. Got a real – good ovation when I gave that. But I am not obligated to take of you anymore. And by your tradition, Jesus says, you break the law which is, “Honor your father and mother.” Now He is criticizing them for not honoring father and mother. How can he say here all of a sudden about hating father and mother? Doesn’t make any sense.

Furthermore He says somewhere, doesn’t He, that you have to love your enemies. Now if you hate your father and mother, that means you are treating them as enemies. They qualify to be loved anyhow. So something. Something doesn’t fit here. Its exaggerated language and what He means here is that like Jacob loving Rachel more than Leah, you must love Me more than the most intimate and noblest forms of human love. The love of Christ is above all other forms of human love.

You have Matthew 6:6, where He says that when you pray, don’t pray to be a – be showy, when you pray, well let me begin to reading at verse 5,

5 ‘And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. 6 But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Ok. Always pray secretly and privately. But then how do you pray secretly and privately? Verse 9, “Our Father who art in Heaven.” That’s a corporate prayer.

Now did Matthew think that this was a contradiction? No. He understood that the form was an exaggerated form of speech. Prayer is not to be used as an attempt to show piety to other people – show how wonderful you are. Prayer is to be done privately.

There is a sense in which my wife and I don’t do that. When we go out to eat, we always pray. Pray thankful for food. Thankful that I never had a time in my life when my children were hungry and I didn’t have something to give them to eat. Just think of how

terrible it must be for prayer to have hungry children and have nothing to give them. If you have never experienced that, at every meal you ought to give God thanks for that.

So when we go out to eat, I don't stand up on the table and say, "You pagans out there. Watch me! I am going to pray." No, you just do it quietly. As unobtrusively as possible. Recently we were praying silently when the waitress came by and she said, "Lord. Make the food taste good."

It is a prayer. ??? Fine. I'll buy that.

But it is meant as an exaggerated message in that regard. Other times a statement conflicts not with what Jesus says but His behavior. For instance, Luke 14:26 about hating father and mother. You have Jesus on the cross. He is concerned about His mother. He says to His mother, "Woman behold your son, Son behold your mother." And He has a place for her to be taken care of – at home with John – who takes her into his home.

Matthew 10:34. Here is something that – it should be a red flag.

'Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.'

Good grief. Well, that right away – aren't there something about, in the previous statement about His having said something like blessed are the peacemakers. One of the Beatitudes. For theirs is the Kingdom of God. For they shall be called Children of God. Excuse me. His behavior. Elsewhere He comes to bring reconciliation and such.

So again one would have to be aware that there is something about this in His behavior, in His sayings that seems to conflict. His statement in chapters 6 of Matthew, Matthew verse 6 about going into your closet to pray. There are times we see that Jesus prays in the Garden of Gethsemane. And the disciples know what He prays. How do they know what He is praying? They overheard Him. So if you take that literally, is a problem in this regard as well.

There is a problem in Matthew 5:33, one of the "You have heard it said, but I say." Verse 33-37. He says,

33 'Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, "You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord." 34 But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 Let your word be "Yes, Yes" or "No, No"; anything more than this comes from the evil one.'

In the context in which this is said, there is debate among the Rabbis when do you have to keep an oath. And in the Talmud, the debate goes on. One rabbi says, "Well. If you made an oath to a Gentile, you don't have to keep it." And another rabbi says, "Yes. But,

if you made an oath to a Gentile in the name of Yahweh, your God, using the sacred name, then you have to keep it.” Another rabbi says, “Even if it is the name of Yahweh, if its to a Gentile, you don’t have to keep it.” So here you have, which oaths to keep, and Jesus says “Don’t make any oaths at all. Let your yes be yes, and you no, no.” In the passage, that I have listed next to it – in Matthew 26:63, we have an interesting incident in which Jesus acknowledges the legitimacy of an oath. Do you ever think of why Jesus at His trial was quiet and then all of a sudden, He started to talk again.

He was quiet. He does not answer until we find in Matthew 26:62,

62 The high priest stood up and said, ‘Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?’ 63 But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, ‘I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.’

That oath is found in Leviticus 5, verse 1 and following, in which when you are placed under an oath, you must answer. If you do not answer, you are acknowledging you are guilty. Why didn’t He just say, “I plead the 5th Amendment?” There was no 5th Amendment in Israel. That was not a possibility. And He acknowledged the validity of the oath and now He responds. And He says, “Yes. You said so. I am the Messiah.” So He acknowledges here in his practice, the legitimacy of an oath. What about us and oaths?

In our country, there are groups, for instance, Mennonites and some Brethren groups that simply will not swear an oath. And in our Law system, that is generally accepted, or it is accepted. And a person, the Judge will say, “Then will you give me your word, that what you are about to say is truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.” And they will say, “I do” and that will be accepted. Their word, because their religious convictions do not allow them to give an oath.

I just had supper this evening with Dr. Chancer and his wife Donna. They came from Canada originally. His wife said he was teaching up in Canada and he married her. Then he came to America and his wife was coming to America to become an American citizen. And when he came to the border, the person at the immigration office said that, “Mrs. Chancer, do you swear that you will not take up violent revolution against the United States government. Do you swear that you will not try to overthrow the government by force? And she said, “No.”

“What in the world?” He said “You will not swear that you will not – you promise not try to overthrow the government.” And so he was confused and he went into the main person there and he was an older person, and he came out and he kind of smiled and said, “You’re Mennonite, aren’t you?” She says, “Yes. I am.” And he said, “Well. Maam. Will you give me your word that you will not try to overthrow this government of ours?” And she said, “Oh. Yeah.” “Well. That is good enough for us. That is fine.” But they took it literally.

Now. I don't think that what Jesus meant here is that you should never take an oath. What He is emphasizing is that you should have the character that it is unnecessary to take an oath.

In other words, your word is your bond. If you give your word, you will keep it, unless you die before you can keep it. I still remember my Dad telling me once, "Bobby. I gave him my word." To a little kid, that was important. That is something. Yeah. Ok. So the giving of your word should be of supreme importance. If I were called in a court of law to give testimony and say "Robert Stein, do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you God?"

It might be a little showy, but I think, we should be able to say something like, "Your honor, I'm a Christian, and Jesus taught me always to tell the truth. So I don't have to take this oath, but if it makes you happy, sure I do."

That would be too show-boating. But I think that's the kind of character you should have, that an oath is not necessary. Your word is good. Don't you know people who if they say, "Yeah. I give you my word. I'll do it." You know it is going to be done.

Someone else will say, "Yeah. I swear on my mother's grave, Bob. I'll do it." Then you go away ??? and say "Well. I guess he is not going to do it after all."

If your character and your word go hand in hand, you don't need to say anymore, and that's what Jesus is getting at here but He uses this hyperbolic terminology here.

A fourth way in which you can detect exaggerated terminology is if a statement conflicts with the teachings of the Old Testament. For instance, hating father and mother. Why? One of the commandments of the Old Testament is – one of the 10 Commandments is honor your father and mother. The fact that there is no uproar about this, that no one is confused about it indicates they recognized because of the other things Jesus said, that this violated the Old Testament and He didn't come to violate the Old Testament, but to fulfill it. That had to be understood and exaggerated terminology.

Sometimes we have statements that conflicted with the New Testament teaching. Leaving apart even for a moment, the issue of divine inspiration - certainly the writers of the rest of the New Testament think an awful lot like Jesus and the Gospel writers. So I would think their understanding of the teachings of Jesus would be far better than most people. They are much closer to the situation. Now when you add to this, that it is part of the Word of God, well of course you have an absolute in addition. But you have the fact that you are not to swear an oath. And yet, the book of Hebrews tells us that several times in the Old Testament, God swore an oath. God Himself swore an oath.

Had Jesus forgotten about this when He framed the saying? No. Come on. You know the Old Testament well. Interestingly enough, it becomes somewhat complicated when God is going to swear an oath. Because we swear an oath on the Bible, which is bigger than

us and greater than us, but who is greater than God. So what He has to swear is on His name. His own honor, personally that way.

Paul swears an oath, “I swear to you, I am telling the truth...” and so forth. “God is my witness,” Paul can talk about. There is another saying in Matthew 5:42, which also is exaggerated terminology.

“42 Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.” Notice the universal language. Probably goes with some of the other. In verse 39, “Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also.”

How do you hit someone on the right cheek?

With the back hand. It is not so much a physical kind of thing. It is an insult more. Slap, back of your hand kind of thing, that is being envisioned here.

“40 if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well ...” In other words, if someone is going to sue you for your undergarments, give him your outer garment also. You couldn’t sue a person for their outer garments, because that was their warmth. They had to return that. Now Luke, when he gives the version of this, talks a thief coming and stealing your outer garment and you let him have your undergarment as well, because that would be more understandable to Theophilus – of a thief coming that way and stealing, rather than a legal situation of being sued for your undergarments and so forth and so on.

If somebody sues you for – in the Lucan saying – if someone steals your outer garment, let Him have your undergarment. If they steal your pants, let them have your shorts as well. Now, I don’t think what we are talking about is some sort of new lifestyle of dress or something here. I think He is just saying, “Look. Be willing to be abused. Be willing to turn your other cheek. Don’t ...oops.” I said that once before. In this illustration, it doesn’t go real well.

{laughter}

Anyhow, to be non-resistant is what you have here. But He goes on, “Give to everyone who begs from me, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.” Now if you look at what Paul says in 2 Thessalonians, this looks like it would be something of a contradiction. In 3:10 he says, of 2 Thessalonians, “10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: Anyone unwilling to work should not eat.” In other words, don’t give the people who are unwilling to work – not people who can’t work, who are physically unable or there is no work provided. But if they are unwilling to work and they can then ??? let them not eat.

But how does that fit with “give to everyone who asks you?” You have to realize that what we have here is an exaggerated form. You don’t have something like “Give to

everyone who begs from me and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you except in the following circumstances.” If you qualify, then you lose the power of the statement. But its understandable that there could be situations where you would not do this.

As pastors you are going to face that. You are going to have people wanting handouts and you are not always sure whether if you gave them money, they would use it for the food or other things they are talking about or whether they would use it for alcohol or drugs. What do you do? I remember somebody saying, “I need money to get back home. I don’t have money for busfare.” And I said “Alright. Well. Let us go get something to eat then we will go to the bus” and I put him on the bus and sent him off. I wasn’t sure if just giving him money, he would use it for that.

What happens when your child comes to you and says “Mom. Dad. I just learned my verse for life - my favorite verse in the Bible. ‘Give to everyone who begs from you and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you,’ and I’d like you to show how that works out. I have a bicycle that I saw in the store and I want you to buy it for me.”

If you love children you don’t give them everything they want. It would be the worst thing that you could do for them. But do you want Jesus to list exceptions or does He expect common sense in regard to the understanding of how this general overstated verse is. The fact is, we are going to be abused. People will ask for things that we will give them, that they probably don’t need or deserving of. That’s part of being Christian. If you want never to be taken as a Christian, the only way you can do that is by sometimes not giving to people who need it. Because you are not that smart. Neither am I, to perceive some of these things so we accept that. That’s part of being a Christian. Our generosity would be abused.

But there are times when it would be foolish and we would know better than to give in that instance.

End of Lecture 19

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Hermeneutics for Exaggeration \(Part 2\)](#)

Sometimes a statement is interpreted by an evangelist in a non-literal way. We had that example in Luke 14:26 – “You have to hate your father and mother.” and Matthew has “You cannot love father and mother more than me.” Whereas Luke gives a more literal word for word translation of Jesus’ words, you have a more meaning for meaning or thought for thought in Matthew here. That helps us.

In Mark 10:11, you have a statement in Mark on divorce. Jesus is teaching His disciples and lets get right to the heart of it - in Mark 10:10, "then in the house, the disciples asked Him about the matter. He said to them, 'whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.'"

Luke has the same saying. Matthew has the saying in two different places and in both instances Matthew has an exception, except for adultery – except for porneia – for fornication. How do we understand this?

Mark, Luke – no exception. If you look at 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, Paul seems to also be aware of this saying on divorce and he understands it as not having an exception associated with it either. Let me read that for you.

"To the married, I give a command, not I but the Lord." He is saying now, with respect to the married, I am going to give you a command, but it really doesn't come from me. Jesus said it. It comes from Jesus. "That the wife should not separate from her husband but if she does separate, let her remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And that the husband should not divorce his wife."

Then he goes on and says, "To the rest, I say – I and not the Lord." What he is saying is that now I am giving you a command as the Lord's apostle. Jesus didn't say this, but I am telling you. So he is not saying, "Well, the one thing is inspired by God and the other is not." He is saying Jesus said it. Now Jesus didn't comment about this, but now I am telling you this. And then He gives an exception as well.

My understanding of how that – to make the most sense out of that is that Matthew understands the saying of Jesus as being an exaggerated one. The general rule so emphasized that Jesus does not want to talk about exceptions. He just wants to say that God hates divorce, there is no such thing as a good divorce. A man should not divorce his wife, a wife should not divorce his husband. Matthew understands that the law permits an exception in the case of immorality in general.

Now a lot of attempts have been... a lot has been written on this. A lot of attempts have been made to try to make this understanding of Matthew's porneia, something very specific such as incest, "except in the case of incest." Which means there wasn't a marriage to start with, so there is no breaking of the absolute forbidding of divorce. But the word used for fornication is a very very general word. Sexual immorality in the broadest sense. I think that what he means here is that this is a permissible, not a required thing that you have to do, but divorce is permissible in the case of adultery – in the case of immorality of one sort or another.

I think Matthew's exception indicates to me that he understood the other sayings as being overstatement – that Paul also seems to have understood it that way is the fact that he gives an exception and that is that if the unbeliever departs and leaves, then the woman is free – an unbelieving husband who deserts – the woman is free.

What is interesting – he doesn't envision that the believing husband would ever do that, but it is the unbelieving husband, and so that there is also another exception. So that you have then in this regard, two possible exceptions I think. What I would understand this is that Jesus is being asked the question "What are all the good reasons for divorce?"

I can't answer something like that. You answer by saying, "There is no good reason. God hates divorce." Years ago when the God-is-Dead controversy was in and a lot of relativistic views of morality were going on. I remember going in lunch -just walk through the lunchroom and a couple of my colleagues said "Bob. We are talking about – when would immorality not be wrong?" I said, it is always wrong.

Now you know upon reflection, what would I do if someone said "There is a Hydrogen bomb in the middle of Manhattan and its going to blow up and kill 5 million people unless you Robert Stein commit immorality. But you know I hardly ever get that temptation. It seems to never arise in my life, so why speculate about stupid things. The answer is, "It's always wrong." And if you were able to conjure up some crazy exception to this – Alright, but you don't emphasize the exceptions. You emphasize the rule and Jesus wants to say "Look, God hates divorce." And the fact is there is never a good divorce. Every divorce shows a failure of God's intended purpose. Whether some are less worse than the continued marriage, brutality in some of these things, people come up with different conclusions.

I remember my pastor counseling someone back in Minnesota, who was being abused by her husband and was thinking about divorcing him. In the middle of that counseling, not during the exact time he was counseling, but in that period that he was counselor, he killed her. I would hate to be a pastor and say, "No. You can't divorce him."

There may be a less worse situation by leaving that kind of abusive situation to protect your children and something else. So I think what we have here is a possibility of an overstatement for effect, to emphasize God is interested in the picayunish reasons why you think divorces may be good or bad or no matter what religion or not. He dislikes divorce. He hates divorce. His purpose is marriage, that's a continual thing and therefore when you marry you commit yourself and you work on that marriage from the beginning day until death to make it a great marriage and something that will be a pattern and example.

Student: In an instance such as this are you suggesting that there are two exceptions to this – two alone or ???

Dr. Stein: Yeah. That is a good point. For instance, if as some people say there are two exceptions that are legitimate: desertion by an unbeliever and immorality by the partner. The only time you would ever have been able to come to that conclusion was after there was – the 4 Gospels and the whole New Testament together and now we are talking about "But what happened when Mark wrote this commentary – this this Gospel rather to the Church. He anticipated that it would make sense to them even apart from the others." I think he anticipated that they would understand this is – this is the main principle pattern.

There may be an exception here or there but that is not Jesus' concern. Furthermore if you start counseling and saying, "Well, I think this is a legitimate reason for divorce and so forth." One thing you have to realize is, that the burden of proof is to demonstrate that it is legitimate in light of what Jesus says in these words, to go through a divorce proceeding.

And on the Day of Judgment, you have to stand before God and say, "I know this is what the Bible said and I did the following because ..." and that's a lot to be feared of ... to explain that.

Student: Would you mind if we called you when one of these things ???

Dr. Stein: No. Uh. Don't call me. I'm a teacher. I am not a pastor. Some of us cop out on that. [Hard To Hear] It is a difficult situation. You want to be sympathetic. You know, you have so many people who are now divorced in our churches. The question is what do you do? Well the one thing you want to do is – if you made a mistake to start with, let us make sure the second time we don't make a mistake. This one has to work, because if the second one fails, its all over. There is no success after two of those. The success ratio of marriages goes dramatically down once you have broken a commitment like that. The second one if you break – now it is just rooming arrangements kind of thing that you do after that.

So as pastors you have to really emphasize... the best way you handle divorce is by building good marriages and how are we doing that in our churches? How are we emphasizing that? Sometimes the church does more to separate parents by having them go through so many different activities that they don't have time with one another or something like that. How do you build that relationship?

Ok. I have said enough about that.

Sometimes an evangelist interprets something in a non-literal way. If you look at Matthew 10:34, you have this saying about Jesus coming not to bring peace but a sword. Do not think that I have come to bring peace on the earth. I have come not to bring peace, but a sword. But notice that Matthew has right next to that two verses in a context which indicates, what kind of sword he is bringing.

He says, "For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And the ones foes will be members of his own household. Whoever loves father and mother more than me is not worthy of me."

So you have a context when you indicate, we are not talking about in any way about political matters. We are not talking about revolution. We are talking about that fact that sometimes, Jesus brings division at homes. Usually He brings healing. But at times He brings division.

Sometimes and especially in certain cultures that are very strongly ethnic and religious, it is very very difficult for a Jewish person to put their faith in Jesus. You find that they may be ostracized from their family as a result. For some that's – that's the unpardonable sin. You turn against the family, you turn against everyone. Sometimes He does bring a sword.

Alright - statements not always, literally fulfilled in practice. Mark 13:2. As they are sitting opposite to the temple mount on the Mount of Olives. The disciples have said to Jesus, "Look. What large stones and what large buildings." And they were. The Jewish temple was not the largest temple in the world, but it was the largest temple complex in the world. The mount on which it stood was larger than any other complex at all. And it could easily have been one of the Seven Wonders of the World except they were written up three centuries earlier than that. It was a magnificent site. Some of the stones were just monumental and huge. You wonder how they ever moved the stones of that size.

But Jesus says, "You see these great buildings, not one stone will be left here upon another. All will be thrown down." Any of you have been to Jerusalem? Seen the Wailing Wall and the temple mount? Did you go to the one place inside the Wailing Wall where one of the stones are removed and you can see all the way down to the foundation, bedrock? Right next to the Wailing Wall, they have a section removed. It is inside, a covered area and they have lights down there. You can see 16 layers of stone that are based on the rock foundation of the mountain.

Because when you build a wall, you have to be built on a rock otherwise they can tunnel under it. They all go back to Herod's time. You remember the Herodians don't have those embossed edges, so you know right away they come from Herod's day. They are still there. A lot of them are standing on each others. They [Hard To Hear] little ground however.

So it's not literally two. But wait a minute. Would anybody in A.D. 70 have said this was not true? On the Western wall of the temple mount, there was a valley – a cheese makers valley – that was not a valley any longer until A.D. 70. From A.D. 70, I mean till the present day, because the ruins of the temple filled the whole valley. There is not a valley anymore. If you had been there A.D. 70, you would have said, "Of course. Yes. Jesus said that would happen."

And the fact that there are still some stones together is no more significant than if I said "I hate to tell you, but next Tuesday night we will not be meeting in this classroom. All of the Norton complex will be a heap of rubble. There won't even be two bricks cemented together.

And you come and you see this huge pile of rubble, broken glass, splintered wood, and somebody climbs the top of it and says "Hey. Here are two bricks. They are still cemented together. He is wrong!" Well. That's the kind of thing I am talking about. Exaggerated language. Very powerful.

Matthew 7:7 and 8, “Ask and it shall be given to you. Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives and he who seeks finds and to him who knocks it will be opened.”

Am I the only one in this class that had not had prayers answered or some of you also have not had their prayers answered. Excuse the frivolous example – I used it before in another class, but I have always wanted to be a missionary. Long before I wanted to be a professor of theology, I wanted to be a missionary and I looked at unreached people groups and the group that I chose were filthy rich of the world.

And I thought there needed to be a special mission effort for them because no one was really going out to try to win them to the Lord and I just thought I would start working in the city of Monaco where there are a lot of filthy rich people and I have been trying to collect funds for that mission but it takes a lot of money to reach the filthy rich unreached people group. Praying you know ... houses ... should get anything for less than 20 million dollars in the town, that you could bring rich people to and not feel embarrassed about. And how do you witness to them, well you can't drive them in that Passat, you have to have ... maybe a Lexus you can get by on if not, but it has to be top line Lexus otherwise they wouldn't ride with you. And then maybe the best way to really witness is to have a nice 70-80 foot yacht sit in the harbor and then you could drink your sweetened or unsweetened ice-tea and share the Gospel out there. I have asked but it ain't been given, I have sought but I ain't found it yet and so I have unanswered prayers.

Somebody says “Yeah. But Luke says, you ask and receive not because you ask amiss to consume it on your own lust.” Well. You take your theme verse, I'll take mine. Mine is 7 and 8 of Matthew. “Ask and it shall be given to you. Seek and you shall find.” I like that one better. Now of course there are exceptions. Everyone would realize that you can't ask God to cease to exist.

Jesus didn't somehow believe that the people, He was trying to encourage in the Sermon on the Mount, needed to be told, that stupid prayers like Stein is uttering or a prayer like God not existing, God is not going to answer those kind of thing. He wants people to be encouraged to pray and to realize that God delights in hearing the prayers of His people.

Now you could have of course say, “Ask and it shall be given to you. Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives and he who seeks finds and to him who knocks it will be opened.”

Except of course in the following instance, 1, 2, ...

What would happen if you put a list of exceptions? Where would the focus of attention go? The exceptions. Is that what Jesus is wanting to do? No. He assumes that there are exceptions and common sense will provide those. And so therefore you don't give exceptions.

When I lived in White Bear Lake, we had in our backyard, two very large Weeping Willow trees. And when Fall would come, of course it was time to rake leaves, well, Weeping Willow trees are lousy trees to rake, because it is not leaves alone, they are all, the leaves are tied to these strings of branches and they get all caught up in the rake and every three times you rake, pull the rake and then you have to by hand separate them all. The Weeping Willow trees came into existence, we know from the Bible after the Fall because the curse came, because they are cursed trees. Maples are nice. Colors. [Hard To Hear] rake leaves. Weeping Willows, bad stuff.

Well. My daughter and son and I had been raking for several hours on a Saturday afternoon and sometimes around 4, Julie my daughter said, "Dad. Keith and I are tired. We would like to quit." And I said, "Well. You know its just about done. In about 15 minutes we will have all of it done. The yard will look great and we will go out. We will go out to eat and you can have anything you want. You can order anything."

Well, Julie knew and Keith knew, they couldn't order anything. They knew we were not going to [Hard To Hear] Steakhouse. No way. We were going to McDonalds and anything they wanted on the menu, they could get.

But supposing I had tried to qualify that. Much of the joy and the enthusiasm would be lost. They knew it was exaggerated. They knew there were certain things you couldn't do. We were not going to eat a lobster or something like that, but we would have a good time and they put in the qualifications.

I heard Keith once say later when I used that illustration "the real exaggeration was when he had said it would only be 15 or 20 more minutes." But anyhow. We use it because it is effective. It is an effective way of communicating. And we allow people, for themselves, to understand what exceptions there are and to fill them in.

In Matthew 5:29, we have a statement that taken literally is meaningless. For instance Jesus says, in the context of you shall not commit adultery, "I say to anyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than that for your whole body to be thrown into Hell. If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off, throw it away... better for you to lose one of your members than that for your whole body to be thrown into Hell.

Now if you took it literally, the fact is, it wouldn't do anything. In the context of looking at a woman to lust, removing the right eye doesn't remove the fact that you can still lust with your left. And if you remove the left eye, you can still remember. Still think. Now if you want to remove the grey matter of your brain, that will... do it.

But common sense here would indicate, if you did it literally, it doesn't do anything. The power of the verse is in this over-exaggerated form, "Hey. There is no sin worth going to Hell for." Even if its as painful as plucking out an eye or tearing off an arm, better to go through that, pain of repentance and so forth and enter life than never having done so to

perish. That's a powerful, powerful statement. If you begin to qualify it, you lose that power.

Sometimes there are particularly reforms that are prone to exaggeration, for instance we have talked already about proverbs and prophesy and poetry, and that many times they use exaggerated terminology, metaphorical language that shouldn't be taken literally. We looked at idioms earlier today. Faith to remove mountains, referring to great faith, not to be taken literally. Sometimes we have idiomatic language that no longer bears its literal meaning like, gnashing of teeth to express horror. There is going to be weeping or gnashing of teeth. Well. [Hard To Hear] joyous occasions in life have often been accompanied by weeping.

People can weep for joy. Maybe there is no joy in Heaven either. No, weeping is generally associated with pain. No sorrow or pain. The gnashing of teeth - unbelievers who do not now have teeth will have teeth so they can gnash them. No... It is idiomatic for expression of [Hard To Hear]

Sometimes we have all inclusive language. You can use all inclusive language literally, but many times it's a sign that we should not press the language literally. Matthew 9:23, let's look at that. Let me just read that real quickly. A man comes to Jesus and says my son needs help and your disciples were no help and he says, if you are able to do something have pity on us and help us. And Jesus says to him, verse 23, "If you are able, all things can be done for the one who believes."

"All things" – universal language. But it's much more powerful than "lots of things can be done." Right? But not things can be done, if you have faith. We have looked at that earlier.

Luke 6:30, let me read that one real quickly and then try to bring some of these to a summary conclusion. Ok.

"Give to everyone who begs you and if anyone takes anything from you of your goods, do not ask for them."

The universal language I think also should warn you, warn us there. Now why this use of exaggeration? Well, it's powerful language. It is language that commissive language, effective, it reveals emotions and the like.

Now sometimes, some people will say something like "Well. Now that we know that these are not meant to be taken literally – now we know what it means – ok, that's the end of it." No, that is not the end of it. There is something very important you miss, if you simply say, "Well. We have to interpret it as not being literal." When do you use exaggeration when you speak?

Students: [Hard To Hear]

Dr. Stein: When it is important. When you come across a saying of Jesus that uses exaggerated terminology, what you need to do is say, “This must be especially important, because He is using exaggerated language. This must be so important to Him that He is evoking language to show its importance and in many ways it is these things that give us the flavor of the heart of Jesus much more than the non-exaggerated language.

You can get a feel of the heartbeat of Jesus when He uses exaggeration. So I would say, rather than simply say, “Well. You just have to make sure you don’t take it literally, you have to interpret meaning as allowing exceptions and so forth,” I would say, “Boy. This must be really important. I better pay attention to it, because He used exaggerated terminology.”

You might also remember that the disciples and the crowds that heard Jesus, did not have tape recorders. They did not have pencil and paper like we have. How would they retain the sayings of Jesus? This is one that is easy to retain. It is probably unlikely that there would be a lot of corruption in this exaggerated terminology because it just stamps - burns in your mind what Jesus said. You would probably never forget it and the like, so.

It was a very good communicative form to use in His teaching ministry. Questions about exaggerated terminology?

Student: Mark 10 of the Gospel [Hard To Hear] It is easier for a rich man than a camel to go through the eye of the needle?

Dr. Stein: - Easier for a camel to go through the eye of the needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God? Right.

Many people have tried to say, since there are rich people in the Kingdom of God he can’t mean what it looks like literally. Probably it means that there was a gate called the Eye’s Needle in the Temple wall that a camel could only go through with great difficulty. There has never been a gate in the Temple wall that we know of that was called the Eye’s Needle. That whole thing only came to existence around 800 or so. People started to use the – that as a gate or something like that. Furthermore if you know that Jesus uses exaggerated language. You don’t have to try to figure out how this is literally possible.

The fact is a camel can never go through the Eye of a Needle, anymore than a left hand cannot know what a right hand is doing. What Jesus is trying to impress is the great difficulty there is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. And that’s why He uses that kind of terminology. It is powerful. How difficult it is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the Eye of a Needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. Have you ever thanked God that you are not rich?

End of Lecture 20

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Hermeneutics for Parables \(Part 1\)](#)

I want to look at the genre of Parables. There are Parables in the Old Testament and the very term, parable, mshal in the Old Testament is a very broad term and I remember, I was taught that a parable was an earthy story with a heavenly truth. Some parables are not stories at all, I mean ... In the norms of language, Jesus says “Doubtless, you will quote me this parabolae” – parable – most of the translations say proverb, ‘Physician heal yourself.’”

Now that is a parable, in the sense that a parable is some sort of a comparison, metaphor, extended into a story or short, pithy and so forth. So we have to go by what the New Testament interprets as parable which is wide-ranging. [Hard to hear] mostly these story parable as such.

We want to talk about various principles for interpreting these parables and the way I like to do that is to deal with a very famous parable, the Parable of the Good Samaritan, follow through history, how this has been interpreted, arrive at some basic principles, apply the principles to this parable and another parable and see how that all works out. Now the parable itself and you and just listen to me as I read it occurs in Luke 10:30. Jesus replied,

30Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. 31Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. 32So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. 34He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’

Very short parable but certainly one of the most famous – maybe if you talked about which is the most famous of Jesus’ parables, it is probably this one or the one of the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Now, as we look at how parables have been interpreted in the past, we are going to look at some that we will think, look kind of foolish and we may want to look down our nose on them – what kind of silly people came up with things like that. But be careful who you ridicule because, these are giants. These are some of the greatest theologians – Luther – Calvin, Augustine, Clement of Alexandria and people like that. I think what happens is that sometimes, you are so much a child of your own environment that you buy into their presuppositions and you make their mistakes and you kind of take it for granted. Fortunately we live in a day and age where we don’t do that anymore.

{laughter}

And so if we want succeeding generations to look upon us with compassion and mercy, let us also do that with those in the past. Alright? Now, we are going to look at some of the mistakes made and we are going to arrive at some of the basic principles. The earliest reference to this whole thing – this whole parable is by a man named Marcion. Marcion was the son of a bishop who lived in Northern Turkey. He came to Rome, joined the church, gave a large gift of money to the church and it was soon discovered that he was a Gnostic – a heretic.

Gnostics believe that matter was evil. They were kind of Platonic philosophers. If matter is evil and spirit was good, well then God's son could have never become a man, because that would have meant that he took upon himself evil – matter – and corrupted Himself. So they argued it would only look like the Son of God took upon Himself a man and that heresy became known as Docetism, from the Greek word, *dokeo*, which means seeing or look. And it looked like to outsiders, he was really a man although, he was not. He was disguised in various ways. Well. Leaving that all aside, Marcion is the first person to refer to this parable and he makes this statement,

“The Son of God first appeared in history as the Good Samaritan on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho.”

It is the first time he appeared in history. Well, you say, “That's ridiculous. He had to be born.” – Not if you are a Gnostic. Because to be born meant, you would have taken on yourself physical material substance, a body and he would have corrupted Himself. And so he is arguing, Jesus never had a birth. He was never incarnate, but He first appeared in history as the Good Samaritan, on the road from Jerusalem and Jericho. And the first reference we have to this parable – first known reference, 140. It is allegorized and Jesus is the Good Samaritan. Alright? Very first reference.

Jesus is the Good Samaritan and we have what we call an allegorical interpretation. Now after that they become hot and furious. Clement of Alexandria, about 180, he interprets the parable this way:

You are not going to have a chance to write all this down. If you are interested in it, all this material is in Stein's *An Introduction to the Parables*. You can get it all there. But right now, we just don't have time to spend on all these materials here to write it all out.

But Clement of Alexandria – the Good Samaritan is the neighbor, who is ultimately Jesus Christ. The thieves are the rulers of darkness and the wounds that he experienced, this man, are the fears, lusts, passions, pains and deceits that we experience.

The wine poured on his wound for healing is the blood of David's wine. The Son of God is a descendent of David. Of the vine of David, so the wine represents his blood.

The oil represents the compassion of God the Father. The binding of wounds represents love, faith and hope.

So notice what you do in allegory. Do you look at the details and you try to find meaning in those details. What does this detail mean? And to do that, you allegorize all the details and find meaning in the details in that manner. The success of Clement of Alexandria was a man by the name of Origen.

Origen was one of the giants of the early church. Great, great, scholar. He made this kind of interpretation, the allegorical interpretation into a pseudo-science. One of the key verses to support this way of interpreting for Origen was 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

There Paul says, “May the Lord sanctify you wholly in body, soul and spirit.” Origen said, “Aha. Paul teaches a tripartite understanding of humanity, consisting of a body, soul and a spirit.”

I don’t think that is what Paul means. I don’t think that is a correct interpretation, but that is beside the point. He thought it meant that. Now, he then said, just as human beings have a tripartite nature – a body, soul and spirit – so God’s Word has a tri-part nature of body, soul and spirit. The body part is the literal meaning of the text. The soul part is the moral meaning of the text. And the spirit part – the deepest meaning – is the spiritual meaning of the text, and the way you get to the spiritual meaning of the text is by an allegorical interpretation. Here is his interpretation.

The man going down to Jericho is Adam.
Jerusalem from which he was going is Paradise.
Jericho is this world.

Notice in the parable, a man was going down – down from Paradise into this world. The robbers who beat up the man and leave him half-dead are the hostile influences and enemies, such as mentioned in John 10:3, where Jesus said, “All who came before me were thieves and robbers.”

The wounds the man experiences are his disobedience or his sins. The priest represents the law and the Levites, the prophets and they are not able to save us. Only Jesus, the Good Samaritan can save us.

The beast which bears the man to safety is the body of Christ, which bears the sins of the world. The inn to which he is brought for good keeping is the Church. The two denarii to take care of him is the knowledge of God, the Father and the Son. The inn-keeper to whom he is brought are the angels placed in charge of the Church. And the return of the Good Samaritan is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Now that’s allegorical interpretation. Each detail, you look for its meaning. There was some protest by what we call, the Antiochene Church Fathers. They came from the area of Syrian-Antioch. Antioch in Syria, Antiochene Church Fathers, and some of them. [Hard to hear] Pelusium, Chrysostom and the like, they protested this way of interpreting the Bible and the parables. For the most part, they were voices crying in the wilderness and the Church proceeded with the allegorical way of interpreting the Parables.

Perhaps the most famous way of interpreting this parable is by Saint Augustine. Now, this is the single greatest theologian between Paul and the Reformers. So this is a giant. His interpretation of the parable:

The man going down from Jericho is Adam. Jerusalem from which he was going down is the city of heavenly peace. Jericho is the moon which signifies our mortality and you say, “Now. Where in the world does that come from?”

Augustine knew Hebrew and he knew that the word Jericho and the word for moon in Hebrew, both looked and sounded alike. And as the moon waxes and wanes, so we wax and wane. We are mortal.

The robbers are the Devil and his angels. Stripping meant they took away his immortality. Adam was mortal and able to die. Feeding him meant, they persuaded him to sin. Leaving him half-dead was that due to sin, he was dead spiritually, but he was still half-alive, because he had some knowledge of God. The priest, the law and the prophets of Levi. In the Old Testament, they are not able to save; only the Good Samaritan, Jesus can do that. The binding of the wounds are the restraint, God places upon our sin. The oil is the comfort of a good hope. The wine is the exhortation to spirited work. The beast is the body of Christ [Hard to hear] the church. The two denarii - is where he differs from Origen – are the two commandments, to love God with all ones’ heart, strength and mind and ones neighbor as ourselves. That takes care of ourselves during this lifetime. The innkeeper to which he is brought is the apostle Paul. Augustine was a Pauline scholar and he was partial to Paul. And the return of the Good Samaritan is the resurrection of Christ. So now you have some differences there but in the main, you have quite a bit of similarity.

Now this was the dominating way of interpreting the parables. In fact it was the dominating way - allegorical interpretation – of dominating – of interpreting most sacred literature. And there were two reasons for that.

For one, there is a parable of Jesus – the parable of the soils – and there is an interpretation associated with that. Now a lot of critical scholars say that Jesus didn’t give that interpretation. Somebody in the early church wrote it up and it became attributed. That is irrelevant. When Augustine read it and the early church read it, they read it as Jesus’ interpretation and this is Jesus’ interpretation of the parable and it is an allegorical interpretation of the parable.

For the seed that fell among the weeds are those who hear the Word of God, and those that fell among good soil are those who received, hear the Word of God and receive it with a good heart. Those who fell among the rocky soil are those who believe but trials and tribulations come and so forth and so on.

So, you have a parable and Jesus’ interpretation of this is an allegorical interpretation. Well. If Jesus thought His parable, this parable should be interpreted allegorically, probably the way you should read all parables. So that interpretation of the four soils

became a pattern by which all parables should be interpreted. Just like this one interpretation that Jesus gave to us, well, we should try to interpret in a similar manner.

Now there was a second reason and that was that this method of interpretation was very common in the ancient world, especially among sacred literature of one sort or another. Whenever you came across some sacred literature in which you had real difficulties in them, how did you escape the literal meaning, which seemed to be contradictory or not of worth anything or really maybe even giving a false interpretation.

An example: The gods on Mount Olympus – what do you do with their behavior? You can't take Zeus's words, go and do likewise, because the gods up there are more immoral than most of us in this world are. So you look at that and you say, you can't take that literally. So it must mean something else. You need to allegorize this. And what the gods are lusting after are not the beauty of human women or something like that. You need to go to a spiritual interpretation of this and allegorize it. And what you realize is what they are lusting after are the virtues of good character, of nobility, of honesty and so forth and so on. And the way you do that is by allegorizing. Because the literal meaning is too difficult.

And now it is not just the Greeks that did that. For instance, how do most of the people in your church interpret the Song of Solomon? Allegory right? Its an allegory of Jesus and the Church – the love of Jesus for His Church. Well. Long before that Judaism had the same problems with the passage and that was the God of Israel, Yahweh's love for the people of Israel, for His people. And the way you do that is you allegorize that.

So it's a very common way of trying to make difficult literature that you hold dearly into some sort of a meaningful work that you can now accept in one way or other. So very common way of interpreting parables. The center of most of this which was really famous for allegorical interpretation was the city of Alexandria. And Clement of Alexandria, Origen, that's where they came from. What the early church did was kind of take up this method which was so dominant in the world and they practiced it in regard to their own interpretation of the parables and of Scripture in general.

What I gave to you in the examples of Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Augustine are examples coming from the early church.

Let us divide for the sake of simplicity, the history of the church into several periods. The early church goes up to the 500. Actually, better at 540, but 500 is a nice number. I can remember 500, 540 I can't. So its 500.

The Middle Ages, 500 to 1500. That's a nice clean number too. It is easy to remember. Then we have the period of the Reformation, 1500 to the turning point, 1888, and then after that the modern period. So, the early church we just looked at. Now we are going to deal with the Middle Ages.

And in the Middle Ages, a man by the name of John Cassian had given not only a three-fold meaning to the text – the moral, the literal and the spiritual – but he came along and he gave a fourth level of meaning. So there was the literal, the moral, the spiritual and now you had the heavenly meaning of the text. And the example that was most famous in this regard was when you came to read the Bible, if you came across the word Jerusalem, you could interpret that at four different levels.

The first level, the literal level would be the city, longitude X, latitude Y, surrounded to the east by the Kidron Valley, to the south by the Hinnom Valley. City – [Hard to hear]

At the moral level, whenever you came across Jerusalem, you should understand that they are here talking about the human soul. If you're talking about the spiritual meaning, you are talking about the church. And if you get to the really heavenly meaning, now you are talking about the Heavenly Jerusalem.

And when you read any verse of Scripture with the word, Jerusalem, you can interpret it from those four perspectives: the literal, the moral, the spiritual, the heavenly meaning of the text. So John Cassian gives that. So now the system of allegory continues.

One of the leaders in the Middle Ages was a man by the name of the Venerable Bede, from England. He interprets the parables this way. 732 is when he dies.

The man going down to Jericho is Adam. Jerusalem from which he is going is the City of Heavenly Peace. Jericho as the moon would signify is variation and change. You know who he is dependent on? Building on Augustine. Stripping meant they stripped Adam of his glorious vestment, of immortality and innocence. The wounds are his sins. The priest, the priesthood of the Old Testament, the Levite, the ministry of the Old Testament, the Samaritan is Christ, the oil is repentance, the Beast is the flesh in which the Lord came to us – that's the Incarnation – and so forth. ~ The Venerable Bede.

So we have a continuation of this allegorical method of interpretation, through the Middle Ages, 500 to 1500.

I remember reading once the work of Thomas Aquinas, who is probably the greatest of the theologians during the Middle Ages. Wrote this tremendous system of theology which is still very very influential in Roman Catholicism. And he defended this four-fold way of interpreting the parables. And the way he defended it was this way:

There has to be four levels of meaning in the text, because there are four directions. North. South. East and West.

Now that is not very convincing, but that is not the important thing. What you have to know here is – if everybody assumes there is four levels of meaning, you can use those kinds of arguments. But if you have to prove it, it wouldn't get very far. But it is so certain, you can use that kind of frivolous in our understanding – way of arguing for the four fold method of interpretation. But everybody agreed to it. Four levels of meaning.

Now let us just stop for a minute. How would something like Augustine's interpretation of the Parable of the Good Samaritan – how would that play in your church? Don't people like it?

Student: Probably wouldn't mind it.

Dr. Stein: There might be some that would be very nervous about it. But if my mother were alive, she would probably say to me something like, "Bobby. You know that man, Augustine knew how to get a lot out of the Bible."

And I would say probably something like, "Yeah. Mom. He did get a lot of the Bible."

At the age of ninety-five or so, how much debate on hermeneutics do you want to get into with your mother, right? Alright now, this is the dominant way of interpreting the Parables. When we get to the Reformation, there is going to be a break with allegorical interpretation in general.

For instance, when Luther was asked, what he thought about Origen's exegesis, he said, "Its worth less than dirt." Which was not at a premium in Germany, at that time apparently. And allegorizers were for him clerical jugglers – religious jugglers performing monkey tricks.

And the word, monkey tricks in German is kind of cute: It is affenspeel. Affen are chimpanzees. Its chimpanzee games. That's what they are doing in that regard. And he was very much opposed to the allegorical interpretation.

Now the reason for that is clear. In contrast to the Roman Catholic position, in which there was a three-fold source of truth and authority in the church, there is the papacy. There is the Scriptures and there are the Early Church Fathers. And all three of them always agree. And so they teach a unified doctrine, and so you have these three sources of revelation.

The living voice of the church and the papacy and its bishops and councils and so forth. You have the Early Church leaders, the Augustine's, the Origen's and so forth. And you had the Scriptures.

Well, in contrast to that what do the Reformers argue?

Student: [Hard to hear]

Dr. Stein: Scripture only. Sola Scriptura. Only in the Bible. Well. If you now eliminate 2/3rds of your source of truth and revelation, that means that you need to have a clear hermeneutical theory to approach Scriptures. And so the Reformers begin to work very heavily on how do you interpret the Bible. And one of the things that frustrated them to no end, would be the allegorical method of interpretation.

How do you argue with somebody on what Paul means in Romans, when the other person's allegorizing has nothing to do whatever with what Paul means in the text? It is like fighting a cloud. Have you ever tried to fight one? Grab one? Just nothing and you get very frustrated by that and so the Reformers were very much opposed to that, because the allegorists can do pretty much anything they want.

Now there were certain rules that they had laid down as to allegory, and they were good rules. If you are going to allegorize, these are good rules to have.

One of the rules was, you can never find an allegorical meaning in a text that violates the teachings of the Church in the Bible.

In other words, you couldn't read heresy into the text by allegory. Someone further - some said you can't find anything in the allegorical interpretation of the passage that is not explicitly taught in elsewhere in the Church's doctrine, teaching and the Bible. It became even more restricted.

So there is a sense in which, they said, you can't read by allegory something in the Bible that is heretical in the Church's understanding. That is good.

If you are going to read something in the Bible, don't read into it heresy. Read something true. Alright? Now the real question is – should you read anything in the Bible? We talked about eisegesis – reading into the text, instead of exegesis, reading out of the text, what the text is trying to teach. The Reformers would be arguing for exegesis, not eisegesis. But if you are going to read into the Bible something, please read something that is not heretical into it.

Now, Luther however when it came to the parables, continued to follow the procedure of the church for the 1500 years preceding him and he allegorized. He had a little of his Lutheran twist into it however.

The man going down to Jericho is Adam and all humanity.

The robbers are the devils who robbed and wounded us.

The priest, the fathers before Moses.

The Levites, the priesthood of the Old Testament. They can't save us.

The Good Samaritan is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The oil and the wine poured on the wounds are the whole Gospel from beginning to end.

You see a little Lutheran emphasis there.

Elsewhere and by the way, I found this material in various sermons and lectures of Luther. It is not just in one place, where you saw the oil was the whole Gospel, the beginning and end. Elsewhere he talks about the oil being the grace of God. The wine is the cross the Christian is called to bear. The beast is Christ the Lord. [Hard to hear] Christianity and the world or the church. The innkeeper, the preacher of the Word of God. So you have a Lutheran emphasis with respect to the allegorical interpretation of the parable.

Calvin was the best of the exegetes. He was also by far the best interpreter of the parables. When in his commentary, he comes to the passage on the Parable of the Good Samaritan, he writes as follows,

“An allegorical interpretation devised by proponents of free will is really too feudal to deserve an answer. According to them under the figure of a wounded man is described the condition of Adam after the Fall. Whence they infer that the power to act well was not quite extinct, for it is only said to be half-dead. As if Christ would have intended to speak here about the corruption of human nature and discuss whether the wounds they had struck on Adam was fatal or curable. As if he had not plainly declared without any figurative talk, that all are dead unless he quickens them with his voice. John 5:25. I give as little respect for that other allegory which has won such regard that nearly everyone comes down in its favor like an oracle. In this they make out the Samaritan to be Christ, because He is our protector. They say that wine mixed with oil was poured into the wound because Christ heals us with repentance and the promise of grace. And a third cunning story has been made up that Christ does not immediately restore health, but sends us to the church, that is the innkeeper to be cured gradually.”

Great statement coming.

“None of this strikes me as plausible. We should have more reverence for Scripture than to allow ourselves to transfigure its sense so freely. Anyone may see that these speculations have been cooked up by meddlers quite divorced from the mind of Christ.”

John Calvin is the first person we know of in the whole history of the Church that said that this parable is not an allegory about Jesus. After 1500 years of people saying this – Augustine, Ambrose of Milan, Thomas Aquinas, Origen, Clement of Alexandria – everyone – he stands up and he says, “No. They are all wrong. This is not about Jesus.” It takes a lot of courage to do that doesn’t it? There was one other person who did say, it was not an allegory about Jesus, but I can’t remember his name, because he never wrote anything so no one ever read what he said about that. But everyone else who wrote anything – they did.

Now, he was really a superb exegete of the parables. When you think how everybody is allegorizing the parables, he refrains on most of the parables from doing it. There are a couple of parables that he allegorizes. [Hard to hear] the guy be perfect, I mean he stands up against the whole world and he says, “No. This is not the way to interpret the parables” so Calvin is really very strong in not allegorizing the parables. He did a few, but very very few.

But with his death, the allegorical method continues to reign after the Reformation. Now with regard to interpreting the rest of Scripture, the allegorical method and chains of its interpretive process around the Scripture were broken once and for all. Never again will you start allegorizing a healing miracle of Jesus. Never again will you start allegorizing an argument of Paul in 1 Corinthians or something like that. That was over.

The chains of allegorical interpretation had it controlled Scripture for 1500 years. That was broken with the Reformers. In every area but one. And that one area – the parables – they continued to be allegorized.

Now the greatest interpreters of the Parables in the English speaking world in the 19th century – there was a man by the name of R.C. Trench. Archbishop R.C. Trench and his book, Notes on the Parables of our Lord was still being printed, just a few decades. It might still be in print, still be being printed in that way, but it had a long long period. And after a literal interpretation of the parable, he gets to this deeper spiritual meaning. The man going down to Jericho is Adam. Jerusalem, the Heavenly city. Jericho a profane city, a city under a curse. The robbers are the Devil and his angels. Stripping him meant, they stripped him of his original robe of righteousness, leaving him half dead. Let me read it all here.

“Covered with almost mortal strokes, every sinful passion and desire a gash from which the lifeblood of his soul is steaming – yet still maintaining a divine spark which might be fanned into flame.”

That was very very common terminology in the 19th Century. Humans may have sinned, but they had a divine spark within them that could be fanned into flame by Christian teaching.

The priest and the Levite – the inability of the law to save. The Good Samaritan - Christ. The Binding of wounds – the sacraments which heal the wounds of the soul. The oil is the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The wine is the blood of Christ’s passion. The inn is the church. The two denarii are all the gifts and graces, sacraments, powers of healing, of remission of sins. “Whatever more you spend” – reward for righteous service.

One other.

Placing the man on the beast and walking alongside reminds us of Him, who though He was rich yet for our sakes became poor. So 1800/1843, 41 when this was published. This is the dominating way of interpreting the parables. Allegorically. 1800 years of allegorical domination of the parables.

Let me stop there and see how we are doing. We are going to get 1888. It is the turning point. We will talk about that in just a minute. Alright?

“You ought to have more reverence for Scripture than to transfigure its sense so freely.”
~ John Calvin.

Probably the hardest thing for me is to find that there are liberals out there who don’t have a hard doctrine of inspiration at all. But they treat the Bible much more reverently than the evangelicals do. For a lot of Christians, the Bible, you have a very very strong doctrine of inspiration, but you mustn’t believe it because it is play-dough. You just shape it in whatever form you want it.

You know it is a scary thing to think that someday we who teach and preach the Word of God are going to have to stand before God and have to explain, “Thus saith the Lord” and quoted Scripture and explain Scripture and we were not saying what God was saying. And for somebody like myself, my responsibility is really heavy, because I am teaching a couple of generations of preachers.

Student: [Hard to hear] What do you think about sermons like that?

Dr. Stein: The way I would try to get an application is to make sure I know what the pattern of meaning is of the passage. And then as I look for an implication that fits our situation, does it fit this pattern of meaning. I think God can at least respect us if we are trying to do that. If we don’t care and we just do our thing, then I think the judgment is going to be strong and heavy. Heavy handed.

I mean we are saying, “This is what God is teaching and He is not teaching it. We are false witnesses.”

End of Lecture 21

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Hermeneutics for Parables \(Part 2\)](#)

The new period comes in 1888, and a man by the name of Adolf Jülicher – cant even pronounce it hardly. J-ü-l-i-c-h-e-r. It is in the text. There is an umlaut – two dots over the u – which makes it hard for anybody who is not Germanic to speak it. Now he wrote a book in 1888 called Die Gleichnisreden Jesu – the Parable Talks of Jesus.

And what he sought to do in the book, and I think he did very well was to point out that there is a difference between a parable and an allegory. In an allegory, the author of the allegory gives meaning to details and wants you to find those details and the meaning in those details. In other words there is not simply one comparison being given but many of them. Many. Have you read John Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress? How many of you have? That’s the most famous allegory in the English speaking world. Maybe in the whole world for that matter.

And in it is the story of a young man named Christian, who is on his pilgrimage to the heavenly city. And as he proceeds there, he gets lost and he gets help and so forth. And it is very important to pay attention to details. He gets lost and the first man sitting on a fence is sitting there and Christian comes and says, “I am lost. Can you help me find the Heavenly city? Can you show me that narrow road that leads to that narrow gate that leads to that Heavenly city?” The man said, “We got better road than that. We got a nice broad road and its all downhill.” And it is a lot easier getting there that way, than the way

you are suggesting. Now there is a little detail that you better pay attention to. His name is Mr. Worldly-wise. Now if you don't pay attention to that detail, you are not able to understand the meaning that is attributed to what he is saying. Christian gets more and more lost and he finds another man and says, "You know I am trying to find a way that leads to that Heavenly city, and I was told about this broad way and..." He says, "You are not going to get that way. There is only one way to the Heavenly city and that's through that narrow road through that narrow fence and gate."

His name – Mr. Evangelist. And he meets other characters. One time he meets somebody and its faith that talks to him. But another time it is somebody named despair. Another time somebody called hope. Now, John Bunyan expected his readers to interpret all these details allegorically. There is nothing wrong in interpreting an allegory, allegorically. That's the way it should be interpreted. There is a lot wrong with interpreting a non-allegory, allegorically.

Now, what Adolf Jülicher was saying was – parables are not allegories. They tend to have one basic point of comparison. One point and the details are just there to make the story interesting. So you should try to understand what's the main point of the parable.

So the first principle: Parables generally teach one main point. When investing it in the parables, be content with one main point. Don't look for allegorical significance in the details unless you absolutely have to. And even if you take this rule, in general, you will see more significance in the details than you ought to.

Parables teach a basic point. A parable is essentially a comparison. Something is likened to something else. You have a picture that is being compared to some reality. The picture part, the story of the Good Samaritan to a reality. The picture part, the story of the Prodigal Son to a reality.

We need to know what is the point, this reality, that the parable is trying to teach. Now any comparison ultimately breaks down. Anyone.

If you say what is God like? And you say God is like a loving Father who cares for His children. Now I think that is a perfectly good comparison – analogy. But if you press that analogy, it completely falls apart. Well, God is like a loving Father. Well then, who is His wife? I am not ... I am just giving you one comparison. Eventually all comparisons breakdown. The only perfect comparison or metaphor is to say, "God is like God."

Who is going to argue with that? But if you change the last God to something else, sooner or later, the comparison breaks down.

Now is there anything wrong in saying God is like something _____ and put in a word other than God? No.

You just have to realize that you are trying to make one basic comparison. Don't press the details in this regard. And so what Jülicher was saying was, don't press the details. There is specifically a basic point to be made and it's not an allegory.

You say, "Wait a minute. Why then in the parable does it talk about a man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho?" Well. It is hard to go from Jerusalem to Jericho except downhill. Jerusalem is on a mountain. Jericho is in a valley. A difference of elevation, 3-4,000 feet. You are not going to go up from 3,000 feet to below sea level. You have to go down.

But think. Supposing the parable began this way. A man was going up from Jericho to Jerusalem and he fell among thieves. Could it change anything? No. You say "Yeah. But then what about the putting on the wine and water on the wounds?" Does there? Have meaning in that? Well, how do you describe the love of the Samaritan, kindness to this man?"

The guy has been beaten up. He is half dead. He is lying in the road. His wounds are covered with dirt. How do you treat a man like that?

Well. You wash the wounds.

Well. He had just run out of Listerine antiseptic in the previous inn that he was at. So the only thing that he has left is the wine, water beverage that he has with him and he cleans the wounds with it.

You say, "Well. What about the oil?"

Well. If he had Bacitracin, he would have used that. But he didn't have Bacitracin. But he did have something that would make scrapes feel better. I am showing my age... but I remember something when I was a kid and I had a scraped knee, my mother would say, "Put some butter on it." Hey – It felt a lot better after words, because it was an oil that covered the wounds so the air wouldn't get at it. Now if she had Bacitracin – but we didn't have Bacitracin in those days. So first aid. Ok.

"Now, yeah but why does he mention two denarii?"

Well. If you had him give him three denarii, well then you would have asked, "Is this represent the Trinity?"

I mean that is part of the story. You don't press the details. You just say, the man is talking care of him and he gives money to take care of him.

So many times you add details to a story because that's the art of good story telling. You do it to make it exciting and interesting, but they have no meaning in it. Parables are not allegories. They teach one basic truth.

Now Adolf Jülicher was a German liberal of the 19th century and it is not surprising to note that the one main point he always found was a good German liberal truth. Because Jesus was trained at a University of Berlin before He began His ministry, right? So they read in there, their old liberal theology. Always a danger, but he being a liberal, that was his tendency.

Now the second contribution to modern parable interpretation comes from a man named C.H. Dodd. He wrote a book on Parables of the Kingdom, 1935 he wrote it. Now what he argued is this. This is so simple you'll say why didn't you emphasize this?

Sometime the most simple things we are blind to and we are not aware of. Here was his point. Jesus did not teach His parables to 20th century Christians, but to 1st century Jews. Therefore when you investigate the parables, you should try to understand the situation in life in which the parable was uttered.

Another way of wording that – you should seek to understand how a Jew in the 1st century would have understood the parable. It makes sense, right? He was telling this to Abraham and Sarah on the mountainsides of Galilee. How would they have understood it? That might be a help for us. You say well, but that makes – that's common sense.

What happened so often was that people who read the parable are so interested in applying it and seeing significance for themselves and the implications for themselves that they lose sight of the fact that first he must understand the point being made by the author, in this instance, Jesus. In other words, what did Jesus intend to teach by this parable?

Alright?

Third Point: 1950s, when Redaction Criticism comes on the scene, people began to realize that the Gospel writers, the evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were not just writing down parables and stories of Jesus.

Say “I don't know what they mean. I am just writing it down. I get paid by the word.” Or something like that. But they were interpreters and they wanted to put a point across. And they are inspired interpreters and therefore we want to know what are they trying to emphasize by the Parables? What are those that are led by the Spirit seeking to teach by this parable? And you have the third principle.

Second, if you want to abbreviate the second one, “What did Jesus mean by the parable?” What did the evangelists – principle three - mean by the parable?”

Student: If we as ministers of God are filled with the Holy Spirit of God, are we therefore allowed to interpret as they did?

Dr. Stein: I think we are allowed to show the implications of what the biblical authors meant to a congregation. And that is good preaching. But I don't think we have a right

to give it a meaning in the sense that the Evangelist is. We try to understand what the Evangelist is teaching. And if we are filled by the Spirit, that same Spirit will not show us a meaning that's contrary what the Evangelist, who is filled by the Spirit is trying to convey.

Finally, the application. How does this apply to us? What good is it, if we have all this academic stuff and don't see what God is trying to teach us in the parable itself? So those are the four major rules for interpreting the Parables.

First is parables are not allegories. They teach one basic point. There are exceptions. We will talk about these in a little while.

Second principle – what did Jesus mean by the parable? What was He teaching?

The third – what the Evangelist mean? What is he teaching?

Fourthly, the application – what does God want me to do in regard to this parable?

Pretty straight forward. Ok. Now questions or comments, so far?

Dr. Stein: Alright let us look at the parable now and apply these four principles. Parables are not allegories. Now, somebody will say “Dr. Stein, why are you so upset with Origen’s interpretation or Augustine’s interpretation? Augustine said that ‘The Law and the Prophets can’t save.’ Are you saying they can?”

“No. They can’t save. Only Jesus can save.”

“Well. That is exactly what Origen said. Don’t you believe that Jesus rose from the dead? It is what Augustine said.”

“Yeah. I believe that too.”

“And Origen said, ‘Jesus is coming again.’ That is what the return of the Good Samaritan means. Don’t you believe that?”

“Yeah. I believe that Jesus is coming again.”

“Then what is your problem with all of this?”

The problem is this. It is not a question of whether the allegorical interpretation is true Christian theology. It is a question of whether the parable truly teaches that theology. Everybody get that?

It is not a question of whether an allegorical interpretation read into the parable is true Christian theology. It is a question of whether the parable truly teaches that theology.

Student: I was wondering what you thought of Craig Blomberg's argument that [Hard to hear]

Dr. Stein: There is a long history to Craig Blomberg's book on parables. When it was being reviewed, as to whether it should be published, I was one of the reviewers. And so I wrote a number of things he disagreed with him, but I said by all means publish it. It is an excellent book. And then he and I have interacted. And what he will do, will be to say – a parable has as many points as it has key characters.

So we will look later on at the Parable of the Good Samaritan. There are three main characters, the Father and the two brothers. So there must be three separate points in the parable. He criticizes me and he says, "Stein combines them all into a single point." Yeah that's the whole thing.

I don't want to divide the main point of the parable into sub-parts. So we are really not that far apart, except that whereas I would say, "The meaning is ... such and such," he would divide that up into sub-parts and say the parable teaches A, B and C.

When we look at that parable remind me again in case I don't think of it. But I think after the parable we will have to ask, "Do you think Blomberg's interpretation of the meaning is more like what Jesus has in mind?" or Stein's one point, "Is that better?"

Remind me when we get to the Parable of the Prodigal Son to deal specifically with that. Alright now, what is the main point of the parable? Let me just tell you, the main point of the parable is not that Jesus is the Good Samaritan. That is not the main point of the parable. The main point of the parable is not that Jesus is the Saviour of the World – that He bore our sins on the Cross and is coming again, that the law and the Prophets cannot save us. That is not the main point of the parable.

And you say, "Well... Boy. You are dogmatic today."

Yeah. I am. I am. I admit that.

Let me tell you that I cheated today, when I read the parable to you. Because when I read the parable to you, I didn't read the verse that introduced it, and I didn't read the verse that concluded it.

Let me read for you, the verse that introduces it.

"But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?'"

The verse that concludes it, Jesus says, "Which of these three do you think prove neighbor to the man who fell among robbers?"

Now let us look at Augustine here. Tell me where you find a neighbor in any of this? If Augustine is right, you have to envision this situation:

Jesus is talking to a lawyer and they are talking about, you shall love your neighbor as yourself, and Jesus says, “You are right. If you do this, you will live.” And the young man says, “Well. If that is true, who out there qualifies as a neighbor that I should love him?”

Alright? Who out there qualifies as a neighbor? Now that was a debate among the Jews. Generally one Jew would say, “All Jews are my neighbors, but not Gentiles.” But there were certain groups of Jews where it was much more limited than that, for instance, the Qumran community, the Dead Sea Scroll community, they called themselves, “the Sons of Light,” and you were to love your fellow Sons of Light. But you were to hate the Sons of Darkness, which is the rest of the world, and Jews as well.

So here you have this question about who is my neighbor and after Jesus finishes the parable, He says, who proved to be a neighbor?

So the question before the parable and after the parable deal with who is a neighbor. Is it brilliance on my part to think that somehow that what comes in between that must deal with who is a neighbor?

Yeah. If not you have to envision this – and who is my neighbor? And Jesus said, “I’m not going to tell you about who is a neighbor, I am going to tell you about what I am going to do about the sins of the world and how I am going to be the Savior of the world.” And when He tells all of this, He then concludes, “And by the way, who is a neighbor anyhow?”

Somehow it makes sense to say this has to be about a neighbor. If there is anything to context – the verse before and the verse after say this is about a neighbor. So the point of the parable involves what it means to be a neighbor.

And you say “Well you are saying Augustine is wrong.”

“Yeah, I am saying Augustine is wrong. Jesus is saying Augustine is wrong. And Luke is saying Augustine is wrong by the way they word the parable.”

Main point: Who is a neighbor?

Now what is the point in Jesus’ setting and it is at this level that the parables became very exciting for me. How would the audience of Jesus have understood the parable? I did an experiment with my daughter who was about 11, 12 at the time.

And I said “Julie. You tell me whatever comes into your mind without thinking.” Word association. You can’t think. You just tell me what comes into your mind immediately when you hear these words. And you can do the same.

And she said “Alright, Dad.” And I said, “You ready Julie?” Ok.

“Samaritan.”

What came into her mind?

Student: [Hard to hear]

Dr. Stein: Good.

Dr. Stein: “Jesus.”

“Hospital.” Lot of Good Samaritan hospitals.

Alright now, lets skip.

It is A.D. 29 and Sarah and Abraham – you tell me what comes into your mind when I say this word to you:

“Samaritan”

Good Samaritan is like talking about square circles. There isn’t such a thing. There is no such thing as Good Samaritan. And what you have to realize is – whats going on in Israel today is built on maybe 70 years or so of animosity between Jews and Palestinian Arabs.

In Jesus’ day Samaritan and Jew hatred had gone on for a 1,000 years. It went all the way back to the descendents of Solomon. Solomon died, his son Jeroboam – Reheboam – Reheboam was it? He was a jerk.

{laughter}

Representatives of the tribes of the north came down to Reheboam and said, “Are you going to tax us like your father did? You know he worked us pretty hard and Jerusalem looked real great.” But you know we are working one month a year and not getting paid for it and our cities aren’t looking that great. Are you going to continue that kind of heavy taxation program?

Reheboam went to his father’s older counselors and they said, “They are right. I think it is time to realize that we can’t do that anymore. We need to acquiesce and lower the burden.”

Then he went to some of his young friends and his younger friends said “You give these guys an inch right now and they are going to walk all over you. You will take a mile. You better show whose boss right away?”

So Reheboam said to Jereboam, the leader from the north, “My father chastised you with whips. I am going to do this with scorpions.”

To which Jereboam said, “Like _____ blank _____ you will.”

{laughter}

And the 10 tribes to the north revolted and became an independent nation. Now that nation became known sometimes as Ephraim, after the largest tribe or Israel or later it became known after its capital city, Samaria.

So the Samaritans were those who were the rebels that divided the glory of the nation - rebelled against God-anointed king and followed false kings. It keeps on going.

722 – Samaria falls. And this northern kingdom is dispersed by the Assyrians. They practiced taking people that they had conquered and scattering them throughout the kingdom so that they couldn’t unite. Met with other people whose language you didn’t know. You wouldn’t be able to talk about revolt and so forth.

We talk about the 10 lost tribes of people of Israel as a result of that. Those Samaritans that remained began to intermarry with the Gentiles that came into the area. So that now they are not only rebels, they are half-breeds. And it goes on and on and on.

In Jesus’ day when they wanted to insult them they said, are you not a Samaritan and have a demon in you? And it may not be the second parts that’s the most insulting. So in the midst of all of this, the Samaritan woman says to Jesus, what are you doing talking to me – I am a Samaritan, you are a Jew. Jews have no dealing with Samaritans.

Alright now, I said to my daughter, tell me what comes into your mind. Don’t think.

Dr. Stein: “Priest”

11 year old girl raised in a Baptist Sunday school. And Baptist Sunday schools, priests don’t come out well.

“Negative.”

“Negative. Alright.”

So how is she going to understand the parable in which for her the hero, the Samaritan, the good guy, does good things and the bad guy, the priest does bad things, when it is just the reverse. It is the hero who is the villain.

And it is the bad guy that’s the hero. Do you really think that when Jesus told this parable, the people who heard it said, “Oh. I just love Jesus’ parables. They warm the cockles of my heart. I just ... I just really enjoy them.”

One commentator said, the parable is not a pleasant tale about a traveler who did a good deed, but it is a damning indictment of social, racial and religious superiority. And it is

not mentioned after this parable but after other parables like it. Religious leaders go out to plot to kill him. Now it maybe that sometime when you are preaching, if your elders plot to kill you, you know you have struck home on something. Ok... Alright.

Here you have a complete reversal. This is not Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, Hop Along Cassidy who is the hero. It is Black Bart. You see the other three, you know. White pad, white horse, clean shaven – guns just shining – goes to the bar and he says, “I will have milk.” And when he really feels like a little rebel, he says, “Make mine sarsaparilla.” Black Bart, half drunk, unshaven, rusty gun, mistreated horse – he is the hero. This – this is strange... strange.

So it is a very different parable. When you try to interpret the parables in the setting of Jesus, they will come alive and they will become very exciting, and you realize that one writer said that they were essentially for Jesus, weapons of war, in His debates

Alright now – Principle 3.

If we were trying to understand what Luke is trying to emphasize, we would note in the context of the Gospel and the book of Acts, that of all the evangelists, Luke is the one who is most concerned for the outcast, most concerned about women, most concerned about publicans and sinners. Most concerned about Samaritans. The only Gospel in which Jesus meets and performs a healing of a Samaritan, other than John. And later on in the book of Acts, it will tell about how the Gospel spread and comes to Samaria and the like. So we can see some of his interests here as well.

Now if we then went alright “Let us see what is God trying to teach us through this parable.” Well, we would start looking at various things and note a number of things. By the way, before I do that though, who is the neighbor in the parable anyhow? Who is the neighbor? The Samaritan? The beaten up guy? There is something you have to realize. The question that precedes an answer that follows are two different questions.

The question that the lawyer asks is “Who is the one who should be a recipient of my love?” Who is the neighbor – who is my neighbor?

Then you have the beat-up guy. But Jesus ends with “Who proves to be a neighbor?” Now you have the Samaritan – there is a twist. And if you get to some critical scholars, you say “And this shows that in the period where the passage, the story was being passed, and it got all fouled up and twisted around.”

I think if you realize that Jesus is a really good story teller. What he did was twist the parable around because the question that the lawyer asks is a legitimate one. When you are commanded to love your neighbor as yourself, you don’t say, “Alright who qualifies?” But you ask, “What does it mean to be a loving neighbor?”

And that is what Jesus does in that parable. [Hard to hear] Let me read to you a – from The Cotton Patch Version of the New Testament written by Clarence Jordan. It came out

in the 1960s. He was a leader in the civil rights movement in the South. He lived in Georgia. Here is how he translates in his The Cotton Patch Version of the New Testament, the parable.

“A man was going from Atlanta to Albany and some gangsters held him up. When they had robbed him of his wallet and brand-new suit, they beat him up and drove off in his car, leaving him unconscious on the shoulder of the highway.”

“Now it just so happened that a white preacher was going down that same highway. When he saw the fellow, he stepped on the gas and went scooting by.”

“Shortly afterwards a white Gospel song leader came down the road, and when he saw what had happened, he too stepped on the gas.”

“Then a black man traveling that way came upon the fellow, and what he saw moved him to tears. He stopped and bound up his wounds as best he could, drew some water from his water-jug to wipe away the blood and then laid him on the back seat. He drove on into Albany and took him to the hospital and said to the nurse, ‘You all take good care of this white man I found on the highway. Here’s the only two dollars I got, but you all keep account of what he owes and if he can’t pay it, I’ll settle up with you when I make a pay-day.’”

Now I would suggest that if you read the parable that way, a week after it had been a civil rights demonstration in your particular community and you are the pastor of the First Baptist Church there. I hope the people at the door would say “Brother Bob, I loved your sermon. Makes me think.” But there might also be a meeting of the deacons and that’s your last Sunday of that church. It is not just a bland sweet picture. It’s a powerful one.

My mother and father immigrated from Germany in the 1920s. I would have been too young at the time but I have often thought – when in Nazi Germany, the Nazis began to put pressure on the church and so forth. How would I have held up? What would I have done? Would I have told the parable this way?

“A man was going from Berlin to Frankfurt to attend a political rally. In Cologne, he was beaten up by some thieves and left dying in the street. A member of the police saw him and as he passed by he thought “In our prisons, we know how to take care of people like this.” Later the pastor of a Lutheran church, nearby saw him.

– It has to be Lutheran – Its Germany right? If it was taking place in Texas, he would be Baptist or a cow or something. That’s all you have down there – Baptists and cows.

{laughter}

Later the Pastor of the Lutheran church nearby saw him and as he passed by he thought, “It never ceases to amaze me how depraved and fallen some men really are.”

But there also came by a Jew, and when he saw him had compassion and took him to his ghetto. There he told his friends, "I cannot stay here to care for this man, because my family has been sent to Auschwitz and I want to go and be with them. Here is a100 marks. Take this money and care for them. If there is any additional expense, I promise that somehow I shall get it to you. "

That may be the last sermon you will preach. So the parables of Jesus are powerful. And I trust you have a sense of that.

End of Lecture 22

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Hermeneutics for Parables \(Part 3\)](#)

Talk about the 4 main rules for interpreting the parables.

1. Parables are not allegories; they teach one main point. Don't press details on them unless absolutely necessary.
2. Try to understand what Jesus meant by the parable.
3. Try to understand what the Evangelist meant by the parable.
4. Try to see the implications for yourself; what God is teaching you with respect to that. In other words implications and significance for point 4.

I tried to explain the parable and the setting and ... pointing out that really if you understand the parable from the setting of Jesus, it is a very disturbing parable for His audience, because it changes things around rather drastically.

Alright. Are there any comments, questions on that parable and the rules we have talked about? Otherwise we are going to look at some other parables and apply these rules.

Alright well let us look at some other parables. Turn with me to Matthew 13, verse 44.

Student: Dr. Stein, could you give us a definition of parable? [hard to hear]

Dr. Stein: No. I didn't give a definition of a parable. A parable is basically a brief or extended comparison. Leave it at that. If you want to look at something more ideal with that at great length ... I did an article for a symposium on the parables, which deals with the defining of what a parable is and I can get that information to you if you want ... where to find it.

Alright in this verse we have a comparison, which is a parable.

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and covered up; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

That is the parable. Very brief. Not an earthly story with a heavenly meaning or anything extended like. But it is a brief, what we would call a similitude. Not worried about those kinds of subdivisions.

Now in this similitude, the first thing I want to call your attention is, the character of a man. In context, something like this frequently might happen. You have a man and his wife and they have some precious coins. Maybe some jewelry. There is a war on and the Babylonians are coming down to Judea. Well. What are you going to do? Well you hide them. And how do you hide them? Well, you wrap them up in something and you go to a place outside the house far enough away and there is that big oak tree there and you say, "Let's walk off 10 paces to the north." You can always find the north. You just look at the North Star. Walk 10 paces from that tree in that direction. And there it is, five feet down. Well. Mom and Dad are brought into exile in Babylon and they die in exile and they pass this information on to their children who are getting old and they can't return from Babylon so they pass it on to the grandchildren and they come and they go to where Grandma and Grandpa used to live. They look for that big Oak tree.

There ain't been an Oak tree in that property for 4 years. They cut them all down. What do you do? You might try digging around a little bit. Israel is not that big but it is too big for one person to dig it all up. So it is lost. Man comes and he discovers it – quite by accident – how? It doesn't matter. And he covers it up and he wants to buy the land from the owner, and the owner says, "I don't want to sell it." And he says, "Well. I will give you a good price for it," and the man says, "I still don't want to sell it." Finally he offers him a price that has to accept, buys the field and then when the field is his, he digs up the treasure and is a rich man.

Sometimes a story like this: a woman who loses a coin, 10 coins and looks for it, till she sweeps the floor until she finds them. Some have suggested - maybe that was his own mother once, who lost the coin. We don't know where they came from, but these are down to earth stories that happen in real life.

Now the question that I have is: What do you think of the man?

Are you going to buy a used car from him? No. No.

Is this your example of the Golden Rule?

I want to show you an example of the Golden Rule: "Do unto others before they can do it unto you." No. I mean...I

Now, some people are really disturbed by this, but don't press the details. What is the point? What is the point of the parable? And the point of this parable is the same as the next parable and then the next parable you don't really condemn the man for anything. This man who was a merchant in search of fine pearls, he found the pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Both parables are placed next to each other because they are ... they have the same point. The Kingdom of God is the greatest treasure you can have. Make sure you have it whatever the cost. Whatever it involves make sure above all that you have the pearl of great price, that you have the great treasure. That is the only that really counts in real life.

If you are willing to settle for that, you don't really worry about the person's character. The point is made. The Kingdom of God is the greatest treasure in the world – make sure you have it. That is all. If you are willing to be content with that, the man's character is quite irrelevant.

You go to another one that has a problem that way. Matthew 25. And there you have the parable of the 10 maidens, the 10 virgins. Matthew 25:1,

"Then the kingdom of heaven shall be compared to ten maidens who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 But when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; 4 but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. 5 As the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. 6 But at midnight there was a cry, 'Behold the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' 7 Then all those bridesmaids arose and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 But the wise replied, 'Perhaps there will not be enough for. Go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him into the marriage feast and the door was shut. 11 After words the other maidens came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' 12 But he replied, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.' 13 Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

What is interesting about the parable is that you have 5 maidens with enough oil and they share the feast, but they don't share the oil with anybody. The point of the parable is simple: Christians, don't share God's blessings with others. There may not be enough to go around. Hold on to them. {laughter}

I heard this parable preached when I was just married for a short time with my wife and ...that is a good person to be married with – your wife {laughter}... but anyhow, we went to her church and the executive secretary of the 4 state area was preaching that Sunday – so big crowd – and wouldn't you know it, we came a little late and the only rows open were the 2nd row and the 1st row, so we went to the 2nd row and sat down

and he preached his sermon. And his conclusion was: Christians – don't be like those maidens who had all this oil and would not share it -share the blessings that God has given to you with others.

And my wife saw me getting agitated. I wanted to jump up on the pew and say "That is crazy. Those were the wise ones. Those were the ones that are wise in the parable." And my wife saw my state of agitation and she put her hand on mine and said, "Bob. This is my home church." {laughter} "Don't embarrass me." I didn't do anything. I just ground some molars in the back of my mouth to a powder and did nothing.

What was the problem? The problem is simple. He was so concentrating on the details, he missed the point of the whole parable. The point of the parable is to be ready. You don't know the day or the hour. Five of them were ready. Five were not. That is all you are supposed to get out of the parable. How are they ready? It is not by hoarding their oil. Somehow, [hard to hear] the man, he had this funny funny idea that no one would read chapter 21, before they would read chapters 1 through 19. And if you want to know what it is to be ready to meet the Lord, after the 19th chapter he is pretty confident that you know and that is what you apply to the parable.

So we don't just read it in isolation. We know what happened in the first chapter. The first 24 chapters I should say. And you are well prepared to know what it means to be prepared for the Lord's return. Now – here is an example – a man that was so concerned about the meaning of the details, he lost sight of what is the main point. The main point is to be ready. Five were wise. Five were not. And five were ready as a result and five were not. Now it may well be that there is some allegory here that we should press and that is that, when the Lord returns, 50% of the world will be ready. 5 out of 10 and 50% will not be ready. Or if you really want to be more biblical, you could say 50% of the virgins are ready and 50% of the virgins are not ready, right?

What is the main point of the parable? If you are willing to settle on the main point of this parable, the character of the wise is not an issue. That is part of the story. That is all you do. Don't press the details. Let the parable stand as it is. Now if you go to Luke 16, you have another parable that is even more difficult if you begin to press the details.

Luke 16:1,

1 He also said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a steward, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. 2 And he called him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your stewardship, for you no longer can be steward.' 3 And the steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the stewardship away from me? I am not strong enough to dig,

... he can't do manual labor ...

and I am ashamed to beg. 4 I have decided what to do, so that people will receive me into their houses when I am put out of the stewardship.' 5 So, summoning his master's debtors

one by one, he said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' 6 He said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' 7 Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' He said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' 8 The master commended the dishonest steward for his shrewdness; for the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light.

Quite a turn ... which is the art – Jesus was a good story teller. Now if you read any commentaries on Luke – any books on parables, when you come to this parable – I'll tell you, there are all sorts of strange, interesting, ridiculous kinds of interpretations to try to make sense out of it. And the problem is really clear. How can you commend a guy for being a cheat?

So somehow, you have to have... well, maybe he wasn't cheating. Maybe he was doing something. And you find the commentators saying things like this,

"The steward recognized that his master had charged an illegal amount of interest to these people and therefore he could get in serious trouble, so he did one last kind gesture to him and that was that he lowered the bill so that his master would not get into trouble with the law and also he would become more popular in the eyes of his debtors and therefore the master thanked him for that – commended him.

How would Theophilus know that kind of an interpretation? Luke somehow thinks that Theophilus is going to be able to hear this ... read this parable – have it read to him and it will make sense to him. Everything that you need to know is there. And if you are willing to say "What is the main point of the parable?" Not press details. The main point is clear. Here is a man facing judgment. He is going to be fired. He is going to be out of work. He is in a desperate state. What does he do? He prepares Himself for it. And the master commends him, not for his integrity, but for his shrewdness in preparing himself for the judgment that comes. That is all that he is [hard to hear]. He is not being commended for anything Christian, but just for being shrewd. "You scoundrel. You knew how to take care of yourself. Made sure that you would come out alright in this after all didn't you? Now get out of here." Something of that nature is to be understood.

The point of the parable is "Are you," Jesus is telling His audience, "who have heard me announce that the Kingdom of God is at hand – that already the axe – as John said, is laid to the root – that judgment is imminent. Are you wise enough to take the advice of this scoundrel? Who prepared himself accordingly."

He is not saying, "If you are going to be a thief, be a good one for Jesus' sake. This guy prepared himself. Make sure you are ready for that as well." If I were preaching the parable, I would say, look, "How many of you in this congregation know the verse, 'It is called upon us, once to die, and then thereafter the judgment.'? Everybody right? How many of you are really getting ready for it? Let me tell you a story about a thief, who is smart enough to get ready for his judgment." You tell a parable. You learned a lesson from this thief, brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Don't press the details. Parable has a good point. Be ready. Make sure you are ready for that day and get prepared accordingly. All right. Let me stop there.

Student: [hard to hear] I am just wondering how Jesus' statement there right after [hard to hear] use worldly wealth[hard to hear] How that ties in?

Dr. Stein: Yeah. Luke is very strong in his understanding of stewardship and what he is saying is "the way you Theophilus need to get ready for your encounter with the Lord is by being good stewards, because one day all of this stuff is going to be gone." When this filthy lucre that we earn and have saved up, all dissipates, will they receive you into the eternal habitations? If you are a good steward, and you followed Christ and lived the life you wanted to, yes they will. If not, it is too late.

The classic story about John D. Rockefeller, who in the last half of the last, of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, is probably the richest man in the world. He gave away a lot of his money into charities, so when he died on his own, he was worth about a half a billion at the time. So his lawyer who was handling the estate was asked by a reporter, he said, "How much did he leave?"

The lawyer looked at him and he said, "Everything."

So when all of this falls away, will they receive you into the eternal habitations because you have been a follower of Jesus or a good steward on his behalf? So something like that.

Dr. Stein: Yeah.

Student: Do we kind of look at and say [hard to hear] ethics or whatever – would they say the same thing about it?

Dr. Stein: I think they were much more able to not get distracted by details than the scientific generation like we are. I think they were familiar with storytelling and they knew it and "storyteller – what's the main point of the parable?" Don't let the details detract you from it. Yeah. I think so.

If you get a poll, they would all say Stein is right on that. Let us look at another parable which is an example of a parable that the evangelist, Matthew interprets somewhat differently. Turn to Luke 15, verses 3-7 and you are going to have to keep your Bible open at this point, at least a finger there. Here you have – verse 3 – so He Jesus told them this parable,

So He - Jesus - told them this parable: "Which man of you, having a hundred sheep and if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? 5 When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.' 7 Just so, I

tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

Now turn with me – keep your finger there – to Matthew, chapter 18, verses 12 through 14. Here is the same parable, but Matthew has interpreted it in a way, which shows his particular interest and emphasis. Matthew 18:12,

12 What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? 13 And if he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. 14 So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

Now, notice some of the differences. Almost certainly the parable in Luke is more like what Jesus said in His setting. How are the sheep described in Luke 15?

Student: [hard to hear] lost

Dr. Stein: He is lost. How are the sheep described in Matthew 18?

Student: [hard to hear]

Dr. Stein: Astray. Actually the Greek word, *planeo* from which we get the word planet – a straying star – is the verb here. He is straying away. The implication here is ...

Dr. Stein: What is the difference between lost and straying?

Student: [hard to hear] stray is ... of your own choosing.

Dr. Stein: Faith-wise. The one that is lost is what, a non-Christian and this one is a straying Christian. Notice the rejoicing in Luke is over one sinner who repents. In Matthew it is – he rejoices over more than the ninety-nine who never went astray, so it is not the will of my Father who is in Heaven, that one of these little ones should perish. The little ones or if you look at the earlier part of the chapter – he talks about the little children – if you don't become like little ones, like little children, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven, verse 3. Verse 6, whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin. Verse 10, see that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I tell you in Heaven there are angels always ... little ones in the early part of the chapter refers to Christians.

So my understanding of this would be as follows: that Matthew has taken the parable of Jesus, which in the first setting in life, when Jesus uttered, point 2, what did Jesus mean, defends why He is eating with publicans and sinners. He is looking for the lost sheep to bring them salvation and Matthew is writing to the church and saying, "I want to tell you an implication of what Jesus said in this parable... There are people in our church that are, they used to be very active, the Smiths and the Browns – they used to be in all the

meetings, where are they? They are no longer attending. Don't despise them. Go out and help them."

He taught about the restoration of believers who are beginning to drift off and that seems to be His implication of a parable that is especially relevant for the situation that He is writing to.

Student: So Christ only spoke that parable one time.

Dr. Stein: That is my assumption – yeah.

Student: [hard to hear] On the literal understanding of it

Dr. Stein: One is an interpretation or ... I would say one is showing the implication of the parable, Jesus uttered. Now, I furthermore believe that He is inspired in doing so. So we have authentic word of God and the interpretation that Matthew gives from a parable of Jesus. Furthermore I would say, that they are not contradictory at all, nor are they even separate. They flow from the same pattern of [hard to hear] Just as God is not willing that one sinner should perish, how much more is He not willing that one of the little ones who had believed in Him should be perishing.

Student: I understand that. I guess I am just thinking of it in terms of – If President Bush gave a speech. The speech ...[hard to hear]

Dr. Stein: Alright we will do it a different way. Let say you are President Bush's ambassador. And you are working out a treaty. And he told you, A, B, C, D, E, F, G. Now, in your working out this treaty, you would be saying, the President says the following. Would you be free as his representative to give the intent and be able to word it the way you want? And even deal with issues that he himself had not even told you about. But you know that is part of the general pattern that he deals with. Are you his ambassador in that sense? That is the way I ... in Matthew, he is the ambassador of Jesus in that regard.

Student: Why should we ...[hard to hear]

Dr. Stein: Sure. One of the common ways of dealing with little differences like this is – Couldn't Jesus have said it twice with a variation? Couldn't Jesus have performed a similar miracle that is almost like this and following?

It was very popular once to – what we call - harmonize the accounts by explaining them with variations of the same saying Jesus gave. What you have to start saying is, in Jesus' setting, were there the kind of problem where followers were beginning to wander off from Jesus' group or does that look more like a church situation after the church is established?

If you look at chapter 18 in Matthew, all the sayings here have to do with church relationships. I don't know if Jesus said them all in that particular way. [hard to hear] But you have to be careful because I think I shared with you ... maybe I haven't ... maybe [hard to hear] my other class. Did I share with you the harmonization of a man by the name of Osiander in the 1500s? The Lutheran. It had to do with the resurrection of Jairus' daughter from the dead. Osiander noticed that in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee from the east to the west, came to Capernaum on the way immediately to Jairus' home, He met this woman – healed her, and then He raised Jairus' daughter from the dead. In Matthew, Jesus crosses from the other side of the Sea of Galilee. He then does a number of healing miracles and then raises Jairus' daughter from the dead.

It is different. And the way he solved that was – he said, “Well. Mark is right.” Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee, came immediately to Jairus' home, raised his daughter from the dead, but Matthew is also right because, after He had done that, He then some others, and He had to go back a second time to raise her from the dead. That is the one Matthew is talking about.

Well. That kind of harmonizing is not very convincing. And that's why sometimes you talk about, Peter denied the Lord, six times, or nine times, because it is not in the same order. But the Gospels are not really that concerned about the order. Mark has Peter following Jesus' after He is arrested and then he switches the scene to what is going on inside and then he switches back to Peter and Peter denies the Lord.

Luke says, “That's not the way that I am going to tell the story. It would be too confusing.” So he has Peter following the Lord and as Jesus goes inside, Peter then denies the Lord, three times. And then he tells the rest of the story about what happened inside. Now, you have different ways of telling the story. One is to switch back and forth, like Mark does and one is to say, “Well. Let us talk about what happened that night with Peter and then we will talk about what happened inside.” Which is right?

They are both right. Just two different ways of telling the story. Now, I think in this regard probable that Jesus used two versions of the parable and that Matthew for some reason chose the one over the other. Or is it, like I suggested. You have to wrestle with that and come to your own conclusions.

Student: Would the readers of Matthew have known that?

Dr. Stein: No.

Student: They would have read this parable and just thought, that's the way ...

Dr. Stein: Sure. Yeah. That's what Christ means for you.

Student: That same person picks up Luke, how would they know was actually ... [hard to hear]

Dr. Stein: Uh. If they still had Matthew around, they would say, Matthew ... yeah... really – that's the only way, that you could handle it. Or if Luke is around. And we don't either ... have access to either of those two.

Student: That is very problematic though for us in a day where inerrancy takes on so much ...[hard to hear]

Dr. Stein: Yeah. Well. Inerrancy is not self-explanatory. When you say Scriptures are inerrant, what do you mean by that? Well. I think I have it that what the Biblical writers intend to say by these words. What they mean is without error. Inerrancy is what the Biblical writers, led by the Spirit are trying to convey by this – that's without error.

Student: You said of the words of Christ [hard to hear] there is a difference between those two

Dr. Stein: We don't have the words of Christ. We have Luke's interpretation of it and Matthew's.

Student: But we presented it to [hard to hear]

Dr. Stein: Well, because they come to us through divinely inspired interpreters who have the mind of Christ.

Student: I guess what I am saying is, when a minister gets in a pulpit, he said, this is what Jesus said. He doesn't.[hard to hear]

Dr. Stein: No. No – you don't say that. But everybody in the congregation knows that Jesus didn't speak English {laughter}. And so they...

Student: Most people think Jesus said, "thou."

Dr. Stein: You better stay with the King James then in your church. ... So they are interpreting. But you have to realize that what is true and without error? Is it the text – what the authors mean by the text – is what the readers mean by the text? You have to have some sort of a hermeneutic to go with that.

Dr. Stein: Alright – yes?

Student: To me personally, since all the things recorded here after a period of three years...

Dr. Stein: What I am showing you today is not, what I would show my congregation on Sunday morning. I am trying ... have you wrestled with issues that is way above them and you don't have to share your great wisdom all the time with them. And last of all, you need to share the personal problems you have with the Biblical text. If I were preaching this, I would preach what Matthew is telling us through the parable. In this

parable of our Lord, Matthew is telling us, we need to be worried as a church about, the Smiths and the Browns that are no longer coming to church that are having struggles out there. And what are we going to do about it? Are we going to visit them? Are we going to try to befriend them? Are we going to win them back or not? Jesus is not willing that any of His little ones should go astray.

That is what I would preach. I would not say “By the way, Luke has a different wording. I haven’t slept nights over this, so I don’t want you to sleep nights over this.”

Student: Dr. Stein. Are you saying that we don’t have the very words of Christ [hard to hear] I am confused.

Dr. Stein: Alright. In your Gospels, New Testament Introduction 1 – This is the kind of material that is discussed there. It is not discussed in Hermeneutics, but we will jump there. What language did Jesus speak?

Students: Aramaic.

Dr. Stein: The New Testament is written in?

Students: Greek.

Dr. Stein: Jesus didn’t speak these words. They are translations of His words. Furthermore, we have a translation of a translation. That doesn’t mean that I have to share that and say that “That means we really know what Jesus says.” No. I preach this is what Jesus said and meant, but if somebody says to me right away, “Well. What did Jesus actually say?” I would say “Well. Look. You raised the question, you have to wrestle with that and do we have a word for word or a thought for thought translation? We explain sometime differences that way. When Matthew says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit” and Luke says “Blessed are you poor,” I assume it is the same Beatitude, just translated differently. And you say, “Well. What did Jesus actually say?” And He said neither.

You have His inspired evangelist sharing the Gospel with us as to what Jesus said and they are infallible in I say that. They will never lead you astray. Matthew wants to help us to understand that poor is a term that talks about [hard to hear] in a sense of humble, not arrogant. Luke just uses the word poor, which is probably closer to what Jesus said, but they are both right. Just two different ways of saying it.

Now I would not be preaching that way on a Sunday morning. I am explaining something in a Sunday School class here. If I was preaching from Matthew, I would say, “Blessed are the poor in Spirit.” Now when Luke translates that, the word here that Jesus uses is the word poor, which means poor in spirit and Matthew is giving us a thought for thought translation like in our NIV. I think ... most people wouldn’t have a major problem with that.

Student: They are not translating something.

Dr. Stein: Again what I would say is that he is bringing out an implication of what Jesus meant here. Matthew is taking the words of Jesus for us and showing what that means... I am talking like Matthew – I am showing you the words – I am showing you what Jesus' words mean for us here in A.D. 75.

The Smiths and the Browns. Abraham and Sarah out there – they are starting to stray away. Are we going to look down our nose at them or are we going to win them back.

You know... when I hear what preachers do with texts, I think I am pretty conservative with Jesus' words in some ways. Again, I think, I would always talk about Matthew led by the Spirit is trying to show his audience what that meant and that might be helpful for us. And we are doubly blessed in that regard.

Ok. Now that I have explained that all or have buried myself, let us go on.

End of lecture 23

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Hermeneutics for Parables \(Part 4\)](#)

Let us look at another parable and that's the parable in Matthew 20, verses 1 through 16 and get some sub-rules for the arriving at the main point in the parable.

I will read the parable in Matthew 20:1 to 16 and I will give you some of the allegorical interpretation of the parable and I will give you some of the main rules for interpreting it and then we will apply it.

“For the kingdom of Heaven is like a householder who went out 1 "For the Kingdom of Heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2 After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. 3 And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place; 4 and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. 5 Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. 6 And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' 7 They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.' 8 And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.' 9 And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. 10 Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. 11 And on receiving it

they grumbled at the householder, 12 saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' 13 But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? 14 Take what belongs to you, and go; I choose to give to this last as I give to you. 15 Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?' So the last will be first and the first last."

A difficult parable in many ways. As often as I have read that both out loud and quietly, I always think the first hour workers got ripped off. These are hard working people - they got ripped off. And these lazy guys in the 11th hour - they who didn't deserve it, they got treated equally. It is not right.

Now there are lots of different attempts to arrive at a point, but let me show you first the allegorical interpretation of this. Irenaeus about 180 to 200 AD, Origen around 200 AD.

First hour worker – Irenaeus – those at the beginning of creation were saved.
Origen - those from Creation to Noah.

The third hour workers – those under the Old Covenant – according to Irenaeus.
Those from Noah to Abraham, according to Origen.

The sixth hour workers, those saved at the time of Jesus – according to Irenaeus.
Those saved from Abraham to Moses - Origen

The ninth hour workers, those saved were contemporaries of Irenaeus.
Those saved from Moses to Joshua according to Origen.

The eleventh hour workers, those who were saved in the last days – Irenaeus.
Those saved from the time of Joshua to Jesus – Origen.

The householder represents God according to Origen and the denarius represents salvation.
Alright that's the allegorical interpretation of the parable.

Now there have been lots of various interpretation of the parable which go something like this. The main point of the parable is that God is sovereign. He can do what He wants. Good Calvinist approach to this passage. Emphasize verse 14 – uh... verse 15. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me?

Others say, the parable teaches the doctrine of Justification by Faith. The eleventh hour workers did not earn. They got saved by grace through faith.

Alright some problems with those.

First of all, he can't do whatever he wants in the parable. If he wants to give the eleventh hour workers, a denarius, he is free to do it, but he has to give the first hour workers a

denarius. So when you talk about the sovereignty of God as being demonstrated here, the owner is not sovereign with regard to the first hour workers – only with regard to the eleventh hour workers.

If you say, you are saved by grace, well, that's true, the eleventh hour workers are paid by grace, the first hour workers are paid for what they have done. The sixth hour workers kind of half get paid for it. So maybe we are teaching that some people are saved by grace alone, and some by works alone and some by half and half and some by three-fourths and one and you know a combination of things like that, which would of course be absurd.

Now, some rules at arriving at the main point. These are sub-rules for point one. Alright, rules for arriving at the main point.

When there are several characters in a parable, there are always two that are most important.

Who are the main two characters? Usually you can zero in on who are the three most important. Now when you look at that – if you notice when they are paid, what workers are not mentioned in the payoff? The third, sixth and ninth, right? Well. If the third, sixth and ninth hours are not even mentioned in the payoff, they are not important. But notice that Origen and Irenaeus equated each one of those as equally important. One, three, six, nine and eleven. But three, six, nine are irrelevant. One in the eleven that are important; the others are not. And there is the owner. So you have three.

Another rule: What occurs at the end - sometimes called the Rule of the End Stress.

How many of you know somebody who can't tell a joke? Why can't they tell a joke?

Student: [hard to hear]

Dr. Stein: They give the punch-line away. Good story telling builds up at the end, and in a joke you have to really build it up to the very end line.

In telling a parable, good parable tellers, tell a story and what comes at the end, the Rule of End Stress is most important. I am going to read the parable again. Everything will sound exactly the same and then I will say "switch," and now I am going to switch something and notice the difference in the parable.

"... the Kingdom of Heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2 After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. 3 And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place; 4 and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. 5 Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. 6 And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' 7 They said to

him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.' 8 And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward,

Dr. Stein: Switch.

'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the first, up to the last.' 9 And when those hired about the first hour came, each of them received a denarius. 10 Now when the eleventh hour workers came, they thought they would receive less; but each of them also received a denarius. 11 And on receiving it they marveled at the householder, 12 saying, 'Truly this is a gracious man.'"

Very different parable. If you wanted to teach something like Justification by Faith, or the grace of God, that's the way you tell the parable. That's not the way, he told it. What are we left with at the end? Grumbling. That is where he wants to get us. Now, another aspect is what occurs in direct discourse? Usually when you switch from indirect discourse to direct discourse – indirect discourse, no quotation marks, direct discourse, within quotation marks. When you switch from indirect to direct discourse, you focus on what is being said.

Now, in direct discourse, there is no conversation between the owner, and the third, sixth, ninth hour workers or the eleventh hour workers at the end. At the end, there is an extensive discussion, between the owner and first hour workers. That's another clue. Then finally, who gets the most pressed? Upon whom is the most space in the account devoted?

In verse 9, we read 9 And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius.

That's all we hear about the eleventh hour workers. But verse 10, verse 11, verse 12, verse 13, verse 14, verse 15 are all a conversation between the owner and the first hour workers. So now you know who the main character is – the main characters – the owner and the first hour workers.

[hard to hear] at the end. [hard to hear] in direct discourse. It gets the most press. So in this parable, the focus comes upon the discussion with the first hour workers and the key comes at the end: "Do you begrudge my generosity?" That's the key.

Now in the setting of Jesus, who was begrudging the generosity of the Lord? Pharisees and Scribes right?

"Why do you eat with publicans and sinners? Why does this man eat with publicans and sinners?"

And so what you have here is a parable in which Jesus directs to the Pharisees and Scribes, "The Kingdom of God has come. The outcast, the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind - they are entering the Kingdom of God. In the last hour, they are coming. Why

aren't you rejoicing? Why can't you enter the joy of the occasion? Why do you begrudge the grace and generosity of God? Alright.

The fact is, the first are becoming last and the last are becoming first. Those you expected at the inside [hard to hear] they are not entering. And those you never expected but who had nothing to lose – they are entering in.

I don't like the parable in the sense that its teaching seems to be so contrary to the my mother and father's ethic [hard to hear] about hard work, about getting what you deserve and if you are leading devotions at the annual meeting of the AFLCIO, you are not going to read this parable. Alright?

There is something about it that I just don't like. And yet, that is just the point. What scares me is that my attitude in the parable is the attitude of the Pharisees and Scribes. If I was a first hour worker and was really a loving kind person, wouldn't I say something like "Hey isn't it wonderful – even those who couldn't work the whole day like this, they also received a denarius? Isn't that great?" I say that and my teeth are grinding because I don't like it. Because I would be the first out [hard to hear] worker type, but maybe we don't understand the grace of God.

On the other hand, I am thankful for the grace of God that at the eleventh hour, my Father-in-law could be saved when he is dying in the hospital. I wish he had been saved a lot earlier, because he wasn't a happy man. But I am glad at the eleventh hour, he has a chance.

So I don't – when I think about it – I really don't begrudge God's generosity. I am glad there is opportunity that way. Anyhow – another parable. Does that make sense? I think by reversing the story-telling, it becomes really clear who the main character is. He really wants us to focus on the older first hour worker type. Ok.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son – to save time, I won't read it because I think most of us know it reasonably well and let me just tell some general things about the parable first.

First thing I want you to know about the parable is that the picture part is beautifully told. Some people only talk about parables, talk about the picture part – the story itself and the reality part. The point that is trying to be made. Picture, point – don't mix them up.

This picture is being told, given in order to teach a point. Now the picture – how do you describe a Jew, a young man on skid row in the first century? He's broke. He essentially hires himself in some sort of bondservant servant capacity. To whom? A Gentile. Well, that doesn't end there. What does he do for a living?

He slops the hogs. Not generally a good Jewish occupation. Then it goes worse. He wants to sit down and eat with them. He's so hungry. Jesus is a great story-teller in telling us that.

Jesus' view of the two commandments, "You shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart, strength, and mind, and your neighbor as yourself." Remember, this is his parable. He created it. Father I have sinned against ... Thou shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart, strength, and mind ... Heaven ... You shall love your neighbor as yourself ... and against you. God-man.

Another parable: "There was a certain judge who neither feared God nor respected man."

"Love the Lord your God, with all your heart, strength, and mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

Shows how Jesus' mind is just filled with this kind of an understanding. Jesus' reverence for the name of God. He avoids it by referring to Heaven, capital 'H', substitution. The Father's acceptance of his son. He goes running after his son. He sees him from a distance. And the older brother, his attitude, verse 30. When this son of your came – Well - does that mean that he was a half brother?

No. He just wants nothing to do with him. His hatred for his younger brother is such that he won't even call him his brother. "This son of yours."

And if you want to say, what does this reflect? If this is reflecting the Pharisees' attitude towards publicans and sinners it does so very well right? They won't call publicans and sinners, their brothers and sisters – something like that. Ok.

Now, with regard to the acceptance of the older son, Joseph Beale tells about the story as a missionary, when on a board, the mission board sent a young man and his wife to a rural village in the Middle East and they candidated for the pastor in that church in the church [hard to hear] To their utter surprise of Beale and their other denominational leaders, voted no - not to accept them.

And they went out – and found out what was going on. They said, "Do you preach a poor sermon or something?" "No." They said "He was a good preacher." "Did he say anything heretical?" "No. He's very orthodox." "What about his wife? Didn't you like her?" "No. She seemed to be a really wonderful pastor's wife."

And everything they said seemed to be positive. And he said "Well then, why did you vote no?" And then he said something sheepishly, "He walks too fast" - which in that culture lacked dignity. If that culture somehow reflects the culture of Jesus' day somewhat, his father doesn't care about dignity; he runs to his son. You would expect him to "Hey let's wait and receive him," but he runs, puts his arms around him and hugs him and receive him back.

Now, the reality part – the main point of the parable. Who are the two main characters? Easy to get down to three. It's not ... I will have to show you somewhere I have a ... I will show you next, the allegory but the main two characters that comes to ... the father who is the one character in two parts of the parable, then you have the two brothers.

So it's the father and the which of the two brothers? Ok. Well. What comes at the end? The older brother right? What's found in direct discourse? No conversation between the younger son and the father. The son has a schpeel of "I've sinned against Heaven, against you ... not worthy to be called your son." [hard to hear] turns to servants as ... put a robe on him, put a ring on him, kill the fatted calf. We are going to feast and so forth. But there is this extensive conversation between the older brother and the father.

Now the other rule about who gets the most press. That doesn't work out as neatly in this one, because more part of the picture is described in the younger brother in that way. But again, I think, the point is, the father and the older brother, and the emphasis lays again on ... well ... Luke gives us something of a context and its interesting that some of the radical critics think that this is exactly the kind of situation the parables were told in.

"Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear Him and the Pharisees and Scribes murmured saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them. So he told them - those who were murmuring, the Pharisees and Scribes - this parable and in light of that, who fits the Pharisees and Scribes very well? The older brother. So it looks like this parable then is also a parable addressed like the other parable in Matthew 20, to older brother types, 'It's time to rejoice. The feast is going on. Why can't you come and enjoy the feast and join in with them?'"

And those who are dealing with the historical issues think that probably this parable about the father ... once you name the parable, you tell who you think the main point is ... Is it the parable about the griping older brother? Is it the parable of the prodigal son? Is this the parable of the gracious father? Once you put a label on it, you pretty much determine what kind of interpretation you give to it.

In the parable of the gracious father, the parable seems to be addressed to Pharisees and in that regard, it looks like it is addressed at a time in Jesus' ministry, in which He had not yet given up hope in reaching some of the Pharisees and Scribes. Later on, "Woe to you Scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites", but at this point, it seems to be a reaching out to them in some ways.

Now, let me show you the allegorical interpretation of the parable, according to Tertullian, the older son, the Jew, jealous of salvation being offered to the Gentiles, the younger son the Christian, the father is God, the inheritance squandered, the natural human ability to know God, the citizen in the far country, the devils, the swine are the demons, the robe represents original righteousness lost by Adam, the ring represents Christian baptism, and the fatted calf represents the Saviour present at the Lord's supper.

Now, allegory, we are going to talk about that, next week, we will have a couple of parables still and one will deal with allegory. It's evident that this is not possible, because if Jesus is trying to communicate to His hearers, I doubt that any of His hearers would have thought that this ring represents baptism in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Even less would they have thought that the fatted calf represents Jesus' presence in the Lord's supper, which has not yet been instituted, but one day will.

So if the audience of Jesus would not have seen these details as being allegorical, this parable shouldn't be interpreted allegorically. We will look at that more fully later on. I have one more thing to say and then we will call it a day, but any questions up to this point?

There is a story about this young man who had run away from home and father was a farmer in North Dakota – he hated North Dakota, he wanted to run away, so he ran away and hid himself in a big city in California. One day he went to church, because he was raised that way, and the pastor was preaching the parable of the prodigal son. And after church, he came to the pastor, near the end of the line and he said, “Pastor, I really have to talk to you about you said this morning.” And the pastor said, “Why don't you wait until I have say good-bye to these last few people and we will meet in the office?” And after that happened, the young man came to his office with him and said, “Pastor, I don't know if you realize that that parable is about me. I am the prodigal son.” He said “Well. What do you mean?” He said “Well. I ran away from home in North Dakota and I stole a pretty good amount of money from my father and now it's all gone, I'm broke and I don't know what to do.” And so the pastor said to him, “Well. I think what you ought to do is, like the parable says, go back to your father and confess to him and I think you will find that he will kill a fatted calf for you.”

So the young man nodded and the pastor never saw him for a while and then a number of months later, he saw this young man in the congregation, he couldn't wait for the church service to be over and when church service was over, the young man came up to him and the pastor smiled and he said, “Did your father kill a few of the fatted calf?” And the young man said, “Not really. But he darn near killed the prodigal son.”

Not all fathers are as gracious, unfortunately as the father of the parable.

End of lecture 24

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Allegory in Parables \(Part 1\)](#)

C.S. Lewis – Mere Christianity – On Christian Marriage

What we call 'being in love' is a glorious state, and, in several ways, good for us. It helps to make us generous and courageous, it opens our eyes not only to the beauty of the beloved but to all beauty, and it subordinates (especially at first) our merely animal sexuality; in that sense, love is the great conqueror of lust. No one in his senses would deny that being in love is far better than either common sensuality or cold self-centeredness. But, as I said before, 'the most dangerous thing you can do is to take any one impulse of our own nature and set it up as the thing you ought to follow at all costs'.

Being in love is a good thing, but it is not the best thing. There are many things below it, but there are also things above it. You cannot make it the basis of a whole life. It is a noble feeling, but it is still a feeling. Now no feeling can be relied on to last in its full intensity, or even to last at all. Knowledge can last, principles can last, habits can last; but feelings come and go. And in fact, whatever people say, the state called 'being in love' usually does not last. If the old fairy-tale ending 'They lived happily ever after' is taken to mean 'They felt for the next fifty years exactly as they felt the day before they were married,' then it says what probably never was nor ever would be true, and would be highly undesirable if it were. Who could bear to live in that excitement for even five years? What would become of your work, your appetite, your sleep, your friendships? But, of course, ceasing to be 'in love' need not mean ceasing to love. Love in this second sense—love as distinct from 'being in love'—is not merely a feeling. It is a deep unity, maintained by the will and deliberately strengthened by habit; reinforced by (in Christian marriages) the grace which both parents ask, and receive, from God. They can have this love for each other even at those moments when they do not like each other; as you love yourself even when you do not like yourself. They can retain this love even when each would easily, if they allowed themselves, be 'in love' with someone else. 'Being in love' first moved them to promise fidelity: this quieter love enables them to keep the promise. It is on this love that the engine of marriage is run: being in love was the explosion that started it."

Prayer:

"Oh. Father we are thankful for the gifts you have given to all creation. We are thankful for the gift of marriage and we especially who are married here pray that you would bless our marriages and help them to be examples of what you have intended from creation. Grant our Father that we may love our wives and husbands in a new and unique way in each day. Help us to never take their love for granted but to seek to woo and to win our beloved until death us do part. Bless us this our now as we meet in Jesus' name. Amen."

Last week we began to look at a particular genre, the genre of Parables and we sought several rules, main rules with regard to interpreting Parables.

One was to seek the main point of the Parable. Parables are not the same as allegories. In an allegory you are to interpret them allegorically, because the details are meant to be interpreted. But in a parable there is generally just one main point, and therefore don't press the parable. Be satisfied with the one main point and we looked at a number of examples in which these difficult parables if you press the details, you get into all sorts of troubles. But if you are willing to be satisfied with the main point of the parable, you are alright.

Next seek to understand what the original Parabler – the teller of the parable – Jesus Himself, meant. And we looked at a couple of examples which take on a whole different meaning when we try to understand the parable in the setting in which it was told by Jesus. But the evangelists also are interpreters of the Parables and we should try to understand what the evangelists was seeking to teach by the Parables of Jesus.

Then finally we should seek to try to understand what God is teaching us today in the parable. We seek for its implications for us and its significance. Putting those together, we talk about application.

Then we have some sub-rules for arriving at the main point of the parable and that is: who are the two main characters in the parable? There are a number of characters, ultimately you zero in on two of them. What occurs at the end? The Rule of N-Stress [Hard to Hear] Good story telling brings everything to a peak at the end. Pay attention to how a story ends.

What occurs in direct discourse, when you have quotation marks being used?

It draws attention to what is being said. And who or what gets the most press? So you have the four main rules at the top. Then you have these four sub-rules for arriving at the main point which is the first main rule.

We want today to look at some other rules and this is now how to detect allegory in a parable. When do you look for meaning in the details themselves? Before I give you the rules, let us look at a parable and see how these rules apply. The parable I want us to look at is in Mark chapter 12, verses 1-12. This is the parable of the Worker in the Vineyard. Now as you turn to that in your Bible, I want to read for you a portion from the OT, from Isaiah 5:1-7. Don't bother turning to that but you may just want to keep your eyes on the opening verses of chapter twelve in Mark as I read Isaiah here.

1 Let me sing for my beloved
my love-song concerning his vineyard:
My beloved had a vineyard
on a very fertile hill.
2 He dug it and cleared it of stones,
and planted it with choice vines;
he built a watchtower in the midst of it,
and hewed out a wine vat in it;
he expected it to yield grapes,
but it yielded wild grapes.
3 And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem
and people of Judah,
judge between me
and my vineyard.
4 What more was there to do for my vineyard
that I have not done in it?
When I expected it to yield grapes,
why did it yield wild grapes?
5 And now I will tell you
what I will do to my vineyard.

I will remove its hedge,
and it shall be devoured;
I will break down its wall,
and it shall be trampled down.
6 I will make it a waste;
it shall not be pruned or hoed,
and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns;
I will also command the clouds
that they rain no rain upon it.
7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts
is the house of Israel,
and the people of Judah
are his pleasant planting;
he expected justice,
but saw bloodshed;
righteousness,
but heard a cry!

Now with that as a background, let me now read for you Mark, chapter twelve, the parable that we are looking at. And what you must think of is the hearers of this parable by Jesus, would they have immediately remembered the parable in Isaiah, chapter 5.

1 Then he [Jesus] began to speak to them in parables. "A man planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a pit for the wine press, and built a watchtower; then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. 2 When the season came, he sent a slave to the tenants to collect from them his share of the produce of the vineyard. 3 But they seized him, and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. 4 And again he sent another slave to them; this one they beat over the head and insulted. 5 Then he sent another, and that one they killed. And so it was with many others; some they beat, and others they killed. 6 He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' 7 But those tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' 8 So they seized him, killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. 9 What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. 10 Have you not read this scripture:
'The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
11 this was the LORD's doing,
and it is amazing in our eyes'?"
12 When they realized that he had told this parable against them, they wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowd. So they left him and went away.

Now, I want to suggest to you how to detect the presence of allegory in the Parables.

Two Rules: First, would Jesus with His audience have attributed meaning to these details? We looked at the Parable of the Prodigal Son and we noted a lot of allegorical details like the ring placed on the prodigal's finger by his father is Christian baptism. The killing of the fatted calf refers to the Lord's Supper and things of this nature.

Now we pointed out that it would have been impossible for audience of Jesus to attribute allegorical significance to those details. But what about this parable?

Wouldn't the hearers, assuming that they knew the Old Testament pretty well and they did. Would they not have seen something about a vineyard, a watchtower, a hedge, a winepress and things of that nature?

I think they would have. I think immediately they would have said, "He is talking a parable about our nation". And so the details here would have been sought after and looked at as being of the bearers of meaning for the audience of Jesus. So that now when we do this, we should also attribute meaning to those details. This vineyard is symbolic of the nation of Israel. Now you have other details that are not mentioned in Isaiah 5, but if you once have the owner of the Vineyard coming to the Vineyard and sending his servants, some they beat, some they kill, others they treat shamefully.

What would that have conjured up about the owner of Israel, God, having sent servants to his vineyard? The Prophets, right? Now. When it comes after the Prophets, we bring with us a Christological understanding of the NT, but let us go back before there is a NT. See Jesus giving this parable and then He says, the owner after sending servants had a beloved Son and he sent him. Is there not a clear distinct difference between those that was sent before the servant and the Son in the parable? Does that reveal a Christological understanding of Jesus in this parable? Of His uniqueness? Now I will tell you, if someone said, if someone said, "You know Dr. Stein, you preach just like Isaiah, Jeremiah," I wouldn't feel particularly put down by that. But Jesus is the Son, not a servant. Totally different relationship with God. His only Son. So you have a Christological understanding as well.

Now, certainly the second part, would the evangelists' audience have understood these details as being allegorical? Yes and I think clearly they would have understood that as well. Now when we get back to the Parable of the Prodigal Son, would the audience of Luke - with Theophilus for example - have understood the ring as being a sign of Christian baptism? There is no sense at this time that baptism was ever used as a metaphor for a ring. Or I should reverse that - a ring was ever used as a metaphor for Christian baptism in Luke's day. So that doesn't - even for Luke's audience have any symbolical and allegorical significance here.

Now I want to read to you the parallels in Matthew of this allegorical - in Matthew 21, verse 39, we have different description. You have the parable of the landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, built a winepress and it built a tower, he leased

it out to tenants and so forth. In verse 34, finally he sent his son to them saying, “They will respect my son.” But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come let us kill him and let us get his inheritance. So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.’

Do you notice anything here?

Student: [Hard to Hear] They killed him in the Vineyard.

Dr. Stein: Yeah. In Mark, they kill him and throw him out of the Vineyard. In Matthew 21:39 and if you looked at the Lukan parallel, in 20, verse 15, the same thing. They first threw him out of the Vineyard and then they kill him.

Why do Matthew and Luke have that? I believe that they changed Mark – Mark’s account, for a particular reason. Why? Yes.

Student: [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: Yes. Where was Jesus crucified? Outside the city of Jerusalem. Hebrews makes a big thing of that – outside the camp, He is slain.

Now. This indicates that they see this parallel allegorically. So you have here, Jesus’ audience would have understood these details allegorically. The Evangelists’ audience would have understood these allegorically. This parable is an allegory. The details are important. Other details, pouring on oil and wine, symbolic of loving kindness, nothing specific mentioned here. These are specifically to be understood. This is about Israel. About God sending prophets to them. Their slaying of the Son of God and the Vineyard being taken away and given to others. The Kingdom of God being – now I go to the Gentiles Paul says. And the Gentile world becomes the beneficiaries of God’s covenant with Abraham and so forth.

So here we have detecting allegory, the audience – would they have understood that this way? Yeah. They would have and so of course would the Evangelists’ audience as well. And the result is that here we have clear instance of an allegory, not just a single point, but the details should be pressed, because they are significant and they seek to convey meaning.

Now. Let me just stop there for a minute and see how we are doing?

Student: What if - do you think [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: Ok. Now. We are getting in to the areas of Gospel studies. If you had Gospel’s with me, this will make more sense than if you have not had it with me or any other Professor. I believe that Mark was the first Gospel written. And therefore in this area, I think he is quoting the Parable as Jesus had said the parable. But I think Matthew and Luke want to help the readers see even more the allegory here, and so they make it fit the

life of Jesus more closely. Easy to think that than to think that Mark would breakdown the allegory by reversing the order. Good question. Yeah.

Student: As far as Luke and Theophilus [Hard to Hear] Is this saying that Theophilus was a Jew and therefore

Dr. Stein: No. Theophilus is not a Jew. His name is very Greek and Luke in general is written as a Gospel to non-Jews. I think we are pretty well settled, set with that. But he would have known the known the OT, maybe not as well as Jesus' original audience but most of the converts from the Gentile world to Christianity in the first decades were what we called God-fearers. They had been attracted to the Synagogue. They had never been converted. Conversion meant becoming a kosher Jew. It meant having those kinds of things that were associated with a lifestyle like, didn't allow you to eat with Gentiles any longer. It meant kind of a drifting away from your own people to a different nation and above all it meant circumcision. And that was a real stumbling block for Gentiles. So they attended the Synagogue, kept the Law, the Moral Law, but never converted as such.

Now when the Gospel is early preached to these people like Cornelius, a God-fearer, and you have Paul, in Pisidian Antioch where he addresses the members of the people of the Synagogue, "Children of Israel, and you that fear God." Now he is not talking about the same group. He is talking about two different groups.

"Children of Israel and you who are Gentiles but fear God. Listen."

And so this group is attracted to Christianity because everything they saw about Judaism that they liked was in Christianity. Oneness of God. Ancient religion. High morality. High family lifestyle uh... noble family life uh ... manifested to the most part.

The things that they didn't like: kosher living, circumcision were no longer required. In Christianity that was unnecessary so these tended to flock over and become Christians. And in fact there was a time when the Rabbi's encouraged this kind of a half-Jewish state of a Gentile becoming a God-fearer but as Christianity comes along and wins most of these God-fearers, they realize that they are essentially just making a seed bed for the Christian church. And so eventually they say, look, either become a convert or just forget about it. And no longer is there a great group of God-fearers that existed.

Alright now, let us look at the parable now a little more and notice a couple of other things. You have the owner coming and destroying the tenants and giving the Vineyard to others. He will come and destroy the tenants.

I can't imagine that any reader in Mark's day or in Matthew or Luke's day would not have thought of A.D. 70. For Mark it was still future but already the city was surrounded probably in a surrounded by other Roman legions; they will be destroyed. A.D. 70 refers to that. So you have here details that you have to take seriously.

But notice, this is the exception of all the parables that we looked at so far. But we are driven to that because His audience would have seen it that way. And greeters would have seen it that way. So that is the way we assume that Jesus and also the Gospel writers intended it to be understood.

Alright let us look at another parable like that. In Luke 14, verses 15 and following, we have a parable.

One of the dinner guests, on hearing this, said to him, "Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" 16 Then Jesus said to him, "Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. 17 At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for everything is ready now.' 18 But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.' 19 Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.' 20 Another said, 'I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.' 21 So the slave returned and reported this to his master.

Now it was very typical in those days that if you were planning something like this, you would go to your neighbors and say "We are going to have a" ... probably you did this to a servant ... you say "My master is going to have a great banquet in the near future and we would like you to come." And he would say, "I would be honored to come." And then all of a sudden these things come up. You say "Well? What does this man expect? You didn't set a specific date. You are just not going to have a banquet sometime. Would you like to come?" So things can interfere. Not really things can't interfere. None of these people are saying, "By the way, we are planning to go to Hawaii. And we just won't be around at the time." Where will people be?

They will be where they are. They don't have vacations that they go somewhere. They don't take long trips. This is home. This is where they are 365 days a year. So you say. "We are going to have a banquet. We would like you to come."

"Oh. Sure."

So the banquet is there and everything is ready and now the second time a servant goes out and he says, "Alright the banquet is today and the master would like you to come." And now they all start making excuses.

Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.' 22 And the slave said, 'Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.' 23 Then the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the roads and lanes, and

compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. 24 For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner."

Now here you have a parable in which there are two sending outs of the servants to bring people in. There is a parallel somewhat like in the Gospel of Matthew that that has only one sending out. Luke is rather specific. Two sending outs: one to the immediate area, and the other to those further out to bring them in.

Now, I think this is to be understood allegorically. I think Luke wants Theophilus to understand this parable allegorically. The Kingdom of God has come – that is what the parable is about. The Kingdom of God is frequently likened to a great banquet: the Messianic Banquet.

And when it has come, those who had been invited - those you expected to come don't come. They refuse it. Instead now the replacement guests are: the poor, the maimed, the lame the blind and they are brought in from the nearby streets.

Alright now, in the ministry of Jesus, can you see anything going on here that the parable is alluding to?

Jesus comes preaching the Kingdom of God is at hand. Those who you think were the most invited ones, like this man who said "Won't it be wonderful when we all eat bread in the Kingdom of God?" and Jesus is saying "The Kingdom of God has come. Repent now." And he is thinking of it still future. And in its place comes the publicans and the sinners. But there is still room. So go out further out. Now Luke's audience would have thought of something here. It is not only the outcastes of Israel that are entering the Kingdom, but the outcastes of the Gentile world and this double sending out, I think is intended to be understood allegorically. I think Luke's audience would have understood it that way.

22 And the slave said, 'Sir, - verse 22 - what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.' 23 Then the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. And consequently ... I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.'"

The Pharisees and the Scribes, the first become last. They are excluded. The last, the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, the Publicans and the sinners of Israel, the cursed Gentile - the goyim – enter the Kingdom of God, but those whom you would have expected will not have tasted the dinner.

I think here is another parable that has allegorical significance to it. There are not a lot more. I think this is the main two. Most parables – not an issue. Parables teach one main point. Therefore don't press the details.

End of lecture 25

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Allegory in Parables \(Part 2\)](#)

Another parable I would like to share with you. That is Matthew 25:31-46. The parable of the sheep and the goats.

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, 33 and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. 34 Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; 35 for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

Probably this is synonymous parallelism. Same thought essentially being repeated in rhythm. There are six lines here.

"37 Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? 38 And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? 39 And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' 40 And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' 41 Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; 42 for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' 44 Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?' 45 Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Now note here the almost monotonous 4-fold repetition of doing acts of love. They can't read this without saying, "It must be pretty important to give food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty. Welcome strangers. Give clothing to the naked. Visit the sick and take care of

them. Visit those who are in prison. Repeated four times in this parable. Must be very very important.

Most times that you hear this parable, it is a parable that is interpreted as something like “Food relief Sunday.” You are to feed the hungry of the world and take care of them in their needs like, because we have an abundance and so forth. Now, I am not minimizing that. I think that, that is an important witness that we have to have.

Several – no must be – no it might be several decades ago now – my wife and I determined that we were going to give every year to food relief. We picked out maybe the most famous food relief and then I found out that the overhead of that was almost 40%. Which meant that sixty cents of a dollar went for food relief. And then I found another group, Food for the Hungry in which I found out that only 7 % is for overhead, so 93% went out. Which meant that the same dollar made me give ... I got 33% more for the buck so to speak.

Then, as I became a Southern Baptist, I realized that whatever you give for food relief in the Southern Baptist Convention, it all goes. No overhead. That is taken care of by the normal missionary responsibilities, so we give there. Very important.

But is that what the meaning of this parable is?

Well. The key question to answer what the meaning of the parable is this: Who are the brethren that are referred to in verse 40? Because everything depends on it.

'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these, my brethren, you did it to me.'

So this then has to do with doing it to the least of these your brethren. Now, alright, how do you go about trying to understand what Matthew means by the “least of these my brethren” in his Gospel?

Concordance and you look up the word “brethren”.

Do you have access to a Greek New Testament – adelphois. You look up adelphos in a Greek lexicon and see where all the references are found, in Matthew, where this is found. Well. Lots of times, brothers refers to physical brothers. But the parable doesn't mean that. So you have to go where is the term brothers used in the Gospel of Matthew, metaphorically? And I just happened to know where they are.

Brethren in Matthew in chapter 23, when it is not referred to particularly physical brothers and sisters. 23. Verse 8. We have an example of that. Verse 8. “But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers.” Alright, now this is addressed to primarily His disciples, because who else would ever thought of being called rabbi in the group. So you have these are the disciples of Jesus. 28:10 - 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid but go tell my brethren to go to Galilee; there you will see

me." And this is addressed to the disciples, because they go on and tell the disciples about this and they go to Galilee.

So you have in these two references, brethren, same term used in the passage and it is always used for the disciples. Now there is another passage which is very much like this but which ... 12:46 – 50. Let us do that one before I go to the other passage.

46 While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers were standing outside, wanting to speak to him. 47 Someone said to him, "Look, your mother and your brothers – brethren in other words – are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." 48 But to the one who had told him this, Jesus replied, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" 49 And pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

So you have here, brothers / brethren being used in the sense of a disciple.

Now there is another parallel here which that term is not used but the correspondence will become pretty clear, when we look at it. In 10:40, whoever welcomes you welcomes me. Alright see the parallel?

"I was hungry and you fed me. I was naked and you gave me clothing. I was in prison and you visited me." Here you have,

"Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, whoever welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward. And whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous. Whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple - truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward."

So you have this parallel "receives you, receives me" and in the ... our parable that we looked at, you have this "receives who receives me" and you have a cup of cold being given and a cup of water being given in the parable as well.

So what we have here then from Matthew's use of the analogy, if you do this to one, you do it to me, but what is that one person? It is a believer, a disciple. Then you do it to me. Then you also have the parallel of brethren elsewhere in Matthew. If it is not used for physical brothers, it is used metaphorically for a follower of Jesus, a disciple.

So I think then, it is rather clear. What you have here is "for as much as you did this to one of the least of these who are my disciples, you do it to me." And in particular, I think this is probably best understood as to those who treat the disciples of Jesus in a way that shows respect and loving kindness. Not just anyone, but particularly, the disciple,

because it is much more focused. The way you treat the messenger of Jesus is the way you treat Jesus. That is not true of every human being.

Those who bear the name of Christ and go out in his name and proclaim the Gospel – if you treat them poorly, you are treating Jesus poorly. If you treat them well, you are treating Jesus well, because they are part of His body, His church. Let me stop here and see, if you followed me or if it all seemed wild.

“What? It is all right. Ok.”

Now let me give a good example. It is not from Matthew, but it is from the book of Acts. There is a rather interesting story in Acts, in which, Paul is treated very differently, before that person became a Christian and then after that person became a Christian.

Can you think of which story that is?

It is the story of the Philippian jailer. In Acts 16:23,

“After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely.”

All right, so he is beaten up and thrown in jail. That is the way he is treated by the jailer. After he is converted we read:

33 At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. 34 He brought them into his house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.

The attitude of the Philippian jailer radically changes after he is a believer. So that the attitude that he has toward this disciple of Jesus Christ reveals his heart and where he stands. And in the parable, the attitude that you have towards those who are followers of Jesus Christ, reveals where you stand with regard to the Christ they represent. Therefore, those who fed them, visited them, clothed them, clearly they are God’s people.

That shows why they are part of the family of God. They did it to Jesus and are well received. But those who abused the followers of Jesus are clearly not His followers. And that is why this can clearly be a heaven and hell issue so clearly. Because when you do that to God’s messengers, that reveals where you stand.

So the “least of these my brethren” means, this is the way you treat God’s messengers. Now I don’t want to have the press do a modern analogy, like we have say in America or something like that – where you preach Sunday and say “I want you to know ‘I am the least of these my brethren, so watch out, how you treat me brothers and sisters.’”

What you have in Jesus' day are itinerant missionaries out there as they come to the village, the way you treat them reveals your attitude towards the faith. You treat them well, it is because you love the Lord, they proclaim. If you ignore them, it reveals the lack of love for the Lord they are proclaiming. It becomes much more a tight single issue there with regards to their faith relationship.

Finally let me just go to one parable real quickly. Luke 16:19-31, because sometimes people have a question about this. Is this a parable or is it a story?

19 "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20 And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 21 who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores.

Don't think of this as "Isn't that nice to have these loving lassie's and Rin Tin Tin coming and trying to help the man by licking his wounds. These are curs. These are street dogs. These are adding insult to injury to the man – not a help.

22 The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried.

Notice the difference between the poor man ... he is not even buried – thrown out somewhere. He doesn't even have the nice funeral that the rich man has. No funeral.

23 In Hades, where he - the richman - was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. 24 He called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.' 25 But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. 26 Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.' 27 He said, 'Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house — 28 for I have five brothers — that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.' 29 Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.' 30 He said, 'No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' 31 He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

Now. There are a number of people who have suggested various times that this is not a parable but a real story. And the reason for that is, do you know of any parable in which a man's name is given? There isn't any. In no parable is a man given a name and so here

we have Lazarus, a name specifically given and some have argued, this therefore is not a parable. This is a real story.

Well. For Luke it's a parable and we know that because of the way Luke introduces parables. Turn with me to Luke 10:30.

"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho"

14:16 - "A certain man gave a great dinner and invited many..."

The other one should also have been "A certain man was going down..."

15:11 - "A certain man had two sons...." The parable of the prodigal son.

16:1 - "There was a certain rich man who had a manager..." The unjust steward parable.

19:12 - "A certain nobleman went to a distant country to get royal power for himself and then return." And you have the parable of the Kingdom of God there.

Now in all of these they are introduced by the Greek word *tis* – a certain man, a certain poor man, a certain judge or something like that, but it is always *tis*. There was a certain man who. There was a certain judge man. There was a certain father who had two sons. There was a certain ... and all of these introduce parables.

Here you have also in our particular parable, the same kind of introduction. There was a certain rich man who was dressed in purple. That indicates that Luke wants Theophilus to know this is a parable. So this is a parable, not a real story. It is also a parable, because it takes liberties that you never could do with a real story. You can't have for instance in a real story, people in Hell looking at Heaven and talking to Abraham in between. You can do that in a parable, but you can't do it in a real story.

So this is a parable and it should be treated as a parable and not a real story. Any questions or comments that you want to raise with regard to parable interpretation? I assume you are all experts at it at this point. We have almost spent a week and a half on it. Yeah?

Student: [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: Don't know for sure who it originated with, but it is fairly common since it the only parable in which a person is specifically named. The question then came up - if it were a parable then you wouldn't have that name and must be therefore a real person. But the way it is introduced, it is clearly intended by Luke to be understood as a parable.

Student: Some of the I guess details of the story [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: You have to see here a lot of symbolism. The rich man goes to Hell and he sees Hades, the place of the dead, and he looks up and he sees Lazarus and he talks to Abraham. I mean that – that's all story telling kind of things. And the idea of ... there is a lot of fascinating questions that arise on the parable, that people have speculated all sorts of things about. And the problem is that there is no answer to all of the speculations. It is very interesting, but there is somebody who does die and come back. Alright. The story of Lazarus in John. He returns and they don't listen to him.

In fact, in John 11, Lazarus rises from the dead and in John 12, they decide they better kill him again – put him into death. Kill him because people are believing in him. So you have some similarity here and some have said, "Well. The story of Lazarus in John 11 came out of this parable." And I would say, "No. The parable came out of the story and all this is speculation." You have no way of knowing anything. It is fascinating. But uh – it seems rather clear, that this is a parable story and not a real historical incident.

And you have them saying, "Well. You know if someone really rises from the dead then they will believe. And the answer of course is even more important than Lazarus is when Jesus rises from the dead, it doesn't force people to believe either. So you have a clear indication of how the church would have understood – "Yeah. Jesus rose from the dead. They didn't believe Him either." If they don't believe Moses and the Prophets, then they won't believe Jesus. Or this instance, Lazarus rising from the dead.

And, I have always been interested in that... people who say for instance "If God would work a miracle that I could really see I would really believe." The answer is "No. You wouldn't."

If you are willing to believe, you have the Old and New Testament and that will lead you to faith. And if you won't believe them, you wouldn't believe even if someone ... a miracle worked in your life. Because after all you can always attribute a miracle to a demonic thing.

If a person's heart is right, there is enough evidence in the Scriptures to lead the faith, but if their heart is not right, they won't listen to the Scriptures and they won't be convinced if someone rises from the dead either in that respect.

End of Lecture 26

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Hermeneutics for Historical Narrative \(Part 1\)](#)

Alright, we want to go now to the question of historical narrative – different genre altogether. We talked about parables, then we talked now about narrative. How did the

early Christian, first couple of centuries – how did they know if something in the Bible was historical – say up to the time of the Reformation.

How did Christians when they heard or if they were able to read, read something in the Bible, how did they know if this was a true historical event or not? What would they do?

Student: [Hard to Hear] interpretation of the church

Dr. Stein: Alright. Yeah. I think you might say some of them didn't personally think for themselves. They had the tradition that went that way. But supposing you were thinking for yourself and you read something in the Bible, how do you know if it is historically true or not before the Reformation? How do you know if something that you read in the Bible is historically true or not?

Student: [Hard to Hear] Fulfilled

Dr. Stein: Well. It is not a prophecy as such. IT is an event. Is this a true event or not?

Student: [Hard to Hear] I would say [Hard to Hear] NT [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: New. Old. Whatever you want.

Student: In the NT, they did keep some records [Hard to Hear] I guess they had something.

Dr. Stein: Alright.

Another student: I am not sure if [Hard to Hear] what you are asking. People read historical narrative in the Bible.

Dr. Stein: No. I didn't say. I said, if you read anything in the Bible, how did you know if this is a historical event or not?

Student: By faith.

Dr. Stein: Uh. Yeah. That was an element, but there are things that even if you have great faith, you don't believe everything that is historically true.

Student: It might be simplistic, but it sounds like an account. It sounds like a record.

Dr. Stein: Alright. Ok. And what do we call that in our vocabulary?

Student: [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: Subject matter. Ok. Well what about the subject matter in this passage we read in Luke 16. I think I know what you are getting at. I am looking for a different term.

Dr. Stein: Genre! Do you believe parables are historically true? Do you believe that there was a real prodigal son? Why? It is a genre of the parable. This is a story. These are fictional stories so that ... which ones did you believe [Hard to Hear] The ones that had a historical narrative genre type. In other words, you could tell rather differently ... when you interpret these two stories differently. Once upon a time and early in the morning of June 6th off the beach at Normandy. Now don't you expect something historical? A historical account. So it's the matter of genre.

There is a sense in which I can see where subject matter refer to this as historical stuff to it. Narrative has. So the way the early church would understand something were historically true or not – they would look and say – “Is this a parable? Is this a metaphor? Is this poetry? Or Is this historical narrative?” The genre of historical narrative is accepted as being true historically.

So it's the issue of genre. How do we understand the genre if it is historical narrative? Historical narratives are true. Prophecies use exaggerated terminology. Poetry uses its own kinds of exaggerated terminology. Parables are made up stories and so forth. Narrative ? Historical narrative? No. We know those things to be true.

Alright. That ... that is pretty much I think the way that things were up to the time of the Reformation. Well. Uh. Let us bring us up to today. This coming Sunday, you were going to begin to teach a Sunday school class – an adult Sunday school class in the church and you suggest to them, “What would you like to study during this time that we have together? We have two months in this opportunity to do this. What would you like to study?”

And somebody says “Well. You know I have heard a lot of stories about what happened with the Exodus and in fact the other day on tv, I watched a movie called the 10 Commandments and I never knew that Moses looked so much like Charlton Heston and so forth. I would really like to know what happened in the Exodus. I would to know what historically took place.”

And the others in the Sunday school say, “Yeah. Let us do that. That sounds great. We want to do that.” So you have a consensus. Now how are you as a Sunday school class at the First Baptist church of wherever you are – how are you going to go about doing it? How are you going to find out what really happened?

Dr. Stein: You read Exodus. Right? And you find out what happened.

Alright, well now we are a different group and this coming Monday or beginning of January when you are starting a J-term and you are in a class at the University of Louisville and this is a class on Humanities and we can study anything we wanted. And so you throw out suggestions and somebody in class says, “You know - I have heard a lot of myths about what took place during the Exodus and I would really like to know... I saw the 10 Commandments the other night on T.V. I would like to know what really happened way back then.” And everybody else in class says “That sounds good. Let's do

that. I'd like to know what really happened in the event which we call the Exodus. Alright, class is agreed. Now, where would your class go to, to know?"

Student: Archeology.

Dr. Stein: Archeology. Saviour of the world is archeology, right? Yes. And so you look up archeological evidence. You look up reports going back to the time of the Exodus, sometime between 1280 to 1290 and 1400, something like that. And you look at cities... you are not looking at cities like Peru. You are looking at cities on the way from Egypt and to Israel, cities like Hatsor or Megiddo or Jericho. You look up the records and see what can be learned from that. Right?

And if you find out that around the time that the Bible says an Exodus took place, all these cities tended to be burned, destroyed and a different kind of civilization and the burn layers had lots of Ashtoreths and fertility gods and goddesses in it but this new level of civilization was much more simplistic and didn't have those things and you say... "Ah... there might be some evidence here." Alright that is one thing – archeology. What else?

Student: Egyptian history.

Dr. Stein: Yeah. Now, how do we learn about that? Inscriptions and you have this big ANE – Ancient Near Eastern literature. You have all this Babylonian materials, Egyptian materials and so forth and... so you read Ancient Near Eastern literature of that time and see if you can find something out about that. And you have an archeology involves not just digging things but inscriptions and things of that nature.

Alright well. Good. What else would you do?

Student: [Hard to Hear] Try to determine if the events themselves are possible...

Dr. Stein: Ok. Somebody might say, well none of these are possible because it talks about a miracle and miracles don't happen. Yeah. You would have to discuss that. Ok. Sure. Someone hasn't mentioned something.

Student: You could try to describe ... [Hard to Hear]

Dr. Stein: Sure, you might try to find out, if you could explain some of these things on a non-supernatural basis. Yeah. Wouldn't you read Exodus in the University of Louisville? Wouldn't there be people... that is crazy...it doesn't count there. Ancient Near Eastern literature – we have some. We all know it. So you would read – you would read the book of Exodus as well.

So, what you would do then would be look at all the sources that are available and you try to analyze the account in the Exodus. The account square with that – is it possible by science to explain it this way and so forth and so on. Ok. But notice the difference.

Notice that up to the Reformation and even today in our Sunday School, if you want to know what happened in the Bible, you find out, “Is this historical narrative?” and then you read it. Then you know. And that’s the way things continued for about 1700 years.

Until the 1700s, that’s the way people learned what historically had taken place. Now in the 1700s, something does take place that is different and let me get for you some quotations. You don’t write them down... it is just something that we can discuss.

Hans Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative* – great book. Too bad it is not translated into English. “In the early Protestant interpretive tradition, we have noted the literal – that is the meaning of the author – and the religious meaning, the significance or meaningfulness is the term he uses, of the text, and the judgment of their factual accuracy has been wholly united.

The point to realize is not that they had been conceived to be in harmony with each other, but they had not even been generically distinct issues. As the 18th century wears on, this situation is increasingly at the end of the back [Hard to Hear]”

In other words, if, up to the end of the 1700s, if you read a story in Mark about the healing of the paralytic and someone asked you, “Well. I wonder what really happened?” [Hard to Hear]

“I just told you what really happened.” Then the paralytic was lowered via a roof and Jesus healed him. [Hard to Hear]

“No” – He says “What I really want to know is – Did this really take place?”

“Of course it took place. I just read it to you. Don’t you understand words anymore?”

The idea of the difference between the account and what really happened, quote on quote, is a foreign thought in their minds. It has not yet arisen.

The idea of the difference between what the text said and what really happened has not yet really been understood. The faith commitment of people was such that it was not an issue. Now however that does become an issue. And so from the 18th century on, you are now going to have, the idea arising is the account and the event described in the account, are they the same or are they different?

Furthermore, if the account and what really happened are different, where are we going to find meaning in all of this? That is the issue that comes up and that Hans Frei writes very nicely - writes in a very complicated way, but very astutely about. We are going to pick it up at that point in 15 minutes. Thank you.

... questions about all these miracles that was supposed to be happening in the church, like the hands of Jesus on a crucifix bleeding during passion week. You began to look seriously at those things. You began to look at all the early myths in the church and you began to question those, and you looked at myths in the other societies and other religious writings and you began to look at them more objectively.

Well when you once get into that mode and you treat other literature with a kind of prove it to me attitude, it is hard to stop if you disbelieve the bibles in a religious works. How can you not question the miracles in your own works, like the Bible?

And so the Bible began to be looked at with the same kind of enlightenment curiosity and also skepticism and you read an account of an axe floating on water in the Old Testament and you say "I ... I can't believe that stuff. Axes don't float on water. They sink." You begin to question some of those miracles and then time goes on and you start ... where do you stop?

Well you say, "Well. No. The one place where you surely stop is at the resurrection of Jesus from the dead." But how can you stop there if you are willing to question all the others. So this rationalism began to take place in the enlightenment and people began to doubt the miracles of Scripture. Now in light of that what you have is a historical narrative which you no longer believe is true. You no longer believe that what it is talking about - the subject matter - corresponds to the authorial meaning.

Now using our paradigm in our vocabulary, if what the historical narrative is saying and what the author means by that narrative does not corresponds to what took place, you have a problem. And what would we do with it, what would we say? If you really believe this – let us get it to the realm of ...

Student: [inaudible]

Dr. Stein: "Yeah. I know what the meaning is. I reject it. It has no significance for us." So we just – on the basis of that – reject it as having no significance.

The problem with that – that was the one thing you couldn't do. You have realize that there were sincere people who were involved in that, said, "The Bible – this Bible story meant a lot to Grandma and Grandpa and led them to a life that was a good life, a happy life, a noble life. So although I don't believe what the author meant, there must be somewhere a meaningfulness about all this."

Ok. So that's where we are going to have to look. Where are we going to find this meaningfulness?

The other approach, some people had to find some meaningfulness there, not simply because, they honestly saw good coming out of it, that maybe they did, but because they were hired by the church. And if you are a pastor, you know you are not going to last

long in Lutheran Germany in the 1800s by saying, “Now let us look at this Biblical text which says something that never happened.”

And if you are teaching in the University, a lot of the appointments were very closely associated with the church and if you want to have a job, you were going to have to find something meaningful here somewhere.

So for some it wasn't quite as altruistic or not, but somewhere along the line, you are going to have to find meaningfulness. You have to find some sort of significance as we would call it, but the word as Frei would use it, is meaningfulness.

Alright now again, Hans Frei. There came about a polarization between hermeneutical extremes. One side stood, those who the identity of the real and intended meanings of the narratives, that is they agreed that the literal meanings and the historical contents are unified. Those would be the supernaturalists.

On the other side are those who claim that the narratives, though literally intended, (you also meant this[inaudible]) were as fully historically conditioned as other ancient manuscripts and that the real meaning that being interpreted (means that they are not a miracle, no real miracle) and that the real meaning is therefore not the same as the authors literal intention.

So here you have, you can't accept what the author meant, because you don't believe it is true, but you have to find meaningfulness. On the other side you have those who say what the author meant and what they are talking about are one and therefore you can still trust the author's meaning.

The result of this – what takes place – is a sharp distinction between two levels or stages in the process of interpretation. First of all you have the determination of the literal or grammatical sense of a document. Using our terminology, the determination of the literal or grammatical sense of the document. What is that? We are after what?

If you are after the literal or grammatical sense of the document, you are after the – meaning of the author. The author's meaning is what you are after.

Now, that is only the first stage according to this. For us and for a man named Anesti that is all that hermeneutics is about. Hermeneutics, to know what the author meant. To know the literal or grammatical sense of the document.

However they argued that there was a second stage that was necessary and that was the historical assessment of what really took place. So you have not only the interpretation of the authorial meaning and intent, you are also seeking to understand the subject matter and now, the ultimate goal, is to combine what is being said – the subject matter – and what the author meant. And both of those have to be dealt with. I would argue that the second stage is something very different from interpretation. When you interpret a text, you interpret what the author meant. Period.

Now, historical assessment involves a different area, not interpretation but significance. That is a separate stage altogether. In Germany, these two things are part of one whole process. When you talk about the interpretation of a text, it is not stopping here with what the author meant, but in its historical assessment as well. The result is that, the interpretation of a text is something very very different, than what we mean by the interpretation of a text.

How do we define the interpretation of a text? Verbal expression of our understanding of what the author meant. Period. There is no historical assessment there. Now that raises the question: Does hermeneutics – interpretation – extend to the subject matter? Does it exegete study of the subject matter? Or is that something different? Or does it exegete – hermeneutics – extend only to what the author is trying to teach by that subject matter? Period.

Or let us word it differently. Does interpretation involve what is written apart from whether it is true or not? Or does interpretation involve the truth of what is being written? So a commentary on Mark, does it involve what Mark writes? Apart from whether it is true or not? Or does a commentary on Mark, and interpretation of Mark involve the truthfulness of what he is writing or not? Historic assessment?

Student: [inaudible] Acquire the meaning of a text [inaudible]

Dr. Stein: Yeah. The role of the Holy Spirit in bringing conviction as to truthfulness will involve our understanding of this. However is a commentary on Mark dealing with what Mark is teaching by this material or does it involve the truthfulness of what he is talking about? You see the difference there.

Student: [inaudible]

Dr. Stein: Oh. Yeah. This is a definitely a value judgment. This is historical value judgment. But is that interpretation is about? Or is that something separate from interpreting text? I would argue it is separate, because thats not what happens in the 19th and 20th century. And the reason again is – you can't simply say "this is what Mark means... this is what Luke means in Acts, but of course that is not true". That becomes difficult. So you have to do the assessment and come out with some sort of a remedy for that. I am trying to make Frei as readable as possible.

If you think what I am talking about difficult, you will call me blessed if you ever try to read Frei yourself. Alright now, here is the problem. You have these assumptions. Interpretation involves the exegesis of the text. But it also includes something else. The assessment or explanation of the subject matter. So now in the latter 18th century or 19th century, we are talking about interpreting from the perspective of what the author meant, the exegesis and you tend to deal with the historical issues involved in what is being said.

But now there is a little problem here and the problem is that the text up here and the subject matter are not the same. They are different. You have no problem like people did

up to the Reformation in interpretation historical narrative when you believe that what the author meant and is describing is what happened. The problem comes when you no longer believe that what the author meant - the text and what really happened are not the same - the subject matter.

Yeah. Next time you preach on Easter, instead of just being so worried about the work in getting a sermon prepared for Easter. Stop for a minute and remember these words, "Thank God it happened!" Wouldn't it be miserable on Easter Sunday to preach the story of the Resurrection when you know it is not true.

Sometimes I feel real sorry for radical liberal scholars. And I think of the congregation out there and I become somewhat frustrated and angry. But it must be a sad thing to have to preach on Easter and sing these great hymns and not be part of it. That is really tragic.

Now however even though the text and subject matter are not the same the text possesses meaningfulness and now the great issue will be where are we going to find that meaningfulness. Where are we going to find the meaningfulness of a text so that we can preach it? Where are we going to find meaningfulness?

First of all, let me say, how many – in the communicative process – what are the elements present?

Student: The author, text, reader.

Dr. Stein: The author, text and reader. You have three possibilities. No one ever thought in the 18th, 19th century that you could go to the reader to find meaning. That is a 20th century phenomena. They still believe that the world rotated around the sun and not around us as individuals.

So there are only two options for them. Where to find meaningfulness or meaning? One will be the subject matter, sometimes called the ostensive meaning. What happened – let us look at what happened and we will look for meaning here. We are trying to find meaningfulness in what took place. The other will be the author in some way. The reader never is considered.

No one sought it in the reader. They were looking for something objective outside their own subjectivity. Looking for objectiveness here. Alright now if you have the subject matter that we are investigating to find ...we are trying to find meaning in what happened and by the way there is a lot of preaching like that going on today.

You read most Christian preaching on the Gospel's or historical texts in the Old Testament, the book of Acts, deals with the event and the preacher gives the meaning to the event. How many of you hear the people say, "Now, what Luke is trying to teach us by this event in the book of Acts – you just talk about the event and this is what happened." Amazing you have an inspired writer who is trying to give some meaning to it and you don't need that, you've got me. I'll tell you what happened.

So rather than the divinely inspired interpretation of the text, we will look at the subject matter and we will tell the interpretation of what goes on.

End of Lecture 27

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Hermeneutics for Historical Narrative \(Part 2\)](#)

Alright now, you have two groups, the rationalists, sometimes called the naturalists and the supernaturalists, those who believe in miracles and those who did not.

What the rationalists sought to do was to reconstruct what actually took place. Maybe there is some way we can find out what literally took place. And a kind of example of that would be the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000. You might come across something like this “Well, what really took place is that we find ...” You probably would be careful not to word it that way. You might say, “On that particular day when Jesus was out there, there were a lot of hungry people, there was no food around, and the disciples did not know what to do. But a little boy came and he said ‘Teacher. My mother sent with me these loaves of fishes and I know there are a lot of hungry people out there. I would be willing to share some of this with others.’”

And this was overheard and Abraham and Sarah – they were just about to open up their large bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken and they couldn’t handle that and they said “Sarah. You know, we can’t eat all of this. Why don’t we share some of that?” And then Jacob, Rachel, Leah had brought a whole ox with them and they were bar-be-cuing that. And Jacob said to Rachel, “You know. I doubt that we can really eat more than a quarter of this thing, so why don’t we share that.” And the result was that, this swept over the whole crowd and people began to see, if you share things like this, then there would be more than enough to go around. And everybody had more than enough to eat. They were all full.

And brothers and sisters in the Lord, we are willing to share what God has given to us in surplus. There will be more than enough that we can share with others. That is how you preach your sermon. Now the supernaturalist also believes that an event was out there, but they believe the event was true. And so they would talk about the miracle itself. And they would talk about what took place and what we can learn from the miracle, and about Jesus’ supernatural power and so forth and so on.

Now the difference between this however and the looking for the author’s meaning is very very important. Here the supernaturalist are giving their own interpretation to the event. Now many times, the interpretation they would see here would be pretty much what the Biblical author intended to teach by it. Sometimes the context unconsciously

gave them that understanding. But what they were doing is also rejecting the author's meaning. They were dealing with what happened and they were playing the same game that the non-supernaturalist or the naturalists were dealing with. The meaning was to be found in the event and they reconstructed the event saw meaning [inaudible] They didn't reconstruct the event and they gave meaning to it, but the author was left out on both of these.

Now on the other hand there were those who argued that it is the author who gave meaning to the text. Now how do you believe that if you think the author's are wrong. Well there are two ways. One was by accommodation. And what they argued was this. The Biblical authors knew that these miracles didn't take place. But they were writing to people who believed in miracles. And they tried to teach great Christian values by using miracle stories. So they accommodated what they were trying to teach – the biblical evangelists – and they wrote and put into miracle form, the ideas and the values and morals they sought to teach. They were accommodating themselves to what the author, to to what they were trying to teach by making up this miracle story.

Now in doing that, a problem arose. Accommodation never really caught on much. Because how do you explain the greatest moral teachings in the world, coming from the pens of outright liars. Great morality by people who knew they were lying out of their teeth in all these miracle stories.

The other thing is... it became rather clear that the Evangelist really believed these things and later on the critics like Rudolph Bultmann, he doesn't believe in miracles, but the one thing he knows is that the Evangelist believes these were true. They were wrong but they were sincere people; they were just wrong. So accommodation never really caught on. And I don't think you would hear... you would find it hard-pressed to find a preacher trying to teach this way of finding meaningfulness in the event. Meaningfulness, it may be found in reconstructing what happened and trying to find some moral to it like the naturalist or finding the meaningfulness in the event itself as a supernaturalist, but it really gets difficult to find meaningfulness in the outright lying of the Evangelists in this regard.

The other approach was the mythical approach. And what this argued was as follows. The Evangelist really believed these things. But the way these stories arose in the mindset of the believing community, they had urges and desires of hope and everlasting life and out of those urges there came stories and dreams and desires that gave birth to these myths and what we should do is to try to find out what is this myth trying to teach us.

And so the Eastern myth teaches us that needed within us is that desire for life everlasting. Somehow we know through stories like it. And the deepest feelings of the human soul give birth to stories like this that death is the end. There must be something more and the resurrection arise out of that urge that – that subconscious desire for life after death.

So now you have real problems. The accommodationists had real smart evangelists. The Gospel writers were smart. They knew these things were not true. They were dishonest [inaudible] but they were smart.

Now the mythical meaning had people whom were very very devout and honest and of great moral character, but they were just plain dumb. They don't have the faintest idea of what they were writing. So you have kind of a choice. You have morality or intelligence. You can't have both. You can't intelligence down here in the mythical meaning because then they are not – if they are intelligent, they know that this is a myth. But if you have integrity you can't have the accommodation so the approach here is the difficult one.

Today, rationalism, you find it every now and then, but for the most part, people who do not believe in miracles take the mythical approach. Made famous by David Strauss in 1835 in *The Life of Jesus*, this century de-mythologizing. Have you ever heard that expression? To de-myth means to go back to that basic yearning that gave birth to this myth. To de-myth it, to get at what that basic existential truth is or religious truth or whatever you call it. And in the 19th century it was a great religious truth and in the 20th century, this great existential reality that was being dealt with. But it is essentially the same. It is just that, the philosophy of the time determines what you are looking for.

So those are the main approaches to historical narrative. If you no longer accept a correspondence between the author's meaning and the text – what the text is describing - the subject matter. You have the approach of the rationalists, the accommodationists or the mythical meaning. The supernaturalists believed the event was true and sort meaning in his understanding of the event but the conscious meaning of the author is a rejected.

Now please note, when we talk about the definition of meaning. I added something that was not in the original text. I added something that was not in the original text. I added the word, "conscious", conscious-willed meaning, because that separates, conscious willed meaning from this mythical approach. Ok. Still will allow for accommodationists but [inaudible]

Alright. How we doing? Makes sense? Its superficial to you in some ways and kind of foreign to us who believe in the Bible.

Student: Was this sort of treatment mostly related to miraculous happenings or did they then take this and say [inaudible]

Dr. Stein: No. The only approach that this really affected in the Bible was narrative miracles. It didn't have anything to do with Psalms. Anything to do with Paul. These are not historical events. These are philosophical concepts, religiously expressed feelings and so forth. You can't disprove them. Historical narratives and...

When you think of how much of the Bible is historical narrative, you have Genesis, Exodus, parts of Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, all of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1st and 2nd Samuel, 1st and 2nd Kings, 1st and 2nd Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, large parts

of the prophets. The New Testament alone, the largest part of the New Testament is historical narrative, with the 4 Gospels and Acts together, its more than the all the rest of the New Testament. This also raises the question in preaching.

I may get myself in hot water, but I don't think you can preach narrative easily with what we call expository preaching. I think you preach Biblically, but it is much more difficult to preach narrative, I think, expositively verse by verse. That is usually dealt with text, like Paul's letters, where he argues carefully in this way. The large amount of narrative is [inaudible] in religious literature. Not usually you find reams and reams of teachings. Morals and laws and things like that. The Bible has an awful lot of narrative, because the God of the Bible who acts in history.

Student: I am thinking of something like the story of David and Bathsheba. Would these people say that that was a story that was made up using [inaudible] in the past in order to [inaudible]

Dr. Stein: No need for it. No miracle. Not a problem at all. David and Goliath, it becomes a little more problematic this way. Or you just say, he was really a great shot. Honed his skills on the range [inaudible] Something like that. Ok. Now.

Student: [inaudible]

Dr. Stein: Narrative it was much more of a concern that way, but when you get to the place where Jesus makes unique claims about Himself, by definition, they can't be true. For instance, the title, *the Son of Man*, is a title describing in Daniel 7, a pre-existing special person who sits at God's right hand and comes to judge the world. In the Journal of Biblical Literature, one author wrote that Jesus never claimed to be the Son of Man, because to do so, He would have to be crazy and we know He wasn't crazy, therefore He never said it. [inaudible] research apparently.

So on certain things like that, yes they will deny it. You can't help but read the Jesus Seminar and see yes ... oozing out all sorts of bitterness and hatred towards the Gospel. Some of them may understand the Gospel pretty well as a result. To me [inaudible] that angry, you probably understand it.

Student: Can the Jesus Seminar can even be taken seriously by the liberal scholars of the 19th century?

Dr. Stein: Not really. They get a lot more press than they deserve in Europe. Not much going on there. It is too absurd. The minute you say, "the most valuable sources of studying the life of Jesus are the Gospel that we never have seen. That's the one we should trust. We haven't seen it. One guy said he saw it, but doesn't know where it is anymore. The Gospel of Thomas which is so clearly Gnostic in the 2nd Century... "lift up the rock and there you will find me." You compare that to the Gospels and you are saying "I should take the Gospel of Thomas more seriously?" And other kinds of things like, the various Q versions, though no one has Q.

We do have Matthew, Mark and Luke and John. Strange and they are all before 1st Century. So, you can't take that seriously. So German scholarship, British scholarship, they don't deal with anything like that. But they have a big budget. And the media loves it.

If you write a book that Jesus was the Virgin born Son of Mary, I don't think the Press is as interested than if you say, He was the bastard Son of Mary and a German soldier, who was pressed in the Roman Legion. You get press for the insane things.

And I think, it makes you realize that the media is really hostile to traditional Christianity. Alright now, some clues for interpreting narrative. I am most frustrated with my book on this section because I have read lots of books on narrative and read lots of things about plots, subplots, characters and so forth. I always say, how can I make that so that a lay person can understand it? Because after all lay people read these accounts and they pretty much understand them pretty well.

Now if your hermeneutic makes it so they can understand it, I don't know if it is particularly helpful. So I always say, how can you make this more useful? And I have not found a great deal of help. So here is some of mine.

Any individual account should be interpreted in light of narrative. And [inaudible] that I am going to say because the example I have is Mark 5:1-20, and I think you are going to become familiar with that in the next week or so. But think for instance of a thousand piece puzzle. You get a single piece, how will you know best what that piece is trying to do? If you only have one piece, on story, it doesn't do real well. But now if you put the other nine hundred and ninety nine pieces together, and then you put the piece in there, then you know exactly how that piece functions.

If you have a Gospel with a hundred stories, and you put the other ninety-nine together and the story you are wrestling with is the other one, I think you will know real well how that one fits. And so you always want to put together how that fits in the context. And the context of a passage in the Gospels is the whole Gospel. The context of a story in Joshua is the whole book of Joshua.

And somehow the author thinks that you are going to interpret in light of the whole puzzle and not to do that is really very foolish. So – the whole context. Secondly, an author many times gives clues to his readers as to how to interpret a text and I will not give you the first example, because that's the one we are going to do next week.

Sorry about that but there are some Old Testament ones that I can use here. For anyone who wants to buy a peek at this, ten dollars a minute. Alright now, if you look at some of the Old Testament passages, themes tend to be shared with the author.

1 Kings 15:5 and 6, ok? Here the author intrudes in the story and helps the reader, because David did what was right in the sight of the Lord and did not turn aside from

anything that He commanded all the days of his life except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

Ok. You go to chapter 22, verse 43, “He walked in all the ways of his father Asa, he did not turn aside from it, doing what was right in the sight of the Lord, yet the high places were not taken away.”

2 Kings 14. You have repetition where the editor intrudes in the story. “In the 15th year of King Amaziah, son of Joash of Judah, king Jeroboam’s son of Joash of Israel began to reign in Samaria. He reigned for 41 years. He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam, son of Nebat which he caused Israel to sin.”

Now these are – that’s not a story. That is not part of the narrative in the sense that it’s part of a story in the narrative. It is a comment by the editor who comments about the story. And as he does time and time again, this reveals what the editor is trying to teach.

2 Chronicles 33:2 and following. “1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign; he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. 2 He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominable practices of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel.

Constant repetition of these things. Another train of comments by the editor is found in 1 Kings 12:15 and following.

“So the king did not listen to the people, because it was a turn of affairs brought about by the LORD that he might fulfill his word, which the LORD had spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam son of Nebat.”

Now that tells you about the next event in which he gives bad advice to the king and so forth.

“As soon as he was king, he killed all the house of Jeroboam; he left to the house of Jeroboam not one that breathed, until he had destroyed it, according to the word of the LORD that he

spoke by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite - ”

What God says takes place. It always happens according to the Word of the Lord. Now one of the things that I find very nice and helpful is to read an account and I read the first time through the book and just mark off what I think, the Biblical editor is adding to the historical traditions he writes.

In other words, the introductory comments or its summaries or its insertion of a ... you can get a feel after a while about the editor now giving it an interpretation of the account. And then what I would do if I was reading that book and studying it, I would list all of those, maybe even mark them in a Bible or something like that. And then when I have done it all, I would go to the beginning of the book and just read those editorial comments and you will see things repeated time and time again. Emphases repeated time and time again. And now when you have gone through that, now you know what the editor is trying to tell you in the story. Now you start reading all these accounts, how do they fit into what the editor is trying to teach here?

Very very helpful to do it that way. Good advice to what the Biblical author is trying to teach with this individual's story and that individual's story and so forth. As I say at the beginning you might be a little unsure as to what is an editorial comment or not, but I just ask each time when you had a question like that, "Is the story that is being told, is this a necessary part of that story or is the editor telling you something about that story to help you understand it?"

Another thing, sometimes an editor or an author provides a thematic statement as to the theme of the book. For instance Acts has an opening statement in Acts 1:8 which tells you the whole theme of the book.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit will come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth."

Now as you go along, you start seeing this paradigm taking place. In 6:7, you have a little editorial summary, doesn't have anything to do with any particular story:

"The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith."

You will receive power after the Holy Spirit comes upon you. Second chapter, Day of Pentecost. You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem. Here we have Jerusalem, 6:7. When you get to 9:31, another summary-like statement:

"Meanwhile the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and was built up. Living in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers."

Then you have other areas of growth taking on. So you can see the spread of the Church. The Gospel being proclaimed. Jerusalem. Judea. Samaria. And the book ends with the Gospel being proclaimed in Rome to the Emperor himself. Now the purpose of Acts is fulfilled at the end.

And that raises the question, well how do Peter and Paul fit into this? What part of the book do you read the most about Peter? The beginning. Why? Is this a biography of Peter? No. No. But he is the one that brings the Gospel to Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. Now after that has been done, he has a role in bringing the Gospel to a Gentile, Cornelius – that is recorded. But the rest of the book is devoted to Paul, because he is the one that brings the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

So the question for instance “Why does the Gospel not tell us about the death of Paul?” is irrelevant. It doesn’t tell us about the death of Peter. It doesn’t tell us about ... because that is not relevant. The relevancy of Peter is that he is an instrument that God uses to bring the Gospel to Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. And now Peter is dropped... Wouldn’t it nice to know what Peter did in the 50s. Yeah. But that is not part of Luke’s story. Not his interest.

It is important to know what Paul does in 50s and 60s, because he is the one that brings the Gospel to the ends of the earth. So sometimes you have a thematic presentation this way that helps you to understand what the whole book is about.

Sometimes you have a repetition of the same thought in a book, which gives you an understanding of what the book of Judges for instance is about. In Judges 3:7-9, you have this four-fold repetition of events.

“The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, forgetting the LORD their God, and worshipping the Baals and the Asherahs. 8 Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of King Cushan-rishathaim of Aram-naharaim; ...”

I tried to do it real quick, so you wouldn’t know I was making a mistake.

“ ... and the Israelites served ...” Yeah. The first guy 8 years. “But when the Israelites cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the Israelites, who delivered them, Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother. 10 The spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel; he went out to war, and the LORD gave King Cushan-rishathaim of Aram into his hand”

What you have here... Israel rebels against the Lord. There is retribution from the Lord against Israel. Israel repents. And then Israel is restored. Now that same pattern comes up in all these other places. So you have repetition of these same things.

Another theme that comes up.

17:6 - “In those days there was no king in Israel; all the people did what was right in their own eyes.”

18:1 – “In those days there was no king in Israel...”

19:1 – “In those days, when there was no king in Israel,…”

And then 21:25 – “In those days there was no king in Israel; all the people did what was right in their own eyes.”

I think you have to realize that the book of Judges sees the time without a king as a bad time, a time of anarchy. A time of anarchy, when everyone did what was right in their own eyes, and an apology for the coming of the Davidic throne and the establishment of the rule of David and his descendents. Ok.

When you didn't have David, when you didn't have his descendents, everybody did what was right in their own eyes. They looked forward to the coming of a king.

Those are some thematic statements, some repetition, some editorial comments in the context. Put those together and they give you a pretty good hint as to what the meaning of a book is and how to go about trying to understand it.

Questions and comments about the narratives?

Dr. Stein: Well. We can look at each other for another 20 minutes or so or go home.

Student: Let me ask you something. Are you continue with narrative or are you going to wrap it up?

Dr. Stein: Uh. We have to go on to the next theory of the epistles next week.

Student: Ok. I wanted to ask you, do you consider the Gospel's a sub-genre within the narrative?

Dr. Stein: Some have tried to make the Gospels a unique genre and I would argue that historical biography, narrative kinds of things existed in the world of the New Testament and these fit pretty well into that area. It is nothing so unique as a genre. The content is unique, but that is not part of the genre. The genre is a form and there were narratives like this that could exist. I don't think we have to say that the Gospels were a unique literary genre.

Student: Would the author of the Chronicles [inaudible]

Dr. Stein: Yeah. The writer of the Chronicles has something of a little different emphasis too. They are not contrary, but they are unique. Sure. Otherwise why would he bother writing it? He has much more of a pro-Davidic stance than Samuel and Kings does. And he kind of minimizes David's flaws as a result of that. He is the Lord's anointed and as a result he can overlook some of his sins where Samuel and Kings don't do that. Yeah.

Alright. So I ran out of material. Just don't have anything more to say.

End of Lecture 28

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Hermeneutics for Epistles \(Part 1\)](#)

The setting of the Pauline letters and the other letters of the New Testament is one in which, finely worded arguments are to be found. And above all in this kind of genre, we need to know how to progress from the norms of language to the norms of the utterance.

Now with regards to the norms of language, we have a pretty good idea of what they are already. We use the dictionary of some sort and when we are working in the Old Testament, if we are working in the Hebrew, there are Hebrew lexicons that are available for us which would tell you the possibilities of what a word may mean.

Now we always want to know the specific meaning of the word but that is not the job of the dictionary. The job of a dictionary is to give us the range of the possible meanings, the norms of language, not the norms of the utterance.

And of course we have in the New Testament, Greek lexicons and then for the various English translations if that is what we are using for the NIV, we have a modern day American dictionary in English for English – Revised English Bible – it might be good to have a British dictionary. And then of course if you have the King James Version that you are using, you need a dictionary that deals with the English language in the 17th century.

Now – once we know what the norms of the possibilities are – the norms of language – then we want to narrow the possibilities to know what the specific norms of the utterance is for a particular word. And we are going to talk about going to understand the specific meaning of a word, see how those words are used in statements, those statements used in arguments and so forth.

So we want to now, having learned the possibilities of a term, we want to go to the specific meaning of a term and here is where a concordance is most helpful. Now you can't look up every word in the Bible and do a large study on it. When I was a seminary student, I remember having an assignment of a word study. I really didn't understand what I was doing then and now I realize why. No one knew what they were doing then.

Word studies don't make a lot of sense to me simply because words don't mean thoughts. They are simply individual words. And words don't always have the same definition. The very fact that in a dictionary, you have a list of possibilities indicates that a word study tells you this is the list of possibilities.

And we should never think that any term really in the Bible is a technical term, that it is always used exactly the same way everywhere it is found in the Bible. The only time you might start doing something like that is if you get a name of some sort, but even then you had people who had the same name.

You say “Well. I will look up Jesus in the New Testament.” Are you sure it is not Joshua that is being referred to in the Old Testament. See even a name can have a variety of meanings. So now when we get to looking at “Well I really want to know what this word means, because it is crucial.” Well, what words do you choose?

I have given up spending a lot of time looking up the word, the in the Bible and in dictionaries. And house doesn’t excite me either. So how do you know which words are the important ones that you want to look up.?

Well for one – frequency. If in a passage a term occurs time and time again, then you have to know what that word means. For instance in the 4th chapter in the book of Romans, the verb, logidzomai – to reckon, is found 11 times. You haven’t seen it in the first 3 chapters. All of a sudden now in chapter 4, the word logidzomai, to reckon occurs, some 11 times. Now, that is an important word.

I think you would have to say, if I wanted to understand what Paul is saying in Romans 4, I have to know what this word, logidzomai means, because of the frequency in which it is found. Another issue is... sometimes a word plays a very important part in the sentence. “By grace you were saved through faith.” But you have to know what grace means. It is crucial. Everything in the rest of the sentence is dependent on by grace. And so here is a word that you really need to know in the sentence to make sense out of it.

Sometimes the author emphasizes a particular word or argument, and therefore if it is crucial, these are the kind of terms that we have to really wrestle with and say, “I really need to know specifically what this word means.”

An author sometimes can define the exact meaning of the term, for instance, in 1 Corinthians 15:3, when Paul says, “For I delivered to you the Gospel which you believed, in which you were saved.” Well. It is kind of important to know what the Gospel is. Then he finds that “for I delivered to you as of first importance how Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He rose on the 3rd day” and so and he defines what that word means.

So sometimes you have definitions given as to a particular word. Now going from the norms of language to the norms of an utterance. Sometimes people are enamored with what we call etymology. Or the root meaning.

We are trying to find out what the root meaning is ... many many sermons in which you hear somebody say, “Now the root meaning of this term is...” Very interesting. This root meaning is being described to you. But let me ask you a question.

Today did you at anytime - today when you spoke, take into consideration what the root meaning of the word is you spoke? No. You didn't take into consideration. You are not interested in what the root meaning of the word is, you are interested in what people understand the word to mean today. There is only one time I think in life that you may take seriously a root meaning. That is when you are going to have children and you are going to give them a name. And you want to make sure that the word you use for your daughter doesn't mean dirty, rotten infidel or something like that, right? So you look up root meanings to see what they are. And in names, many times we look up the root meanings of terms. Like in the Bible, many characters are named and the root meaning of that term is very important as to understanding how that name is going to fit and describe what is going on.

But generally, root meanings are irrelevant for us. We are not interested in them. I get some examples in the text for instance like the word, let, l-e-t, well, the root meaning for that comes from the Latin, "to hinder, to obstruct". I don't think any of you ever used the word let, last year, meaning to hinder or to obstruct. That's the root meaning of the term. But that's not the way you use it because the way people understand that word today means to permit, so the root meaning is quite irrelevant.

The word nice, meaning pleasant for us comes from the Latin neccius meaning ignorant. I don't think anyone here has used the word nice recently to describe someone as being ignorant. You have words that change over a period of time and the etymology of the word is essentially something like this. It talks about the meaning from the beginning to the history of how the term has been used. That's etymology.

And that kind of an understanding is what we call a diachronic – a diachronic understanding of the word – across a long period of time. But the fact is, we are at this point in history and we want to know what the word means at this point and that would be a synchronic understanding of the word.

How is the term being used at this time?

That is all we are interested in.

~ What it mean back here – that is interesting but it is not relevant. We are not interested in here. We are not interested in how it is used thereafter. When we try to understand the text, we look at the word and say "What were the norms of language at that time for this word?"

Words change drastically. King James Version could be very free and translate James 1 about a man coming into the congregation in gay clothing. You can't do that today because what gay meant back here in 1611 is not what it means here in 2002.

So what we have to do in modern day translations is use a different kind of terminology. The idea of a person being a square guy in my Dad's understanding was that he was a really fine person you could count on, a man of character. Now that would be a

complement back then. Not a compliment today. So... we are not interested in a diachronic understanding of what the various possibilities of words. We are interested in when that word was written or spoken, what did it mean? What were the norms of language back at that time?

Now you say “Well then, why do we have all this concern about etymologies and things of that nature? Why do people for instance emphasize the etymology of words? Especially in the Old Testament. Why do we read so much in Old Testament studies about etymologies and so forth – the root meaning of a word?”

The answer is we are desperate. We haven’t the faintest idea of what it means. We have nothing to go on. And sometimes if you have no idea of what a word means, the only thing you could do is somehow say, “Well what would the root meaning of a word like this be?”

For example, in the Lord’s prayer in Matthew, we have the petition, “Give us this day, our epiousios bread.” Epiousios artos. Daily bread – what does the word epiousios mean? Well that is simple. We will look it up and see how its used in other references and we find that in the first century and shortly thereafter, there are several other times when that word is used and found. And if we go to the Gospel of Luke, for instance we find it there. And it is found in the Lord’s Prayer. Give us this day our epiousios artos. Our daily bread.

And there is one other reference sometime written around 75 to 125 AD and it is in the Didache, the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. And its is found in the Lord’s Prayer. Give us this day our epiousios artos. Those are the three times we find it. Now somebody said they found it somewhere else [hard to hear??] But they can find it anymore and so forth and so on, but that’s not very helpful.

What do we have to do on?

Well there are some other things we could do. You might say, maybe somebody back then who translated the Greek Latin or into Coptic or something, maybe they knew what it meant. And we look at how translations deal with it. And what we have then is the root word and when you put the parts of the root together, what can that mean? But notice how desperate we are? And the root meaning is a grabbing in the dark.

And as much as the New Testament has problems this way, the Old Testament has even more. We have words that we don’t even know exactly what they mean. There is no real close parallel with other ancient Near Eastern languages and we are desperate so we go to root meaning, but whenever you get to root meaning, you are stabbing out in the dark. Root meanings are not that valuable. It is our last gasp at trying to understand the meaning of a word.

Alright let me stop there and see if you... before we go and leave etymology and go how to narrow down from the norms of language to the norms of an utterance. Any comments and question about etymology and so forth?

Student: I have a question. It is a practical question [hard to hear ???] TNIV debate got down there and of course at that time a lot of the King James [hard to hear...???...] because of the fact that language changes.

Dr. Stein: Well I think that what you could do ... the way I would approach it would be to deal with Old Testament and New Testament passages in which the meaning is very, very clearly something different. For instance, I might talk about Romans 1:13, where Paul says ... You know one of the problems I had as a young Christian, was that when I read Romans for the first time, Paul said to the Romans, "I would have come to see you sooner, but I was let hither to"

For the life of me, I couldn't figure out why if he was he let, why he couldn't go. ??? I would have come, but I was let. Well if he were let go. And then I would say, but you see the problem that I had was that, this word was being used, back in the sense that it had in 1611 and we don't use the word that way anymore. Back then it meant to hinder.

Use an example of the Latin [hard to hear ???] words don't always have the same meaning. I wouldn't push it too far. And what we have to do is say, what it meant back then, how would we translate that today. And don't push it that far. And give some other examples and the like and then as time goes on you might be able to talk to people and say, "Well. You have to realize that King James is a wonderful translation but it was written to people who understood English back in 1611." Have any of you ever read Shakespeare? Troubles you had [...hard to hear ???]

Yeah. Well. Ok. See language has changed since... in almost 500 years now. Shakespeare or 400 in King James and therefore you have to realize that you need to always change words and give some examples like, "Do you remember when the word, square meant something positive?" "Remember when the word queer had something to do with a strange kind of person. It had nothing to do with a person's sexual behavior in any way?" You see words change.

Last thing we want to do is to be using words in a way, back then which was perfectly legitimate but not today. And see how that would work I would have think. Remember our job it not to show how brilliant we are, but to help lay people to understand the Bible more. To have them know we love them and want to help them in that regard. We are shepherds, not herders. Well.

Let's go on. How do we go then to narrow the possibilities from the norms of language to the norms of utterance? Well. I am going to go the long way around and then I will tell you after we have done this which theoretically makes more sense to do it this way, that we will reverse the order because of the shortage of time in doing these things.

For instance one of the things that caught my interest very early in my teaching career, was an article I read about the drinking of wine in Biblical times. And what surprised me so much was that the word wine, oinos in the New Testament is the same word that was used in classical Greek, and my understanding of the word was quite clearly different

than the understanding of the people in Greek times and in New Testament times, for instance, wine as I know it and as we know it in America today is, a beverage that contains about 11 to 12% alcohol. It is fermented and at a certain stage after it reaches about 11% alcohol, the alcohol content is such that it can't ... the yeast dies off and it cannot go any stronger.

But that also allows the fruit of the grape to remain for a long period of time and not get rotten. So how do you preserve grapes, when you have a big grape harvest? Well. You can sit down and eat a lot of grapes, but there comes a time, you just can't eat anymore. But if you make it into a beverage, well ok, grape juice. Well without refrigeration it doesn't stay very long, even with refrigeration it doesn't stay very long.

But, the fruit of the vine that would be made into wine would preserve for a long period of time. But they referred to the final product of that wine. They always referred to wine as that product mixed.

I remember once going into the archaeological museum in the city of Athens and when we were there, we saw these big bowls, which were called kraters. And, what fascinated me was that these were mixing bowls and wine would be brought from where it was stored in what were called amphori – these kind of big jugs that had kind of a pointed bottom, and then they would mix water with it so they could drink it.

And there was discussion as to what is the ratio that you usually use when you mix this water and what we would call wine. I remember a man by the name of Athenais wrote a book called The Learned Banquet. He was the Martha Stewart of the day and tell you how to give a good banquet.

And he quotes for instance from Aristophanes "Here drink this also, mingle 3 and 2, Demas. But it is sweet and bears the 3 parts well." The poet Unius around the 5th Century B.C. writes, "The best measure of wine is neither much nor very little, for tis the cause of either grief or madness. It pleases the wine to be the fourth mixed with three nymys." In other words, one part wine and three parts water. So you have a mixture of water and wine.

There are other ratios mentioned. Hesiod 3:1, Alexius 4:1, Diocles 2:1, Eon 3:1, Nicochorus 5:2, Anaquion 2:1. Sometimes the ratio goes down to 1 part water and 1 part wine. And yet that mixture is specifically referred to as strong drink. Not regular wine but strong drink.

And drinking wine unmixed was looked down on as a Scythian or barbarian custom. Athenias quotes another man, Nessius of Athens, "The gods has revealed wine to mortals to be the greatest blessings for those who use it aright, but for those who use without measure, the reverse. For it gives food to them that taketh and strength and mind and body. As medicine it is most beneficial. It can be mixed with liquid and drugs and brings aid to the wounded. In daily intercourse to those who mix it, then drink it moderately, it gives good cheer. But if you overstep the bounds, it brings violence. Mix

it half and half and you get madness. Unmixed, bodily collapse. So what you have here is an understanding of wine as being a mixture of water and wine.”

Plutarch: “We call a mixture wine although the larger of its component parts is water.”

In the Old Testament there is a distinction between wine and strong drink. And the Jewish encyclopedia suggests that strong drink is unmixed wine. In the Lord’s Supper we have Jesus passing a cup which is called wine and this is during the celebration of the Passover. Now in what we call the Talmud, there are various books or tractates dealing with various subjects. One like Sanhedrin talking about the rules of the Sanhedrin, but there is also a tractate called the Pessahim, which deals with the Passover celebration and it talks about the mixing of water and wine and the normal mixture is said to be two parts water to one part wine.

So that if this is the normal drink of “wine” in the Passover, that was probably the kind of drink that Jesus and His disciples shared.

The book of 2 Maccabees, “to drink wine alone or again to drink water alone is looked down upon. Drinking wine mixed with water makes it both sweet and delicious.”

Then you go to the early Church Fathers and they refer to the Lord’s Supper and how the drinking of wine in the Lord’s Supper involves this mixture.

Justin Martyr, “Bread is brought and wine and water.”

Hippolytus says “We bless first the bread into the presentation of the flesh of Christ and the cup mixed with wine for the antitype of the blood which was shed for all those who believe in Him.” So you have a number of references.

Now from this large understanding of Greek literature, where wine is always referred to as a mixture, it is debated as to the exact percentage of the mixture, but it is always a mixture. It seems quite clear that unless otherwise designated, the term oinos would have been understood by the Romans, by the Galatians, by the Ephesians and those who read the letters of the New Testament as a mixture of water and wine.

In fact, in Biblical times if you wanted to refer to our wine, you had to describe it as unmixed wine, because wine by itself was assumed to be mixed. We have an example of that in the book of Revelation, where in Revelation 14:10, the writer speaks of “the wine of God’s wrath, poured unmixed into the cup of His anger.” In other words, this wrath of God that is coming at the end time is not the normal kind of wrath. It is unmixed wrath. It is not diluted. It is the unmixed wine of God’s wrath.

So what we then have is by looking through all the Greek literature, we come to some understanding that wine was a mixture of water and wine.

Student: Just out of curiosity what proof of ??? alcohol is safe ???

Dr. Stein: When I wrote this article by the way, it was interesting, I got criticism from the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and I got criticism from the Liberated Evangelical. The one thought I was liberal. The other said I was too conservative. And I thought, that must be right then. If everybody from both sides hated me, I must be somewhere in the middle.

What I am trying to say is ... not about anything with regard to implications of this yet, maybe we can deal with it shortly. But what I want us to do, is when we look at this word, wine in the New Testament, it is a mistake to simply assume that what we call wine and what they call wine is the same this.

And here we have a mixture. A mixture which by the way could be diluted 2:1, sometimes 3:1. I made a comment at the end of the article that, if you were drinking in a situation like that, long before your mind was affected by this beverage, your kidneys would have been.

There is a lot more water here and the result is that if somebody really wanted to become intoxicated this way, it would be so apparent that something is wrong here. It is one thing to drink three glasses of wine, it is another to drink 12. It becomes part of a meal mentality, not a bar and how do we get out of our minds here. It is a food and it is understood as a food.

A lot of people who come from Europe, drinking alcohol is part of a meal, or drinking a glass of beer. A lot of ... when they come to America, don't teach their children anymore to do that, because in Europe a lot of people drink at a meal to "enjoy" the wine.

Americans, especially younger Americans drink to get drunk. It is supposed to be a great experience. I remember when I was in college, a guy was coming in at midnight, throwing up, drunk as can be, saying, "I will never do this again." What is the enjoyment in that? Fun? Is there something about vomiting that brings out a real delightful experience, so in America I would never want to encourage my children to drink. It is just such a bad context in America, I think.

And none of my children do drink and I am very happy about that. I recommend total abstinence as a lifestyle. I do it without any embarrassment. I don't try to say, that this is the only way Christians can live. But I bet, when we appear before God's day of judgment, there will probably be a few more people who have chosen to drink, who will repent of that lifestyle, than those who said, "I never did drink, and I am really repentant over that." Think for a minute. How many people are going to feel sorry for that.

Well anyhow. Now, when we taught our children, we taught by way of example. We never said, you will burn in hell if you drink a glass of beer." We never said that.

And one time we were really in a very embarrassing situation. My wife and I went to my father's hometown in Germany and his niece and her husband entertained us. Now Germany was in really terrible condition after World War II and my father and mother

sent 20 pound food parcels to them regularly, with food, clothing, medicines - all sorts of things. And when I came in 1975, they remembered that. They honored the son and his wife because they wanted to honor my father. And they treated me royally, because I was Willy Stein's son. They always remembered what Willy Stein had done.

So I went to a distant cousin, Hansen Gertrude's home, and we had this glorious meal, and afterwards, Hans comes and brings a bottle of wine in. I say, "Oh. It's the wrong year." And he goes back and brings a different bottle of wine. And he said, "Uh. Bob and Joan, this is the best bottle of wine we have in Germany since World War II. I saved this bottle, knowing that you were coming." Now this is all in German. And my German is not that great. I can get along, but not great. And my children are looking, with eyes about ready to pop out.

And so he poured Joan and Me a glass of wine and we drank it. And he said, "Wie schmeckt es?", "How does it taste?" I said "Hans. It's the best wine I have ever had." It really was. It was the only glass of wine I ever drunk.

So. He was happy by it. And that night I went to bed and just before we did Julie who was probably about 11 at the time, said, "Mom and Dad. You drank wine tonight." And I said, "That. That's is right. We thought it would be the kindest thing for us to do for Hansen Gertrude. They wanted to do something very special for us, and I don't think they would have understood my broken German that we don't drink wine and so forth. So we just, Mom and I just thought we would drink it and not say anything." And she looked at me and she said, "Ok." That was it. That satisfied her. And I think that kind of an understanding approach carried over. And now they are teaching their children to abstain from alcoholic beverages.

I think it's a wise policy. I recommend it to you. I make no embarrassment of being a teetotaler in that regard.

But in the text, when the text talks about wine, the one thing we should realize is that it does not refer to our wine. It refers to a mixture of water and wine. And there may be something to the fact, that the ancient Greeks, not the believing community, but the ancient Greeks who drank wine all the time in their meals, said that drinking half water and half wine could bring absolute bodily collapse.

And to drink wine straight is a barbarian custom. Now just think about the practices we have. We don't merely drink wine straight, we distill it, so instead of being 11, 12 % alcohol, now you have 50% alcohol. Well would you think the Platos and the Aristophanes of the ancient world would think of that practice? So it is not just a religious matter, but it is a common sense approach they had back then.

Ok. We want to go on to some other words and some other approaches. Let me just stop. Comments? Questions? In that regard?

Student: ???

Dr. Stein: Excuse me. The article can be found in revised form in Difficult Passages in the New Testament. It also found in 1975 in Christianity Today.

Student: When you spoke of it, it sounded like almost impossible to get drunk...

Dr. Stein: No. No no no. It is certainly not.

Student: How do you bring in Ephesians 5:18? [hard to hear???

Dr. Stein: When it says “Be not drunk with wine”, it is evident that you can get drunk. On the other hand, he doesn’t forbid it. He forbids drunkenness. And if you say that its grape juice, how much grape juice do you have to drink to get drunk? It must be something alcoholic about it. So I think, my understanding is that it is a diluted wine that surely you can get drunk on, and that is forbidden.

But let me ask a question. Do you think that was a problem in the Early church? We shouldn’t so romanticize the early church that there is this impossible to ever be like them group out there. That were so noble, never sinned, all died as martyrs, all were personal evangelist and lead 432 people a day to Christ and so forth.

These were human beings who had frailties and even though someone might drunk at Communion and even though some of them didn’t get along with one another and had arguments with each other, they are still God’s people and God’s love for them despite their sin is the same love He has for us.

So we are not perfect. We are on the way to perfection. It is a long way to go. We are going to fall but probably more important than ever thinking we are not going to fall is to remember to get up again and continue on our pilgrimage and so forth.

End of Lecture 29

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Hermeneutics for Epistles \(Part 2\)](#)

Now – Greek classical literature – a monstrous amount of work. Well could we narrow this and let us not read everything in the world that has been written in Greek to find out what this world means in the New Testament. Who thinks more like Paul in the New Testament than Plato and Aristotle? I mean they were using classical Greek.

Well you know there is a group of people called the Early Church Fathers. They also wrote in Greek and maybe they can help us to understand what the New Testament is

saying in these places because the people here, the Early Church Fathers, think more like the Biblical authors than the classical Greek writers.

And we are trying to understand what the Biblical authors meant and therefore if we can get closer to them and to read the works of people who think more like them, this is more likely to help us in understanding their specific meanings with regard to certain words.

So we go to the Early Church Fathers. But you know there is another group out there. That is the translators of the Hebrew Old Testament. They translated the Hebrew Old Testament into what we call the LXX or the Septuagint. LXX is the Roman numeral for 70. The Septuagint was supposedly written by 70 translators, all who translated the whole Old Testament independently and when they compared them, all 70 had everything in the Old Testament exactly word for word. They didn't differ, one from another.

Nice story. I don't believe a whit of it. But... that's what it is.

But these people have a mind and a terminology and vocabulary that is probably even closer to Paul and to 1st John and 2nd Peter and so forth than the Early Church Fathers. Now we are getting like a funnel, more and more specific to people who think more and more like the Biblical authors.

Now if we are trying to understand what Paul means in a particular letter, I know somebody that thinks like Paul, for instance in – if you write something in Philippians – I know an author who thinks more like Paul in Philippians than the Early Church Fathers. His name is Paul. And maybe what we should do is try to see where else in the rest of Paul's letters he uses this word.

For instance in Philippians 1:29, turn with me if you have the New Testament in the Bible. Philippians 1:29. Now just by understanding how Paul uses this particular word, will have a great insight in regard to how to interpret this word.

Philippians 1:29, Paul writes in the RSV:

“For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake...”

“Granted”

In the King James and who has the King James? 1:29. What is the word used?

“For unto you it is given...okay?”

Now I remember reading that as a young Christian:

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake...”

In other words it is required of us by God not just to believe in Him, but also we are going to have to grit our teeth and suffer for Him. That is part of the cost of being a Christian. But is that the way Paul uses the word?

Here is the verb: echaristhe (ἐχαρίσθη τὸ)

It passive, has been given, aorist passive, the root form, charidzo, the noun, charis. How does Paul understand these terms? What is our translation in English?

“grace”

Does our understanding of how Paul uses this word elsewhere give a different kind of understanding of this verse?

“For unto you it has been graced, that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.”

Paul sees suffering from Christ, not as an ordeal to be borne, but as a grace from God. Very very different approach. But that is how he uses this term.

“For unto you God has graciously given the honor not only of believing in His name but also for suffering for His sake.”

Granted is the way, the RSV, the New English Bible, the New American Bible, the Roman Catholic translation, the New American Standard, the New International Version translates it. The New RSV translates it, graciously granted. The New Living Bible, the New Jerusalem Bible, granted the privilege. Okay?

And I think the latter two probably gets a sense even more close to this Greek term, “for unto you it has been graciously granted the privilege not only of believing in His name but also of suffering for His sake.”

And the Early Church picked that up. They thought that way. Who was the elderly Church Father that is brought to Rome where he is going to be martyred? Comes all the way from the modern day Turkey, Asia minor? Anybody know?

Student: Polycarp.

Dr. Stein: Yeah. Polycarp. When Polycarp comes to Rome, he writes the Church and says, “Please don’t try to keep me from being martyred. I can’t wait to into the arena to feel the breath of the beast on my neck.”

You know some people go a little weird on some of this stuff. I am not quite there yet. He thought of the joy and privilege of dying for Christ sake. I think he understood Paul. He thought it was a gracious privilege of so doing for Him.

Now how do we come to that understanding? How does Paul himself use that term elsewhere in his writings? And that is far better than to read everybody else in Greek literature that has ever used the term. It is far better to follow Paul here than to see what classical Greek uses it or Early Church Fathers or the Septuagint. Paul is by far the best interpreter of Paul here. Very very helpful.

Another example in that same book is 2:12. There Paul says, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling ...”

Now that first drove me nuts as a young Christian, because we are told we are saved by grace, not by works. And here Paul seems to say, “therefore work out”, here is the Greek term, “your own salvation with fear and trembling”.

Following through what I just talked about, where should we go to understand what Paul means here?

Students: Paul

The rest of Paul – does he ever use this word? Yeah. He does.

In Romans 15:18, Paul says, “I will not boast of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me.”

2 Corinthians 12:12, “The signs of a true apostle were performed among you.” Now, none of these words can refer to earned or to merited. You can’t say, “except where Christ has merited through me. It doesn’t make any sense.”

You don’t talk about the signs of a true apostle were merited among you. They were manifested. They were shown. They were demonstrated. And therefore the way this term is used elsewhere in Paul, let’s apply ... therefore demonstrate, carry out to its fulfillment your salvation with fear and trembling.” The word doesn’t mean earned, doesn’t mean merit and interestingly enough, in all the places where Paul talks about “not by works, but by grace”, he never uses this verbal form.

The verbal form he uses *ergadzo*, not *katergadzo*. So this word is never used in that context of meriting your justification through your deeds or the like. So here Paul clearly understands that this word has nothing to do with earning or meriting. It has to do with manifesting – carrying out your salvation with fear and trembling.

And so Paul is the best interpreter of Paul and elsewhere in his own letters, he uses this term in a very helpful way to describe what it means here in Philippians 2:12 as well.

Now with regard to understanding of Paul, we have gone to other books here in 2:12 but sometimes instead of going to other books, the same book uses the term in a way that helps us.

For instance, at the beginning of the semester we talked about the role of the Holy Spirit in the interpretive process and the verse we looked at was 1 Corinthians 2:14. There Paul says, the unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him. He is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

What did we do to understand what the word folly means?

Well we said where else in 1 Corinthians is this found? And we found in 1 Corinthians 3:19, “for the wisdom of the world is folly with God.” Well it makes no sense whatsoever to say, the wisdom of the world is not understandable, not perceivable to God.” He can’t figure it out. Makes no sense at all.

Even those for instance who have openness theology would never say the wisdom of this world is not understandable to God. This is a value judgment. And following Paul’s use of this same term elsewhere in the same book, it is clear that it doesn’t mean “cannot be understood” or that they can’t get a correct mental grasp, but that they judge this negatively as being foolishness or folly. And so following it in the same Pauline book is very helpful this way.

Other times we can go to the chapter and find out in the chapter itself how this term is being used. I am going to go on and not deal with the chapter but I am going to go and deal more specifically with a very paragraph within a chapter. And we want to look here at the issue of James and Paul and the apparent conflict between them. The issue of Paul and James seems fairly clear. If you look at those passages it sure looks like we are talking about opposing understandings of how one is justified.

Paul: “We hold that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law...”

James: “You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.”

Paul: “If Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God, for what does Scripture say, ‘Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.’

James: “Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar?”

It is understandable why Luther who is so strongly in the debate as to how one is justified and arguing for the doctrine of justification by faith, thought that the book of James was a right straw epistle, and in his New Testament, he places it in a different order towards the very end, the very very end because he does not like James.

Now, is it possible that we can make some sense out of this, and I think it is. I think, one of the things we have to say is alright. When people use the same word, people in the

Bible use the same word, do they always mean the exact same thing by that word. Or does the word have a range of meanings?

Alright, norms of language. If you look up the word, faith - pistis, works – ergon in a lexicon of the New Testament, you don't see one meaning here. You have a list of possibilities and lets just talk about faith with regards to how we understand it.

A semantic range of faith can include all sorts of things. When we talk about faith, we can talk about the name of a woman. It can refer to intellectual assent. Confident belief in the truth. Wholehearted trust. What faith you belong to? "Oh. I am a Baptist." Denomination.

"And thereto I pledge you my faith." That was part of my oath and promise at my wedding ceremony. A system of religious belief. What kind of faith do you have – what is your faith system? "Oh. I am a Calvinist. I am an Arminian." Or something like that. It can refer to loyalty – have faith in someone. Confidence. He has great faith. Allegiance. A belief in God. Faithfulness. A pledge.

Now in the norms of language, these are all possible. None of these are illegal. The word can mean any of these things. The question then is, when Paul talks about faith, when James talks about faith, do they mean the same thing. Well, lets look for a minute in James as to the faith that he talks about that cannot save.

In James chapter 2, James describes this faith that is of no value. In chapter 2, verse 14, he describes this faith:

"What does it profit, my brethren,
if a man says he has faith but has
not works?"

Now this is the faith that has no works. Alright. Now the question that we are going to ask shortly is what the word, works means. Let us hold off on that. This is a faith that has no works. It is a faith that he describes as, "not being able to save". It is a faith that does not save.

There are some interesting things here that we will have to look at here in a minute.

In 2:17, it is a faith that's by itself has no works and is dead. Here again, 2:18a, it is a faith that has no works. 2:18b, it's a faith that is apart from works. In 2:19a, it is a faith that believes that God is one. In other words, check what you believe. Check your faith and you have this Gallup poll. Do you believe that God is one? True. False. Check it off. True. That is the faith that we are talking about. Do you believe God is one? Yeah. I checked true statement on that one.

Even the demons believe and shudder. Now think. James in saying that demons have faith. Same word used here. The word pistuo. This is faith that demons have. Now you

have to ask yourself the question, when Paul writes by grace you were saved through faith, like demons have, does that make sense to you? Or can you see right away that we are talking differently. That is not what – James is not talking about what Paul means by faith here. Because it is very unlikely that Paul would say, “Yes. I believe that demons have faith.”

Then you go on 2:20, faith apart from works is barren. 40:24.?. A faith that’s alone is described. Faith that is apart from works and that is ultimately dead. Then he talks about the kind of faith that saves.

2:18. By my works, I will show you my faith. It is a faith that has works associated with it.

2:22. It is a faith that is active along with works and is completed by works.

2:23. It is the faith that Abraham had.

Now, the faith that saves looks very much like Paul’s understanding, the faith of Abraham that saves. The faith that does not save is not a kind of faith that is at all associated with what Paul believes. That is not the kind of faith that Paul talks about. The semantic range of works. Works can mean physical or mental effort. It could mean a deed of some sort. A job. What kind of work do you do? Well. I teach.

In James works are described as clothing people who are naked. Work can be keeping the law. It can be an action. It can involve keeping the Sabbath. That is the way Paul talks about works. Feeding the hungry is a work that James talks about. Acts of love. [Hard to hear??] can be called a work. An accomplishment of some sort or an occupation. Acts meriting God’s favor.

Paul is arguing against. Engineering structures are sometimes called works. Circumcision in Paul is referred to as works. In dry goods, New York city. Peace works. And you get paid for work. For me, it meant relish, mustard, onions and ketchup. And anything else that was free that you could put on my hotdog.

Works can mean any of these possibilities. Alright well. Let us look at how James views works. In 2:15 and 16, the works that James sees as associated with salvation are as follows. If a brother and sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace. Be warmed and filled’ without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit? So the works James talks about are not the works of being circumcised like the Judaizers are telling the Gentiles, “Unless you are circumcised you can’t be saved”. It is not about keeping certain laws or being – keeping the Sabbath – certain days. It is clothing the naked, and giving daily food to those who are hungry. Those are the works. Acts of loving compassion are the works he is talking about. In 2:21, it refers to Abraham’s willingness to give Isaac on the altar.

James 2:25, the works being referred to there involve Rahab the harlot, receiving God’s messengers and protecting them and sending them another way.

But now let's look at the works that Paul talks about that are not able to save. In Romans 4, verses 2 and following, you have works described this way:

“If Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about but not before God.”

Works here are something that allows you to boast before God. Something that places God in your debt, like verse 4:

“Now to one who works, his wages are not reckoned as a gift but as his due.”

Works that Paul talks about that cannot save are those which allow one to boast and place God in debt to them. Romans 4:9-12 involve the issue of being circumcised in order to achieve salvation.

Galatians 2:16, “Man is justified, not by works of the law, but by faith in Christ.” Not by works of law. Not by works done to keep the specifics of the law.

4:10, works refer to here to observing days, months and seasons. The obedience to a religious calendar in order to achieve merit before God.

And then 5:2-6, very important: “Now I Paul say to you that if you receive circumcision that Christ will be of no advantage to you.” The act of being circumcised, this work to achieve favor before God.

“I testify again to every man who has received circumcision that he is bound to keep the whole law. You were severed from Christ. You who would be justified by the law. You have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit, by faith we wait for the hope of righteousness.”

And then in 5:6...

Does this sound like Paul or does it sound almost like James?

“For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail, but faith working through love. Show me your faith apart from your loving acts of kindness like feeding the poor and I will show you my faith by those works.”

Paul says, the only thing that really saves is the faith – but one that works through love. Not one like the demons that is one of mere intellectual assent. Not one that is simply a checking off on the Gallup poll, “this I believe”, but a wholehearted trust in God that leads to a life of obedience and faith.

Now I am not saying that we resolve the whole issue of faith and works between Paul and James. What I think I am trying to tell you is that, the problem is far less evident than

most people think it is, because they are not talking about the same faith and then talking about the same works.

The faith that can't save is the faith that has not acts of loving compassion associated with it. The faith that can't save is the simple kind of faith that the demons have, that God is one. By the way, on any Systematic Theology exam, the faith of demons will come out better than yours. They will get better grades. They are supernatural. They know a lot more than we do. Doesn't save them.

The works that can't save are works of circumcision – of keeping specific laws in order to achieve merit before God and place Him in your debt. But the works that do save are the works that stem from the life of obedient faith. And that kind of work goes with faith and that brings about a faith that does save.

So I think, if Paul read James in that perspective, he would probably say, “Yeah well. That's exactly what I am saying. Circumcision – that will never save anybody. But faith that works through love – that does save.”

Faith that works through love, that sounds like James in chapter 2. So I don't think that they are that far apart as many people make them.

Alright. I've talked pretty much straight on at this time. Questions that you have with regard to how we are trying to understand what an author means by looking at this same paragraph now and see how is this term faith described in this paragraph? How are the terms works described in that paragraph?

Student: Could you plug in some dates [hard to hear ???] what do you mean by Septuagint?

Dr. Stein: Septuagint is the Greek Old Testament completed probably around 2-300 B.C., but it is the Bible that Paul and the Early Church are enmeshed in. They think very much like the writers of the Septuagint. Their vocabulary comes out of the Septuagint. Their grammatical clauses have come out of there.

So if you try to understand what Paul means by this expression, if the Bible he is reading all the time has the expression, that might affect things pretty well.

Student: I am wondering if an earlier occurrence of a word would have more relevance than one after the time that Matthew wrote it because Matthew was influenced hard to hear???

Dr. Stein: Yes. You are right. The trouble is there is none earlier and there is none immediately later. But very very later you have it.

Student: [hard to hear???

Dr. Stein: Because the words that occur afterwards would generally reflect the usage found in the Biblical author. Whereas words found earlier, that which reflect what the Biblical author is thinking in his mindset.

Now notice, logically we should go from the largest, get more specific. The classical Greek writers, they don't think as much like Paul as the Early Church Fathers. They don't think as much like Paul as probably the translators of the Septuagint which preceded Paul but Paul is in their mindset. But the one who thinks most likely, like Paul would be Paul himself.

I would suggest that between you know – if you wanted to become more and more specific. I put the other New Testament writers after the Early Church Fathers, just before Paul. In other words, I think the writers of 1st, 2nd John, 1st Peter, Hebrews and things like that think more like Paul than the Early Church Fathers.

So you are getting more specific with the rest of the New Testament. But then when you get to Paul himself, he thinks more like himself in other letters, than the New Testament does. The Paul in the same book, even more specific. The Paul in the same chapter, the same paragraph, the same sentence and so forth.

All of these are more and more specific. Now if you had eternity, this would be nice. Anytime you look up this word you go through all of this and if it takes a couple of millennia, it really doesn't matter a great deal. But preaching every Sunday makes it a little more difficult. So here I would reverse the order and go from the specific sentence to the paragraph to chapter to the book to other Pauline letters and work my way out to the rest of the New Testament, the Septuagint or the Greek Old Testament, the Early Church Fathers and so forth.

As you proceed up this list, the chance of becoming more and more sure of the specific meaning that you are looking up becomes less and less. The more you go up this route, the less likely it is for you to become really sure of the meaning of the Apostle. The more you go down this list, the more specific it would get. Well that makes sense and lets start from here and work our way outward.

Logically coming this way down the funnel makes sense but practically because of the shortage of time we go from this and work our way upwards, the other direction.

Student: How does this work with authors who don't have as many books as Paul does?

Dr. Stein: Well. You still have sentence, paragraph, chapter and specific book. But if you had Luke in his Gospel, you do Acts. But you don't have that from Matthew. And you don't have that for Hebrews, so here you jump then and this is missing but you still have the rest of the New Testament. And in general the writers of the New Testament, as a group think more alike than its authors and the Greek philosophers and so on.

But you are right. The more you have available, the better it is. Mark – who do we have? We just have Mark. John – Well you have 1st John. That helps. But for a number of the others, you don't have anything like that.

Student: When we were discussing Philippians 1:29, we went from a Greek verb for granted down to its cognate ...

Dr. Stein: The noun, yeah.

Student: How is that different from finding the root meaning of the word? [hard to hear ???]

Dr. Stein: Notice I didn't ask how this word is used in 1000 B.C., when Greek comes into existence. All I did was to say, how does Paul use this word elsewhere? That is not a root meaning. That is his contemporary usage of the term.

Student: So the key element is time and usage. Paul used both of those terms concurrently and they are related, so we could use those to understand one another.

Dr. Stein: Well. It is not just time of usage, because you could have a Greek writer like Josephus. It is pretty close to Paul's time. Maybe couple of decades later. But his mindset is not the same as Paul's other letters. Well, time wise they may be very close. So most specifically, who are those people who think this way and it will help me understand Paul's way of thinking?

And of course it is Paul but not Paul in his other letters, as much as Paul in this letter and not so much Paul, four chapters later but Paul in this chapter and in this paragraph and this verse. We get closer all the time.

End of Lecture 30

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Hermeneutics for Epistles \(Part 3\)](#)

Now after we understand the specific meaning of words, we want to know how they are together to be understood as a statement or a proposition. Now you can't isolate this completely. And the very process of trying to understand the specific meaning of the word – you are wrestling with how that word is used in that particular sentence in this context.

What I am simply saying here is that – in the focus on the word, we are focusing more on the individual meaning of the word, not so much the entire statement. Here now we are

going beyond the understanding of individual words and trying to understand the statement as a whole.

Now the key tool for understanding statements involves a grammar. If we are talking about how to go from the norms of language found in a dictionary to the norms of an utterance, a lexicon is most helpful here. When we are trying to understand statements, now it is the grammar of the language that is most helpful and here we are talking about grammars – Greek grammars for Greek, Hebrew for Hebrew, English for English.

Grammars of different languages involve different syntax structures. For instance in English, when you try to put a statement together, the position of words is all important.

For instance:

Bob loves Joan.

Bob, Joan loves.

Joan loves Bob.

Joan, Bob loves.

Loves, Joan, Bob.

Loves, Bob, Joan.

The words are identical. There is not a single difference between the words. All three of them have the same words. The meaning is completely dependent on the order of words in the English language.

But that's not true in other languages for instance in Greek, it's different here. It is the way words end that is most important. The endings on words.

So you have for you Greek:

Bobus agape Joanien

Joanien Bobus agape

agape Joanien Bobus

Bobus agape Joanien

Joanien Bobus agape

agape Joanien Bobus

Bob loves Joan in all three of those.

Well you say, "The order is different."

Yes. But notice the endings are the same. It's the endings that matter.

One of the screwy things about Greek is that the order is irrelevant and it drives you crazy. German is somewhat similar to. German language always puts the verb at the end. That's why Germans are so neurotic. They keep waiting for the verb. When is it

going to come up? Sometimes the sentences are so long, you have to look at the next month's edition to get to the verb.

And over here, Joan loves Bob – same thing. No matter what the word order is, what we have are the endings that determine this.

Now, when we get to the Greek language we want to know how these words relate and clauses relate by little phrases that we tend to ignore and I think part of our English language is not interested in precision as to relationship of words.

For instance if you have the words, “The battle was lost - _____ the general died.”

You have all sorts of words that can change the meaning of this. For instance if you put “The battle was lost – after the general died,” now you have a relationship with the battle having taken place and being lost after the general died, but there is not necessarily a causal relationship. This is just a matter of fact. It is interesting to note that it was after the general had died and the battle was lost. There was no relationship between the battle being lost and the general dying but that happened in time.

“The battle was lost –even as the general died.”

Now they are taking place at the same time. Now when you say,

“The battle was lost –when as the general died.”

Now you have more than just a temporal relationship. You are talking about somehow, the general's death being intimately involved in the battle being lost.

“The battle was lost –while the general died.”

Very much the same as “even as”.

“The battle was lost - so that the general died.”

Now the battle is lost and the result of the battle being lost is the death of the general.

“The battle was lost – for the general died.”

Now the battle's being lost is determined as being grounded on the general's death. If he hadn't died the battle might not have been lost.

“The battle was lost – and the general died.”

Two separate facts that are just related.

“The battle was lost – if the general died.”

Now you talk about – “I don’t know the outcome yet but if the general died, then the battle would have been lost because he was essential for victory.”

“The battle was lost – then the general died.”

You have a temporal ..

“The battle was lost – because the general died.”

It was the general’s death that is the cause of the battle being lost. Then you have since, before, therefore, and you have all sorts of words like this.

And the one thing that we very seldom do in English and grade school and so forth, is to interact with – how do these clauses relate to one another. And in our chapter on the epistles, the genre of the epistles, I give a lot of examples of relationship of clauses that talk about temporal, causal, instrumental and the like.

Now let me give a very famous passage in Scripture and we will talk about some of the clausal relationships. Its Ephesians 2:8-9. Paul writes:

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith,
and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of
God — 9 not the result of works, so that no one
may boast.

For by grace. Here is the Greek here:

And by grace here is a ... instrumental case. What we have is a particular instrumental of cause. You are saved because of grace. The cause of salvation is grace. Because of grace. By grace you have been saved.

Now you have through faith and that would be an ablative of means. The means through which salvation comes is faith. Not the cause ... the means.

You say, “What is the difference?” Quite clear that cause and means are very very different in the relationship here. By grace through faith.

If someone says I am saved because I believe. It is a very erroneous kind of statement. You are not saved because you believe. “Well. Sure I am saved because I believe. Bible says if you have faith, you will be saved and you are saved because you believe.”

No. You are not saved because you believe.

Have the greatest faith in the world. Eliminate Good Friday and Easter from history. You are lost. You are not saved because you believe. The cause of our salvation is the

death of Jesus Christ for our sins and His resurrection from the dead. This gracious act of God, this grace is the cause of salvation.

You can have all the faith in the world, just remove it and it shows. No. You are not saved. The means by which that grace is appropriated is faith. Faith is not the cause. Faith is the means by which that cause brings about our salvation.

Let me give a... maybe not a great example, but one that is sometimes helpful.

You are dying in the hospital of a form of pneumonia and the doctor comes in and he has a vial of ampicillin and he says "This stuff will save you."

The cause of your being saved will be that ampicillin. But somehow there has to be means by which this is appropriated in the body. So you get a hypodermic needle and a syringe and you fill it with ampicillin and through the hypodermic needle the ampicillin, the saving medicine enters your body and you were saved.

Now what saves you?

It was the hypodermic needle which also saves you! No. You could be stuck with that all day and it won't help you. You just jab people with the hypodermic and it doesn't do anything. It is the means by which the cure – the ampicillin – enters in and brings about healing. It is not the cause of your healing.

When we talk about what saves us. It is Jesus' death on Calvary that saves us. Not our faith! And I think there is a sense in which we are insulting the grace of God and the death of Jesus on our behalf when we talk like that.

"Uh... Um... I am saved because I believe."

You are saved because Jesus died for you. Your faith is the means – the hypodermic needle – through which God's healing salvation, Jesus, the ampicillin comes into your life. It is by grace. It is because of grace. It is through faith, but it is because of grace and all the faith in the world won't save us apart from God's remedy, His grace in Jesus Christ.

And I think we need to make sure that when we talk about people, we don't emphasize our personal faith, but the grace of God that brings about that salvation. By grace, the instrument, cause, if you want to use another word. By grace, because of grace; the instrument being the grace of God that saves us.

The means through faith.

Then he talks about, you have been saved, ok. We could talk a little about this being a perfect. And that you have been saved and indicates something has happened that brought you in a state of salvation and state continues on, but lets not worry about that.

But then he goes on and says, “this is not your own doing” – touto (or τοῦτο (= this)) – “this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Now, what is not of our own doing? There have been people who have said, “Well, faith”. That faith is a gift of God and that apart from God giving us this gift of faith we couldn’t never enter into the Kingdom of God. Well that may be true theologically, but that’s not what Paul is saying here.

Now we know that because this is feminine – grace. Faith is feminine. And this is neuter. Now if this is referring to an antecedent, a specific one, it has to take on the same gender is what it is referring to. It doesn’t take on the gender of faith or the gender of grace, so its not referring to that. Its not saying that “this faith saves you”. It’s not saying that “this grace saves you.” He says this whole thing is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast.

So the causal relationships here of these phrases towards one another – you who are learning Greek – you have an opportunity to be able for the rest of your life to read Paul’s actual letters. To read what Luke says. To read what Mark says, without translation. I know languages are not easy and you just can’t let them sit there ... unlike good cheese and good wine, they just don’t get better with age. You got to use it. Work on it. But use the opportunity. There is something exciting for Dr. Stein being able to preach from the pulpit as a young pastor. It was not a cockiness. It was not an arrogance. But I had known that I had studied the text in the original language and I was able to share that – not telling the congregation my work. I didn’t try to impress upon them that I can read Greek and they can’t or something like that.

But there is a confidence in the pulpit that comes about and therefore make use of it.

Now if you don’t have use of the language, well, then you are always translating, not the Greek of Paul, but the English of the translators. So now when you get to study of Ephesians 2:8, “by grace you are saved through faith,” you have to say, “Now what do English translators mean by the word “by” and “grace” and so forth. So you are a step removed. Now, compared to the rest of the world, we have a wonderful surplus of translations. And you have commentaries and others that can help you, but there is something exciting and wonderful about being able to work on biblical text in the original languages and I recommend that to you.

Lets look at a couple of others. Turn with me to Romans 12:2. We are looking at how words are related in a sentence to one another. Here you have:

1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God,
to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God,
which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may

prove what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Now when Paul says, “Be not conformed to this world, you will not that it is an imperative, the present imperative of negation. Usually that implies, you should stop doing what you are doing. And you might be able to translate this, “I appeal to you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, which is your reason to worship.

Stop being conformed to this world!

Now, Paul is assuming, that Roman Christians, even without television, without the media, without CDs, the movies were being conformed by this world in its own image. And Paul says “Stop allowing this to take place.”

If that was true of the Christian church in Rome, think about what's happening to us today: being bombarded with the media all the time.

And perish the thought that anybody should drive a car without a radio on. Or that they could jog without earphones. I think we are scared of silence. I think we are going to go crazy if it gets silent or something like that.

But much of this non-silence that we are hearing is not necessarily edifying. Much of it may be of this world and conforming us, shaping us into its own image. Paul says, “Stop doing that. Stop allowing that to happen to you.”

On the other hand, be transformed – metamorphosis is the word that we get there. And now the question is “How are we going to be transformed?” And Paul gives us this expression, “By the renewal of our minds.” By the renewal of the mind.

The way we stop allowing ourselves to be conformed and start to be transformed, Paul says is the renewal of your mind. Now Paul didn't go further than that but he does say, that's the answer. Our minds have to be renewed. Elsewhere he uses that very word renewal and talks about the Holy Spirit trying to renew us. But I think there is more involved than this. And I would say that if we want to help our people to be transformed and no longer conforming, how do we help them get a renewal of the mind.

What are we going to fill their minds with?

When was the last time any of you read a missionary biography? Last year. If you want to be transformed start reading missionary biographies. Very challenging. Very challenging. You begin to think differently. You start filling your mind with different things. You need to have in your church a book of the month club, where you emphasize a good missionary biography of some Christian work that will help them to think differently and to be transformed and so forth. Well Anyhow. Lets go to another one.

Philippians 2:12-13

Now, we have looked at this verse from the perspective of trying to understand the meaning of terms and coming to the norms of utterance.

12 Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

“Work out” doesn’t mean earn but to earn, merit, but to demonstrate, manifest, carry out your salvation with fear and trembling. But we didn’t look at verse 13. And there is an intimate connection between them. Paul says,

13 for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

We are not being asked to work out our salvation in order that God would be at work in us. He is talking to Christians – because God is at work in you. Therefore manifest the salvation that you have with fear and trembling.

So verse 13 is the ground and cause of the exhortation. We are never told to do certain commands so that God will work in our hearts. But because God is at work in our hearts as Christians therefore we have the exhortation. The exhortation is built on our standing in Christ. The exhortations are never given in order to achieve a standing with Christ. We already have that. And because God is at work in you. Because you were His children. Because you came to faith in Him. Therefore – work out – manifest that salvation with fear and trembling. With reverence and care.

Alright. That's about the only ones I had in mind to share with you in that way. Anything here that you want to comment on before we go on to the next?

End of Lecture 31

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Hermeneutics for Epistles \(Part 4\)](#)

Alright, the next kind of thing that we want to look at is going from understanding a proposition, a simple statement to following an argument. And I am going to trace with you a very carefully worked out argument by the apostle Paul in Romans 13:1-7. What's nice about this passage is that there is no intimate, needed connection with what precedes or what follows. It follows a general list of exhortations that Paul gives here.

1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. 2 Therefore he who resists the authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of Him who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval; 4 for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain! He is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore one must be subject, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. 6 For the same reason you ought to pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. 7 Pay all of them their dues, — taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.

Now I am not implying in the least, that you should be able to work out what I am going to show you here. What I am saying is that, I want you to see there are times when you have a very carefully constructed argument and the more you understand the argument, the more rich it becomes for you and the better you are in being able to preach and teach it.

Now let us follow this verse by verse.

13:1 – A general exhortation – let every person be subject to the governing authorities. Now he then goes on and gives the theological ground for this. For why should I? I don't like it. Why should I Paul? Be subject to the governing authorities?

For Paul says, there is no authority except from God and those that exist have been instituted from God. What Paul is saying is that – this governmental authority that we have above us – is a gift of God - a gift of common grace which God has ordained for the well-being of His creation.

This authority that the state has comes from God Himself. And when you don't like a President or you don't like a governor, we don't have a choice of saying "we are not going to pay attention to them." Paul says to be subject to the governing authorities. Their authority ultimately comes from God and therefore when you disobey them, there will be consequences.

So you have a theological ground. Notice the "for" - the cause. Why should we obey and be subject to the governing authorities? For there is no authority except from God and those that exist have been instituted by God. Now the result of this theological argument is as follows:

"Therefore or so that he who resists the authorities, resists what God has appointed. And as a consequence of that, those who resist will incur judgment. So you have a general

exhortation about being subject to the governing authorities. And you have the ground for that – the authority comes from God. And consequently the result is, if you resist them, you will incur judgment.

Now, second argument. A practical ground. Notice the “for” in 13a. Here you have another one. A positive example.

“For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad.” In other words, the reason you should obey government is because they are for our good. They are helpful. They are good for us. If you obey the law, you don’t have to worry about them. They are a real blessing.

“For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad.” And the explanation for that:

“Would you have no fear of Him who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval; 4 for he is God's servant for your good.”

On the other hand, if you do badly, if you do wrong, then be afraid. For, he does not bear the sword in vain. The idea of the sword here is the symbol of the power of life and death over the citizenry. In Roman literature there is an example of one of the emperors who resigned and handed over his sword. And the person describing this said, “In so doing he showed that he was surrendering the right of life and death over the citizenry and giving that up.”

“He does not bear the sword in vain.”

If you are looking for a proof text for capital punishment, I think that this is a good one. This is what Paul is saying, that he doesn’t bear the sword in vain.

“He is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer.”

And you have the explanation of why he bears the sword.

He is God’s servant to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer.

If someone were to say to Paul, “By what right does the state have to punish people who are evil, the answer is – if they don’t – they are not doing what God has ordained them to do. They are to punish the wrongdoer.”

So you have the ground, the result and you have the practical ground and argument, the positive one and a negative one. Now beginning at 13:5, you have a summary, a chiasmic summary. Chiasmic is A-B-B-A.

5 Therefore one must be subject, not only to avoid God’s wrath but also for the sake of conscience.

Now in 3 and 4, we had reference to the wrath of –
he is God's servant for ... if you
do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain!
He is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the
wrongdoer. 5 Therefore one must be subject, not only to avoid
God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience.

Now conscience hasn't shown up anywhere in this passage so far. Its unlikely that Paul would just pull out of the hat another reason that he hasn't dealt with in some ways so my understanding that goes back to his argument that all authority comes from God, those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore if you resist the authorities, you resist what God has appointed. You violate your conscience, because God has given them authority and if you don't obey them you violate your conscience, because you know that it is right to do so.

Then you have an argument from Christian practice.

6 For the same reason you ought to pay taxes,

Dr. Stein: Think a minute, you Roman Christians. You pay taxes. Now why do you pay taxes? Why do you think the Roman Christians paid their taxes? What?

Student: They didn't want to go to jail.

Dr. Stein: Alright. You have the danger of punishment. But why else? The Christians?

Student: {hard to hear}

Dr. Stein: Yeah. The things that are God's. I think this is an allusion to this. I would word it maybe something like 'That's why Jesus' told you to pay your taxes, because these authorities are ministers of God attending to this very thing. That's why we pay our taxes, Jesus said. Because they are God's servants and they are there to issue wrath and conscience.'

Then you have a concluding exhortation. We begin with a general one and it concludes with a concluding one. Different ways of referring to a structure where, the beginning and the end look alike. Some taller ring kind of style and the like.

7 Pay all of them their dues, — taxes to whom
taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to
whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.

And then we have the complete argument. It begins with the general exhortation and it ends with a concluding exhortation. The general exhortation is followed by a ground, a theological ground that authority comes from God with the result that if you don't obey them, you resist them, you resist whom God has appointed and you will get ...

experience God's judgment for doing so. Rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad – if you don't want to fear those in authority, then do what is good. They are God's servant however to endear the sword as His servant to execute wrath, therefore, conclusion and you have the argument from Christian practice.

Now the next step having understood what Paul is talking about is the question, "Is this universally true?" A lot of the Christians for instance in Nazi Germany were wrestling with "Should we obey our government?" And the government, being in a quote "Christian state", frequently passed out Christian propaganda and emphasized Romans 13. Obey the authorities. Obey the Ruler. He is God's anointed leader.

I think the way I would wrestle with this would be, what kind of government, does Paul say, comes from God? And is the government I am talking about like that government? Notice that the government that Paul refers to is coming from God and is having divine authority are a terror to good conduct but to bad conduct.

In verse 4, they are God's servant for a good. If you do wrong, they punish to execute wrath on the wrongdoer. But if you do good, you don't have to worry. But it is evident that sometimes you are under a government that that doesn't seem to square. There are governments that punish good and reward evil. And then I think you are saying that this is not the kind of government which Paul is talking about here and I think that a lot of the Christians in Nazi Germany said, this is not the kind of government that Paul is talking about. The Nazi government is not this kind of a government. It is an illegitimate government. It doesn't have divine authority because they don't punish evil and reward good.

Therefore you can't simply blanketly obey them in everything they say. It is not a legitimate government in that way. The Christians during the Reformation had a real problem with what to do when you have an evil government. Calvin said, if you have an evil government, you have two things you can do: "Flee and pray!"

The Lutherans, said, "No. If there is an evil government, you can defend yourself against an evil government." And that was worked out in a city that was surrounded by a Roman Catholic army trying to destroy them. I think that might have influenced their views somewhat. Then who is the Presbyterian? John Knox up in Scotland, went further and he said Christians are obligated not only to resist an evil government, but to seek to overthrow them. They had all sorts of different ... uh... we don't have a clear example of what to do here.

However, I remember as a young pastor during the Vietnam years, where a lot of material was being passed on to pastors and we were being urged not to obey the government in this war. We were being urged to not pay our taxes and so forth and so on. I remember working my way through this passage and I simply said "Well. Let me think for a minute. Is the government Paul talking about in Romans – Was this a better government than the government that I am presently under?" And you know I had a hard time thinking that the Romans were really a very noble military machine. You say "Well. What were they

using their taxes for?” It wasn’t for social welfare of the poor and their conquered territories. It was to maintain their legions. And I thought “Well. You know, in some ways my government may not be the best but I think it is better than that government and Paul says, to his Roman Christians that they should obey the Roman authorities, then how much more should it follow that I carry it over and obey my government?” Now, the time might come when I think my government would be worse than this? But at the present time, I didn’t think they were, so I did continue to pay my taxes and to get involved in some of that.

Now, lastly for tonight, what we want to do is to look at the genre of letters and let me put up here – the form of ancient letters – there is a lot being done today on this area. I will do some very simple, maybe superficial books at this.

The Form of an Ancient Letter

An ancient letter usually begins with a greeting. You have the greeting as generally a secular kind of greeting. Acts 15:23, 23, 26 James 1:1 all involve this kind of secular greeting.

Let me read Acts 15:23 to you.

“The Brethren, both the apostles and the elders,
To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:
Greetings.”

So you have (A) the writer to (B) the recipient with a greeting. That would be a very secular kind of greeting or salutation as it is called.

Now, if you were Jewish, what kind of greeting would you give?

Shalom. Ok A to B. Shalom. Which would be Hebrew. Peace is our English translation of that, so in the New Testament letters however, peace is often times part of that Greeting, but also grace is frequently one, which makes these greetings - the salutation much more Christianized in that way. It seemed very early that Christians had this common greeting to one another and salutation and not just a secular greeting. Shalom might still stay there, but grace is most important. Sometimes grace, mercy and peace. Sometimes just grace and peace. Sometimes ... let us see ...

Romans, “Grace to you and peace...”

1 Corinthians “Grace to you and peace...”

2 Corinthians “Grace to you and peace...”

Galatians, “Grace to you and peace...”

Ephesians “Grace to you and peace...”

Philippians “Grace to you and peace...”

Colossians “Grace to you and peace...”

1 Thessalonians “Grace to you and peace...”

and

2 Thessalonians “Grace to you and peace...”

Looks like grace and peace is the common one. Ok. After the salutation, there usually was a thanksgiving or a prayer of some sort.

“I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you.”

“I give thanks to God upon you.”

“We give thanks to God.”

“I pray for you unceasingly.”

And something of this nature. So you have a normal form. “I thank my God through Jesus Christ.” After the salutation which includes the A to B greeting and grace and peace usually, there is a thanksgiving and or a prayer.

After this, there would be a - the body of the letter itself. In Romans, the body of the letter is rather lengthy. Galatians as well. 1 Corinthians, not quite as long as you might expect. Then you have after the body of the letter, some exhortation or instruction. Notice in Romans that the exhortation and instruction is essentially four chapters, whereas the body is eleven.

Galatians and 1 Corinthians, in 1 Corinthians, the exhortation and instruction is much larger and beginning with chapter 7, he answers a lot of questions that they have had.

“Now concerning what you have written. Now concerning things offered to idols. Now concerning ... now concerning and so forth.”

Now this is then followed by a conclusion which is very diverse, a wish for peace, a greeting, a holy kiss, a concluding autograph, a benediction of some sort or another. There is no standard kind of conclusion of this nature. That tends to be the normal form of a New Testament letter, following the normal form of most other letters – secular letter.

You start with the date on the left side. The address to a business corporation, then dear so and so in the body of the letter and then you have Yours Truly, Sincerely, His always, In Christ love or something like that and the name that follows. So it's a standard form, we follow as well.

Now in this kind of a letter, one of the things that we note is that when Paul introduces a letter, he frequently has a very heavy and pregnant introduction, especially the churches that he has not founded. This is a clue as to what is about to occur in the letter. Let me show you here Romans 1:1-7, a very lengthy introduction.

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle,
set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which he promised
beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures,
3 concerning his Son, who was descended from David
according to the flesh and designated the Son of God
4 and was designated the Son of God in power according
to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead,

Jesus Christ our Lord, 5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, 6 including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

7 To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Very very lengthy.

Philippians:

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,
To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at
Philippi, with the bishops
2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians
Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,
To the church of the Thessalonians
in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
Grace to you and peace.

Very short compared to this. I think that indicates something. I think the reason he writes such a long introduction is that he is writing to a church he has not founded.

On what basis are you writing to us Paul? Who gave you authority to write us and to tell us what to do? And here Paul introduces what he will later argue in the letter. Notice verse 2.

“The Gospel which He promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, the Gospel 3 concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh”.

We will deal with that at great length, but when we get down here to the Son of God having been raised from the dead, in verse 5 now he begins to give this rationale as to why he writes this letter.

5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations

That includes you. Paul has received grace and apostleship to bring obedience of faith for the sake of His name among all the nations and that includes you. That's why I am writing you. I have never visited you. I didn't found the church there, but I write to you

because God has given me grace and apostleship to be in charge of bringing about obedience and faith among all the nations.

Now he will then bring that up more and more clearly as we go on. Let me read to you in Chapter 15 of Romans as he gets to the end of the letter, he now writes more and more specific about that grace and apostleship.

Chapter 15, verse 8:

“For I tell you that Christ became a
Servant to the circumcised to show God’s
truthfulness in order to confirm the promises
given to the Patriarchs, in order that the
Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy.
As it is written and so forth...”

“I myself am satisfied...” Verse 14, “about you brethren”
“that you yourselves are full of goodness.

“But on some points I have written to you very
boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace
given to me by God

... to bring about obedience, through whom we
have received grace and apostleship to bring
about obedience of faith ...

I have written to you very boldly by way of
reminder, because of the grace given to me by
God to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the
Gentiles in the priestly service of God ...
of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the
Gentiles may be found acceptable.

Now he says, verse 22 of that chapter:

This is the reason why I have so often been
hindered from coming to you. But now, since
I no longer have any room for work in these regions,
and since I have longed for many years to come to
you, I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain,
and to be sped on my journey there by you, once
I have enjoyed your company for a little while.
At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem...

So Paul is talking about his gift of apostleship. The grace given to him for apostleship. He picks that up also in Galatians when he writes then, and this is why he writes to the church in Rome. He believes that he is in charge of that church and is responsible for it and therefore he writes to them.

In Chapter 1, verse 9 after this:

For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit
in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention
you always in my prayers, asking that somehow by
God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.
For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some
spiritual gift to strengthen you — that is, that we may
be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both
yours and mine.

I want you to know, brothers, that I have often intended
to come to you (but thus far have been prevented),

... I am in obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians,
both to wise and foolish so I am eager to preach the
Gospel to you also who are in Rome ...

So right here in the salutation, Paul introduces the reason for writing his letter and this becomes a clue for us. If you want to understand Romans, you have to understand why he writes in Romans 1:1-7, he gives that overview in regard to the letter.

One other thing I want to comment on in that and then we will conclude. I mentioned that after every salutation in all of Paul's letters, we have what is known as a thanksgiving or prayer. After the salutation in Romans,

“First I thank my God through Jesus Christ
for all of you. Because your faith is proclaimed
in all the world...”

He goes on and elaborates. In 1 Corinthians after the introduction, he says,

“I give thanks to God always for you because
of the grace of God which is given to you in
Christ Jesus.”

2 Corinthians:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord
Jesus Christ, the Father of all mercies, and God
of all comfort, who comforts us in our affliction.

Ephesians:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ in every spiritual blessing.”

Philippians:

“I thank my God and all my remembrance of you always in every prayer of mine.”

1 Thessalonians:

“We give thanks to God always for you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers.”

“We are bound to give thanks to God always for you as it is fitting.”

Do you get a sense of we thank you God for everything. Every person who had a letter written to them expects a salutation and a word of blessing and comfort. Here is Paul in Galatians.

“1 Paul, an apostle— not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— 2 and all the brothers who are with me,

To the churches of Galatia:

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

Now what are you expecting?

Blessed? We thank God? Here is what is written here:

“6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7 not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed”

– anathema. And just as you are about to gain your breath again, he says,

9 As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

Every letter, even the one in which they had drunk at Communion, there is a God always or Blessed be the God but not this church. So when you see this normal order, if this is missing, it says a lot about the letter. If it is there that's what you would expect. It is not as clearly important to us because you expect that. This being out, it shows, there is real trouble in that church.

The lack of a thanksgiving and prayer in Galatians reveals probably more about that letter than all the words what we read in between and so forth. So when you look now at the form of the letter, this is very helpful.

Today, there is a lot of talk and a lot of discussion as to becoming more exacting on the forms of the letter, whether this is an apologetic letter, whether this is a defense letter and so forth and so on. I think that's far too specific, I think. I think its making something into a genre that becomes too complicated and most of Paul's readers would not have followed it.

Alright it is 9:30. We are a little early. Do you have any questions so far on what we have covered? My voice is just about...

Student: ???

Dr. Stein: I am not going to give you an exam question on describe the difference between an instrumental of means or an instrumental of cause or things of that nature. I put them in the book to show you that these are the kinds of things that you need to be aware of as a possibility. I gave you examples that are helpful.

When you learn Greek syntax. You start looking about Hina clauses as a purpose clause. You look at the different... you were taught that there were only cases to worry about. The nominative, there was the genitive, there was the dative, there was the accusative, and there was the vocative.

I remember I felt that somebody had lied to me after I realized that there were really eight of them. And that those had sub-meanings and so forth. Those are simply the questions that you have to ask. This is a dative instrumental, locative kind of ending. Is it more emphasizing the location, the means of something ... with the indirect object, and when you talk about the different kinds of instrumental cause, means of... those questions help you to think about what kind of possibility you have here.

And essentially that is something you work on in Greek exegesis as you go on. But no I am not asking you to memorize all those kinds of clausal relationships in the chapter on epistles.

End of Lecture 32

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Genre of Covenant \(Part1\)](#)

Let me read you something from Karl Barth. Karl Barth is the greatest theologian of the 20th century. It doesn't mean you agree with him in everything he says, but his impact was greater than any theologian. If you have to agree with somebody completely – the greatest theologian in my opinion in the 20th century has to be me. I am the only one I agree with completely. [Laughter in audience]

Even then I have debates with myself. I don't know. So I am not sure.

But KB is certainly the most significant and the most prolific writer in the 20th century. On December 31st, 1962 he preached this sermon in Basel Prison. Between 1954 and 1964, he visited the prisons some 28 times and would preach in the prison. Think of the man who was the most busy theologian of the 20th century but he still goes to prison and preaches to prisoners.

“‘My grace is sufficient for thee.’ 2 Corinthians 12:9. This is a very short text. A mere 6 words. The shortest I have ever preached on. The brevity is an advantage for you. You can contain it better. I might say in passing that every time I come here I am very concerned that no so much my sermon but that the text that it follows may really sink in and go with you. This time then my grace is sufficient for thee. The wonderful spice of its saying lies in its brevity. The 6 words are enough. Some of you may have heard that in the last 40 years I have written many books. Some large. I will freely and frankly and gladly admit that these 6 words say much more and much better things than all the heaps of paper with which I have surrounded myself with. They are enough which cannot be said even remotely in my books. What may be good in my books can be at most that from afar. They point to what these 6 words say. When my books are long since outdated and forgotten and book in the world with them, these words will shine with everlasting fullness. ‘My grace is sufficient for thee.’”

[Prayer]

Father in heaven we are thankful for a man who had such fame and notoriety and yet despite all his writings he knew that these 6 words of scripture were far more important than all that he had ever written. Grant our father too that as we become more successful in the ministries that we are in and if fame should happen to come our way that we can learn from Karl Barth and his humility. And also be interested in only one thing. To have all people know that your grace is sufficient for all. Bless us now as we meet for we meet in Jesus' name. Amen.

We have an exam next week. I will do it again like we did it the last time. As soon as you come to class we will have the exam first. Then afterwards we will have some more material and we will have that and then we will have one more day of class on the 3rd of December and then we will have the final exam. There s no class on the 19th because of various society meetings and then there is no class the following week because its Fall reading days. So after next week we have one more full day of class and then the final exams. We will talk about the examination later during the second hour. The second part of our time together.

We want to talk today about the genre of a covenant. The genre of a covenant. During the latter part of the 19th, early 20th century, a lot of work was done by what was the History of Religions school.

And this school sought in the Middle East, parallels to Biblical texts. And this was needed and helpful. Sometimes you get carried away and if you see anything that looked related to what the Old Testament says, the New Testament says... well all Old Testament all New Testament referred to this kind of thing. Somebody referred to this kind of a thing as parallelomania, where people got crazy with parallels and all sorts of kinds of things.

An example of this that Dr. Bruce Metzger pointed out and that was in Mithraism which was one of the mystery religions at the time of our Lord. They found in one of the Mithraisms, which was a cave where they worshipped, a carving of a picture in which people were meeting together and a loaf of bread was being passed and on it was the cross and someone went absolutely bonkers on it. "See the whole doctrine of the cross of Jesus Christ goes back to Mithraism! You see here is the cross and Christianity borrows all of its ideas and understanding of the cross of Jesus from Mithraism." Well after a while it became clear that nothing of the sort was true.

That the reason there was a cross on the bread was that it was a lot easier to break the bread if you had divided it into parts with the cross. You could break them in half a lot easier. So there was a lot of this silliness going on, but a lot of very useful materials that were parallel were also being found.

And they found in the A.N.E. – capital letters - Ancient Near Eastern literature, the especially the Hittites which were a group in Southeastern Turkey, a particular kind of covenant form, which soon as they began to see this, looked very much like the Biblical form of a covenant. It was a covenant that looks very much like the one we have in the Old Testament.

When you have a covenant, you have agreements between people. There are essentially two kinds of covenants.

One is the Parity Covenant. Par – You shoot par in golf, you equals what the golf course says you should shoot. That's a covenant made between equals. It's the covenant that you may make among yourselves on something like that. You have various covenants in

certain residential areas when you move in. Everybody who moves in agrees and has a certain kind of covenant together like you can't build a moveable garage in your lot or something like that or you can't. We lived in an area where you couldn't hang up your clothes to dry in your backyard. That's a kind of a crazy one. Yeah. Well. Everybody who lived in that community had that kind of agreement. That's a kind of a parity agreement.

But there was another kind of agreement and it was named after the rulers that made this agreement. And the Suzerain was a – think of him as a king. And there was a Suzerainty treaty covenant or treaty form which was made. It was not one made between equals. It was made by the Suzerain, the king and you could either take it or leave it. It had to be a gracious covenant and people would generally accept it. But it was a one way covenant. It was from the king to the people. Kind of like agreements we make in class about grades here. They are not Parity covenants, they are Suzerain covenants. You have a Prof and the students.

Now, in these Suzerain covenants, as they looked at them, they noticed that it had a form very much like the kind of covenant form that would be found in the Old Testament - a Suzerain covenant form. Covenant treaty agreement, but let us use the term covenant because it is a term frequently found in the Bible.

Now, one of the great tragedies that we have is that, I think most people in the Baptist church tend to [? – hard to hear] what a New Covenant is. And it plays a very very important role in the Bible.

Covenants – we don't talk much as Baptists about covenants. If you are Reformed you talk about covenants. If you are Presbyterian, you might talk about covenants. But Baptists don't talk about covenants usually in our teaching and our preaching and the like. But, the Bible starts out with a covenant. It starts out with a covenant where in Genesis 17, God makes a covenant with a man named Abram or Abraham. In the 17th chapter of Genesis,

1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. 2 And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous."

3 Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, 4 "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. 5 No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. 6 I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. 7 I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. 8 And I will give to you, and to your offspring after you, the land where you are now an alien,

all the land of Canaan, for a perpetual holding; and I will be their God."

9 God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. 10 This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. 11 You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. 12 Throughout your generations every male among you shall be circumcised when he is eight days old, including the slave born in your house and the one bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring. 13 Both the slave born in your house and the one bought with your money must be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. 14 Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."

Now here is the beginning of the covenant that God makes with Abraham and through Abraham, his offspring and then into the New Testament. Notice, its not Abraham and God haggling over terms of the covenant. It is a gracious covenant, but it is made one-sidedly. God dictates the terms. Abraham can reject it, but there is no give or take in working out agreements other than that.

This is the way the covenant is and works and operates. It is from top down. Now that covenant is remembered in the book of Exodus. Exodus begins that way. In the 2nd chapter of the book of Exodus, we have in verses 23-25, that the people of Israel are in bondage, they are suffering and in chapter 2, verse 23,

"23 After a long time the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned under their slavery, and cried out. Out of the slavery their cry for help rose up to God. 24 God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 25 God looked upon the Israelites, and God took notice of them."

So what is going to happen now in the Exodus is due to the fact that He had made a covenant with Abraham and He remembers that covenant. That covenant continues throughout the Old Testament and then when we get to the New Testament, we get to Mark, chapter 14 and we have one of the two rites of the Christian church.

22 While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." 23 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. 24 He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. 25 Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Then we have in the book of Acts, Peter preaching and he has preached on the Day of Pentecost, and in the next chapter he is in the temple witnessing and he makes these comments, beginning at Acts 3:22

He quotes the Old Testament and he says,

22 Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you from your own people a prophet like me. You must listen to whatever he tells you. 23 And it will be that everyone who does not listen to that prophet will be utterly rooted out of the people.' 24 And all the prophets, as many as have spoken, from Samuel and those after him, also predicted these days. 25 You are the descendants of the prophets and of the covenant that God gave to your ancestors, saying to Abraham, 'And in your descendants all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' 26 When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you, to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

The Gospel message is that God has remembered the covenant that He made with the people of Israel. And He sent His Messiah. And then Paul, when He tells the Corinthians about the Lord's Supper, he says, this cup is the New Covenant in my blood, do this as often you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So the essence at the heart of a biblical message is this idea of a covenant. A covenant that God unilaterally makes with His people. A covenant that looks like in its form – the Suzerain covenant form found in the ancient near eastern literature.

Now, let's look at a couple of covenants and see the material that makes up such a covenant. A covenant usually begins and we have a covenant form in the book of Exodus, when God renews His covenant with the people of Israel at Mount Sinai. Usually there is a preamble in which the person who makes this covenant identifies himself. And in Exodus 20:1, God identifies Himself with the people of Israel and He says the following ... uh actually in verse 2, this is 20. Then God spoke all these words.

"I am the Lord your God."

So the covenant maker identifies Himself in the preamble. I am the Lord – the name that God gives to Moses to identify Himself, the I AM THAT I AM, Yahweh the Lord, whose name you are not to take in vain.

"I am the Lord your God."

And now you have the covenant maker identifying Himself. The word LORD in capital letters is the way we translate the Tetragrammaton, the sacred name for God, "Yahweh".

Now after the identification of the preamble there is usually a historical prologue. Sometimes – you will see in the next example, there is a very extensive and lengthy prologue. In this verse it is “who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”

So the covenant maker identifies Himself and tells what He has graciously done for this people, which they were not in any way deserving of. They had no prior claim to this, but nonetheless this is what the covenant maker did.

“I brought you out of the land of Egypt. Out of the house of slavery.”

There is always a gracious description of the character of God. Now after this prologue and preamble, there are various stipulations that are given and the stipulations here are what we call the 10 commandments.

3 you shall have no other gods before me.

4 You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, 6 but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7 You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

8 Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work. 10 But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work — you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

12 Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

13 You shall not murder.

14 You shall not commit adultery.

15 You shall not steal.

16 You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

17 You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Now here you have various stipulations that are given. Now please note – the stipulations are not given in order that God will make a covenant. The stipulations are not for people to enter into this covenant. Because the covenant's already been made.

Those – you already have in historical prologue what God has done and has entered into this covenant with them so stipulations are not to enter into covenant but to remain faithful within the covenant already.

So what does that tell you already about faith and works here? The covenantal relationships exists before the command to keep the commandments. As one might say “the stipulations are to keep you within the covenant.” Not to cause you to enter into it. The covenant has been made graciously and now this is what you must do to remain in that covenant and faithful in it.

Oftentimes there is a provision for a continual reading of the covenant. In Exodus 24:7, we have something like this:

Then Moses took the book of the covenant, and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient."

So you have here, provision for the continual reading of that covenant to remind you are the people of the covenant and the terms of the covenant.

End of Lecture 33

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Genre of Covenant \(Part2\)](#)

Then there is oftentimes reference to various witnesses that are present.

3 Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice, and said, "All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do."

Verses 3 and 7, so there is a witness to what is going on there. Sometimes a stone or something, a memorial is erected, so that whenever you look at that and when the people would pass by it, they will remember that there is a covenant that agreed to and that God graciously made with them.

The frequently blessings and curses associated with the covenant in this particular one we don't have it as readily as some of the others, but we have references elsewhere to a covenant which God graciously blesses those for a 1,000 generations to those who are faithful, but God will not acquit those who disobey his covenant. And then there is the oath that the people make, "We will obey the covenant. All that the Lord has said, we will do."

Now this is the covenantal form.

Now let us look at a larger example of this and that is in the book of Joshua, where in the concluding chapter of the book of Joshua, we have this covenant coming up once again. The 24th chapter of the book of Joshua and once again we have in verse - the opening verse, Joshua 24:1-2a, the preamble:

1 Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. 2 And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel..."

So you have the Lord – Yahweh – the God - Elohim of Israel. Ok. So you have the preamble in verses 1 and part of 2 in this chapter. Then you have a very extensive historical prologue all dealing with past tenses where God has shown what He has done graciously to the people and for the people. And this goes from verse 2b, 2nd part of 2, all the way through verse 13. Let me read them to you.

Long ago your ancestors — Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor — lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods. 3 Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan and made his offspring many.

"Yeah. That's right." The people would say "Yes. That's right. You did that. You blessed Abraham and we have become a great nation."

I gave him Isaac; 4 and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. I gave Esau the hill country of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt. 5 Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt with what I did in its midst; and afterwards I brought you out.

"That's right. We remember that. And every year we go through the Passover celebration. We remember that."

6 When I brought your ancestors out of Egypt, you came to the sea; and the Egyptians pursued your ancestors with chariots and horsemen

to the Reed Sea. 7 When they cried out to the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and made the sea come upon them and cover them; and your eyes saw what I did to Egypt.

“That’s right. We didn’t deserve any of that. That was all your gracious doing.”

Afterwards you lived in the wilderness a long time. 8 Then I brought you to the land of the Amorites, who lived on the other side of the Jordan; they fought with you, and I handed them over to you, and you took possession of their land, and I destroyed them before you. 9 Then King Balak son of Zippor of Moab, set out to fight against Israel. He sent and invited Balaam son of Beor to curse you, 10 but I would not listen to Balaam; therefore he blessed you; so I rescued you out of his hand.

“That’s right. You rescued us from Balak and the others.”

11 When you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho, the citizens of Jericho fought against you, and also the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I handed them over to you. 12 I sent the hornet ahead of you, which drove out before you the two kings of the Amorites; it was not by your sword or by your bow. 13 I gave you a land on which you had not labored, and towns that you had not built, and you live in them; you eat the fruit of vineyards and oliveyards that you did not plant.

Now on what basis can Israel say, “Yes. That’s right. We earned all of that.”? All of this is God’s graciousness. And notice it all comes before the stipulations. So God’s grace which they have already experienced is not based on the stipulations that are going to follow. They are separate from them. God’s graciousness has been revealed.

Now in verses 14 to 21, you have a description of the stipulations, whereas the previous verses, 2b-13 all deal with the past, 14 begins now in light of this gracious historical activity which is described in this prologue:

14 "Now therefore revere the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. 15 Now if you are unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

16 Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; 17 for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He

protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; 18 and the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God."

19 But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the LORD, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. 20 If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm, and consume you, after having done you good." 21 And the people said to Joshua, "No, we will serve the LORD!"

Now verses 22 and 23, we have reference to these witnesses that are there.

22 Then Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to serve him." And they said, "We are witnesses." 23 He said, "Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel."

Then in verses 26-27 – we will jump ahead and we will come back to the other two verses. You have the provision for continual reading.

26 Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God; and he took a large stone, and set it up there under the oak in the sanctuary of the LORD. 27 Joshua said to all the people, "See, this stone shall be a witness against us; for it has heard all the words of the LORD that he spoke to us; therefore it shall be a witness against you, if you deal falsely with your God."

You want to go back to verses 24, 25. We have the oath of the people.

24 The people said to Joshua, "The LORD our God we will serve, and him we will obey." 25 So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem.

Alright. That pretty much is a more extended example of this covenant form that we have. Very important and it's a very important hermeneutical tool to understand what is going on here, because the whole issue of how stipulations – how law relates to God's grace is at stake here, and if you once know the form of a covenant, you realize that the commandments that are given in the Old Testament are not legalism as such, but are stipulations to people who have graciously entered into a covenant with the Lord, their God. And these are stipulations to guide the community in that covenant, and it is not a matter of entering into it, but if they disobey, they will essentially be thrown out of that covenant.

Alright. Let me stop and see how we are going in regards to the covenant form.

Student: Was it pretty much the King said 'This is your deal. This is the covenant. Take it or perish. Was it a situation like that?'

Dr. Stein: No used car dealing and bartering. It's the one that we have. But the covenant is such a gracious thing, you want to jump at it. For example, who wants to deny a covenant and say, "I don't like it", when you say, "Look what God has done for us. We were slaves in Egypt. He took us out. He brought us into the Promised Land, defeated all our enemies for us. We have cities here that we didn't build, we have fields and fruit trees that we didn't plant. We would be crazy not to accept this. It is always a gracious covenant and on all grounds you would have to be out of your mind not to accept it. But Israel lots of times is out of its mind, just like we may be.

Student: Salvation? [? – hard to hear]

Dr. Stein: This is the blood of the New Covenant, Jesus says.

Student: Covenant – and you want to relate to the Old Testament covenant - you want to believe [? - hard to hear]

Dr. Stein: There are some passages in the New Testament that seem to teach that. If you read the book of Hebrews, read about people having experienced all these wonderful things, tasted the first fruits of the Spirit and look at all those things and I said, I look at them and I say, "You know there are people in my church that think they know the Lord that never experience any of these things. And these people are lost and people in my church think well you know "They got my decision card, when I was six years old in the church. And once saved always saved. That's what the Bible says."

Dr. Stein: I haven't found that verse yet, but how are you gonna preach those things. And you have to ... you know its interesting, of all the points of Calvinism, the one that Calvin was least sure of was the one that we call eternal security.

And he believed this because it had to be the result of his understanding of the first four. But the one that he was least sure of. Now we have a lot of people that have one point of Calvin, that's eternal security, and throw everything else away. But you lose sight of the fact that you only have that as far as Calvin is concerned because of the first four. Now you have other understandings by Christian people, who say "Yeah. You can lose your salvation."

Student: But in terms of a covenant, you said it was one way. The covenant is made by a king, so if I don't have half the power to make the covenant, I don't have the power to break the covenant. If you look at the Old Testament, God never goes back on His Word, no matter what the people do. I am of the opinion, that it's the same way with Christ. It's a gift. I didn't do anything therein. So I couldn't think of anything there is to do to lose it. Cus the covenant [? - hard to hear]

Dr. Stein: But the warnings in the Old Testament is that if you break these things. Why does Joshua say, “You better watch out about this covenant. God will/wont[? - hard to hear] forgive you if you break this covenant.” There are warnings. Now. One of the things, when you get a system of theology – let me say to first year students, hold off on a system of theology. Let it kind of ferment in your mind, for your years here at seminary, till you get all the other evidence, passages that, what I worry about is, you get a system here so quickly, that and once you have that, that’s a grid that now stands over your Biblical text. And if the text doesn’t seem to fit it, well, its kind of play dough, we can kind of squish it and make it fit the system and the system becomes an end in itself. And that’s scary. Our system forces the Bible to fit it, rather than our system fitting the Bible.

I know there are some of you here that not only are TULIP Calvinists, but you are Chrysanthemum types – you need a lot more letters or something like that, for your Calvinism. Hold off on that and try to wrestle with some of these issues, and if you do want to talk about eternal security, use the kinds of expressions that the theologians who worked carefully on this used. And they didn’t use once saved always saved. They talked about the Perseverance of the Saints. I’m comfortable with that. The work that God began in you, he will complete it. I believe that.

You say, what about a person who doesn’t persevere? Well. The saints persevere. That’s all I know. And you leave it that way. And it may well be that we need to have some people start thinking about whether that decision is a 6 year old which has never affected ones life at all and that there is no great love for Jesus Christ or passion for Him. And our lives are no different than any unbeliever’s life. Maybe that kind of person needs to rethink seriously. Doesn’t the Bible say make sure you don’t miss out on the salvation.

Student: So all of God’s covenants are out of His grace. Is that[? - hard to hear]

Dr. Stein: A covenant by its very nature is gracious. God doesn’t have to do it. It is an act of loving grace in which He establishes a relationship with us. There are stipulations in it that we must keep and if a person thinks that they can enter a covenant and not have to worry about keeping God’s commandments, then I am wondering what kind of covenant they have entered into. Good trees bear good fruit. Evil trees bear evil fruit.

Student: Children of Israel ever become not God’s people from their lack of [? - hard to hear]

Dr. Stein: When you talk about the Old Testament covenant, there seems to have been a two-sided dimension on this. There is a sense in which the covenant extends to all the physical offspring of Abraham. Those have to do with land issues and so forth, but the spiritual benefits of the coming Messiah and a relationship with God, the coming of the Spirit tend to be to those who later on become more and more referred to as the remnant in the Old Testament, the faithful remnant.

And I think that – when you get to the New Testament, that national kind of covenant doesn’t exist anymore. And now you have a inner covenant dealing with the renewal of

the heart, where you are not talking about two dimensions, everyone who is in this is part of the remnant, following the footsteps of the prophets and the true Israel.

That's why I think for instance, you can circumcise infants, because they are part of that larger covenant. That's why I don't think you can baptize infants. That's quite different there.

Alright let me then comment a little about the stipulation or law in the Old Testament and in the New. I think its quite clear that to understand God's commandments or laws as the reason why we obtain a salvation by keeping them perfectly or so forth or keeping them as best as we could is a misunderstanding. I don't think that Legalism is a possibility. I think that Legalism is the idea that somehow, if I keep the laws perfectly, that will merit me eternal life. I don't think that that's at all what the Bible teaches about law in this regard.

When I became a Christian, somebody gave me a Scofield Bible, within a week or two after my conversion. This became my Bible and my Systematic Theology. And it was nice having not only an inspired Bible, but an inspired group of interpretations and interpretive notes.

[laughter]

That's one of the real dangers of Study Bibles. I laugh at it now, because I am mature, but I remember the first time I disbelieved some of the Scofield notes, I was really scared, wondering if I had become a liberal or had lost my salvation or what was going on here.

I can laugh now, but it wasn't then. It was very kind of scary and that's the danger. Somehow if you find notes in the Bible, doesn't inerrancy, infallibility, the plenary inspiration of the text, doesn't some of that rub off onto the notes when you read them? For instance when you read a Bible, a text and there is a footnote on it, which says A, and they ask me and I say, "No. I don't think that's right. I think that it is B." Who are they going to believe? I am not in the Bible!

So we have to be careful in how we teach our people to use footnotes and so forth. Well. Anyhow, in the Scofield Bible, in the chapter 19 of the book of Exodus, verse 8, it reads this way.

"So Moses came, summoned the Elders of the people and set before them all these words that the Lord had commanded them"

And now here is verse 8,

"The people all answered as one, 'Everything that the Lord has spoken, we will do.' Moses reported the words of the people to the Lord."

Now there is a footnote there in my Scofield Bible which says,

“This was the most terrible thing which Israel could have ever said, because now they were depending on their works, not on God’s grace.”

And I looked at that and I said, “What were the people of Israel supposed to say? ‘All of the things that the Lord has said, we are not going to do.’?”

I mean how else do you answer that? It was a positive statement. So it was a wrong understanding. I think they didn’t realize that within the grace of the covenant which has already been established now you have the stipulations. Well, anyhow. Law and laws are gracious. They are gracious ways in which God shows us how you can please them.

When you are in love with somebody, you really want to know how to please someone. What can I do to make my beloved happy? Well. God says, if you want to make me happy, I want you to do these things. So unlike the rest of the world that is groping and wondering what in the world God demands, we don’t have to worry about that. God has given us His laws. And we know, they don’t [? - hard to hear] out there. We know because God has given us His laws.

Now when the Reformation took place, they began to wrestle with the issue of what about all these laws in the Old Testament. What – there are some six hundred and thirteen in the Pentateuch or something like that. Are they all to be kept still? Is there something that’s happened since the coming of Christ? And so the result was that they began to wrestle with that. The Laws, some of the laws were civil laws – punishment for crimes. What do you do if someone steals something and is caught? There are laws that deal with such things as cities of refuge. When you kill somebody by accident, not maliciously, it has just been an accident. You are to provide cities of refuge so these people can go and flee and then when you are in that city you don’t have to worry about vengeance on the part of the family of the person who has been killed.

So there are civil laws or regulations. There are also cultic laws or regulations. Let me just read some of the civil laws to start with. In Deuteronomy 19. Now this is the case of a homicide which might flee there and live. These have to do with cities of refuge. This is what you do. Verse 14,

“14 You must not move your neighbor's boundary marker, ... 15 A single witness shall not suffice to convict a person of any crime or wrongdoing ... Only on the evidence of two or three witnesses shall a charge be sustained.

These deal with civil kinds of laws of one sort or another.

In chapter 22

1 You shall not watch your neighbor's ox or sheep straying away and ignore them; you shall take them back to their owner.

What you do with kinds of civil issues of one sort or another.

Now the cultic issues, well, if you go to the book of Leviticus chapter two through six, you have these various kinds of sacrifices. Whenever anyone presents a grain offering to the Lord, this is what you do with a grain offering. If you have a sin offering and offer sheep, verse 32, when you have heard of public adoration to testify and so forth.

So you have cultic rules and laws that exist at this time. Let us think of government laws, back[? - hard to hear] Or things of that nature.

Then you have ethical kinds, when I think of the ten commandments here. Moral laws. Now there has been some protests, Jewish scholars especially and others who said that, in the time of Jesus for instance, Jewish people didn't think of the laws in those categories. They are all laws that you were to obey and if you disobeyed them, you were disobeying God and that was wrong.

Now they didn't make a big difference between civil, cultic, and ethical kinds of laws. That may be true. That may be true. But Jesus makes a distinction. In the seventh chapter of the book of Mark, Jesus makes a statement, "It is not what goes into a man's stomach that defiles him, but what comes out of his heart." Thus Jesus declared all foods clean. Now, these cultic laws involved things such as what foods you can eat.

And there is a distinction that Jesus sees here between cultic laws and ethical laws. In other words, so you eat some pork, it doesn't make you a sinner, because that goes into the stomach and then later goes out and ends in the latrine, but it doesn't ... that's not the issue. He says what comes out of the heart is what defiles a man... defiles a woman. What you have here is a distinction between what would be cultic – foods to eat and so forth and so on – and what has to do with moral laws of one sort or another. Cultic regulations, the New Testament sees them as having come to an end. You have the experience of Peter, with the sheep coming in from Heaven with unclean animals. He is told, "Rise. Kill and eat." Peter says, "No. I don't do those things. I am a kosher Jew." The Lord says, "Don't call unclean what God has called clean."

Paul in Romans says, "Eat whatever is set before you. Don't worry about those things. Let everybody be convinced in their own mind as to whether they can eat meat or something of this nature."

So the cultic aspects have gone away. Christians don't feel obligated to have a particular diet of one sort or another. It is not a religious issue. They can eat whatever they want. And one person may eat barbecued spare-ribs and give God thanks ... "Barbecued spare-ribs are great. I thank you Lord for them!" And another says, "Lord. I don't feel it is right. I won't do this, because I think I can serve you better by not doing it." God is pleased because He looks at the heart.

So cultic issues have gone out - are no longer in effect. The ethical issues of course are, because the Ten Commandments are a reflection of God's character. That doesn't change. These are not just arbitrary matters where He says, "I just think arbitrarily, it wouldn't be right to kill people." Now this reflects His character and understanding of

morality as ethical being itself. So the ethical aspects of Old Testament law are still binding.

The Ten Commandments are still issues that we should keep. Civil laws, we are not a theocracy. We are not a religious state. All we can suggest is that our government should think seriously about some of these understandings that are present there. Shouldn't any good government take in consideration, that it should be an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. Not two eyes for an eye and two teeth for a tooth.

That kind of regulation which says that punishment should fit the crime is the basis I think that any good state would have. And we would urge you know I would say that biblical teaching here is a very good one. But I don't think in our secular situation we could say, we should do it because the Bible says so. If it would arise, we would say, this is a good basis for any society to be built on in that way.

Student: [? - hard to hear]

Dr. Stein: No. In the sense that if you defined the ethical laws as you should love your neighbor as yourself, the very nature of God is a loving relationship within the Trinity.

Not eating pork – that was an arbitrary law. If you try to explain it and say well, it really is based on hygienic issues. The answer is no. It is not based on hygienic issues. You say “Well. Yeah. Trichinosis was a real bad disease.” It was as bad in the 1st century A.D. as it was in the 5th century B.C. It didn't change. Nothing is ever built on that. It is just that God is seeking to show that everything in life is clean or unclean. No decision in life are lacking in religious matter so that whatever you do you should do all to the glory of God and it extends even into the matter of what you eat and things of that nature.

But that lesson has apparently been learned. The period of being under a teacher to lead us to Christ has come to fulfillment and therefore in the maturity that which we supposedly have we are granted freedom so that we can better serve the Lord and not have to worry about do's and don't's with regard to cultic issues of one sort or another.

Student: What is your ... not necessarily ... you don't have to get into ... like that or anything ... cause a big disagreement. But as far as ... do you see them as stipulations of a covenant that God has made with Adam? Which they were ... with children of Israel...or do you see them in the character of God? [? - hard to hear]??

Dr. Stein: Oh. I see them as continuing. I think for instance for the Christian, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, strength and mind, and your neighbor as yourself” is a continuation of those ethical laws - a summary of them. I think that continues.

On the other hand, these tend to be arbitrary. What you cannot eat. What you can eat and so forth and so on and the kinds of sacrifice and things of that nature, those no longer are necessary since we have the once and for all sacrifice of Jesus. So in light of the

fulfillment of aspects of that covenant with Abraham, some of these things have ... have no longer a necessity of existing.

Student: [? - hard to hear]

Dr. Stein: I think we as Christians should try to keep our Sabbath, Sunday and I practice Sunday worship, not Sabbath worship because the early church understood the 1st day of the week as being a special way... day as having replaced the Sabbath. Very quickly, Paul writes to the Corinthians that when they meet together to celebrate the Lord's Supper and collect their offering on the 1st day of the week, they should do that. When he meets with the church in Ephesus in the city of Miletus, they break bread on the 1st day of the week. The book of Revelation talks about the Lord's Day and by then it's the 1st day of the week and so forth.

So I think, the 1st day took over. I think probably in the history of the early church for a while, the church being primarily Jewish celebrated the 1st day of the week in a special way, but also the Sabbath. They continued to be Sabbatarians in that sense.

As the church becomes more and more Gentile in orientation, the Sabbath becomes of lesser importance and the 1st day of the week, the day of the Resurrection becomes the key day. For me the worse day of the year, of the whole universe was the Sabbath day. The day after Good Friday and before Easter was a miserable day. I want to celebrate the Resurrection Day and that's what the early church seems to have wanted to do.

Now how to keep it. You have to realize that there are no laws here. If you look at the statement of faith of our seminary, it was written in a time when people were very strong Sabbatarians. And when I came here I had some problems with that.

"Do you have anything you have questions with?"

I said, "Yes. It's the Sabbath. I don't wash my car. I don't mow my lawn on Sundays or anything like that. It's a church day, but it's a fun day. I have always wanted it to be a fun time for my children. I wanted them to like Sunday. Not hate it."

And when you are in the pastorate, if your children begin to hate Sundays because they don't have a father anymore, you better do something about that. It should be a kind of a special day for them.

Worldly amusements – well I love pro-football on Sundays. Maybe I should just sit and watch it with a Bible open or something like that. You have to play that by ear somewhat.

Ok. Anything else on the covenant – very important?

Student: Based upon the Old Testament - [? - hard to hear] – what you said about that regarding how the blessings [? - hard to hear] In light of that what covenant[? - hard to hear]

Dr. Stein: Are you keeping the covenant?

Student: [? - hard to hear]

Dr. Stein: I don't think what happens when we as Christians sin is that we seek to be resaved over again. When we ask God for forgiveness, it is not that we will be forgiven in the Final Day of Judgment and be saved. That's been done for when I have received Christ. When He forgave me of my sins, He forgave me of my past sins, but all the sins that Bob Stein was going to be associated with the rest of his life. That was taken care of. Therefore I don't ask the Great Judge of Heaven and Earth to forgive me of my sins when I do that, but I ask my Heavenly Father to forgive me so that the relationship we have together will not be stopped and hindered.

Not to be resaved but it is like a son coming to his father and saying, "Dad. I did something wrong. Would you forgive me? - To restore that relationship. It is not looking to be readopted or something like that. Or be received back into the family.

So the fellowship you have with the Lord is so special, that you don't want anything to stand in the way of that. And if you do sin, you ask God to forgive you of that so that relationship can continue. But it hasn't to do with a salvific – its not a salvific kind of experience.

Think of it as – you can't divide God into parts but there is a sense in which the eternal judge of Heaven and earth forgave me of my sin once and for all. Now that He is my heavenly Father, I ask Him to forgive me when I offended Him and I have not been a good son and have shamed him.

Student: Even the blessings are not earned or merited for they are offered as rewards for obedience and not as pay for [? - hard to hear] I understand what you are saying there.

Dr. Stein: The idea of rewards and so forth[? - hard to hear]

Student: Yes.

Dr. Stein: I don't know how it works out in the end time. I don't think that there are layers of mansions and different suburbs and some of you are going to live out in nice suburbs and I am going to live out in a slum area of Heaven or something like that where the gold streets are a little more beat up than where you are where they are polished regularly or something like.

I think mostly ... see ... the well done, good and faithful servant – at that point will I be embarrassed – at that point will I hear “Well done. Good and faithful servant”? That that I am concerned about. Not what happens after that.

It is so hard to envision something that is so much unlike anything that I have experienced in this life. Do you sleep in heaven? There is no way you could imagine what it will be like. All I know is that any of the longings of my heart will be met in some way or the other.

Can I go skiing in Heaven? My guess is if the good Lord thought that would make me happy -Yeah.

End of Lecture 34

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Genre of Psalms](#)

All right, we want to look at the Psalms. The book of Psalms is the largest book in the Bible. And it consists of 5 parts. There are 5 books actually. And each of those books or sections ends with a doxology.

Now, the 1st set of Psalms, book 1 ends at Psalm 41, and then the last verse that concludes that 1st book, ends:

“Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen”

The 2nd book consists of Psalms 42 to 72 and that ends with the doxology:

“Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel who alone does wondrous things. Blessed be His glorious name forever. May His glory fill the whole earth. Amen and Amen.”

The prayers of David, son of Jesse are ended.

Then you have book 3 and I do not understand why there is a difference in sizes here between them. This is a short one but book 3 is Psalm 73 through 89. 89 ends:

“Blessed be the Lord forever! Amen and Amen”

Book 4, Psalm 90 to 106 and 106 ends with the doxology in verse 48:

“Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting. And all of the people said, ‘Amen. Praise the Lord!’”

The last section, Book 5, Psalm 107 to 150. Actually Psalm 150 is the entire doxology ending:

1 Praise the LORD!
Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty firmament!
2 Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his surpassing greatness!
3 Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!
4 Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
5 Praise him with clanging cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
6 Let everything that breathes praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD!

Now, of these Psalms, the largest number of them, some 73 are attributed to David.

The next largest grouping, 73 are to David, that's about half of all the Psalms.

Twelve are to Asaph. And 11 to the sons of Korah. So nearly a 100 or about 2/3rds of the Psalms are devoted to David, Asaph or the Sons of Korah.

Much of the arrangements of these books, and the editorial work is done by unknown editorialists and somehow we have to have an understanding that in the inspiration of God, this editorial work is also divinely authorized and partly because how they are placed and where they are located helps in the interpretation of the Psalms, so the editors of these also have to be inspired in how they organize the Psalms in this particular way.

Now, there are a lot of different kinds of Psalms. They are not all the same. But there are different kinds. Let us look at some of them.

Psalm 84

1 How lovely is your dwelling place,
O LORD of hosts!
2 My soul longs, indeed it faints
for the courts of the LORD;
my heart and my flesh sing for joy
to the living God.
3 Even the sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may lay her young,
at your altars, O LORD of hosts,
my King and my God.
4 Happy are those who live in your house,

ever singing your praise.

5 Happy are those whose strength is in you,
in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

6 As they go through the valley of Baca
they make it a place of springs;
the early rain also covers it with pools.

7 They go from strength to strength;
the God of gods will be seen in Zion.

8 O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer;
give ear, O God of Jacob!

9 Behold our shield, O God;
look on the face of your anointed.

10 For a day in your courts is better
than a thousand elsewhere.

I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God
than live in the tents of wickedness.

11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield;
he bestows favor and honor.

No good thing does the LORD withhold
from those who walk uprightly.

12 O LORD of hosts,
happy is everyone who trusts in you.

Now, how many of you like in Psalm 48 have said something like this.

“Let Louisville be glad.

Let the towns of Kentucky rejoice because of your judgments.

Walk around Louisville

Go all around it.

Count its towers.

Consider well its ramparts.

Go through its citadels

That you may tell the next generation that this is God.

Our God forever and ever

He will be your guide forever”

When you put any other city in there, it kind of looks dumb. Right?

Why is this? Why do we have this Psalms of Zion?

When you think of Zion, God has chosen to set His name in that city. And so when you think of the glory of Zion, you are thinking of the glory of God. And you rejoice because in some way God has identified with the city and you just want to be near it. You want to be in it. You want to partake of it. Psalms of Zion.

Its very special, now of course you can go and still think of Zion in idle [?] and nothing can ever happen to it. And now you go to the time of the Prophets and Zion is going to be destroyed and plowed up like a field because of the disobedience of the people. But in the midst of all this you have Jeremiah warning the people of Zion, uh ... going to be destroyed and the Priests are quoting these Psalms.

This is God's city. God is not going to let this happen. What kind of a God is it that would let this happen to this city. And Jeremiah is saying "Don't trust in this foolishness here." So its not an end in itself but there is a sense in which it is very special.

There are Royal Psalms. And again, you have here Psalms that sing about the king.

Psalms 21 for instance.

When I talked about the Psalms of Zion, let me give you some of them. There is also 46, 76, 87, and 122.

Now the Royal Psalms ... I am picking out the most clear ones. are Psalm 21:

1 In your strength the king rejoices, O LORD,
and in your help how greatly he exults!
2 You have given him his heart's desire,
and have not withheld the request of his lips.
3 For you meet him with rich blessings;
you set a crown of fine gold on his head.
4 He asked you for life; you gave it to him —
length of days forever and ever.
5 His glory is great through your help;
splendor and majesty you bestow on him.
6 You bestow on him blessings forever;
you make him glad with the joy of your presence.
7 For the king trusts in the LORD,
and through the steadfast love of the Most High he shall
not be moved.
8 Your hand will find out all your enemies;
your right hand will find out those who hate you.
9 You will make them like a fiery furnace
when you appear.
The LORD will swallow them up in his wrath,
and fire will consume them.
10 You will destroy their offspring from the earth,
and their children from among humankind.
11 If they plan evil against you,
if they devise mischief, they will not succeed.
12 For you will put them to flight;
you will aim at their faces with your bows.

13 Be exalted, O LORD, in your strength!
We will sing and praise your power.

Psalm 2 as well:

1 Why do the nations conspire,
and the peoples plot in vain?
2 The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the LORD and his anointed, saying,
3 "Let us burst their bonds asunder,
and cast their cords from us."
4 He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the LORD has them in derision.
5 Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,
6 "I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill."
7 I will tell of the decree of the LORD:
He said to me, "You are my son;
today I have begotten you.
8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.
9 You shall break them with a rod of iron,
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."
10 Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.
11 Serve the LORD with fear,
with trembling 12 kiss his feet,
or he will be angry, and you will perish in the way;
for his wrath is quickly kindled.
Happy are all who take refuge in him.

Now, Psalm 2, like Psalm 21, let me give you some others. Psalm 2, Psalm 18, Psalm 20 and 21, Psalm 45, 72, 89, 101, 132, 144

A Psalm like Psalm 2. Lots of people read this like it's a prophetic Psalm about Jesus. My understanding is that, this is a Psalm about the king of Israel. God's anointed. David's successor. This is the anointed of the Lord and the people sing praises to God's anointed king over them. And they rejoice over them.

Now in light of the fact that here is a king who has been anointed of the Lord to rule His people, aren't there implications that whatever is true of this king would even be more true of the King of kings who is the Lord's anointed who will rule His people. So that I think this Psalm was used of kings and I think it becomes even more appropriate for the greatest of the kings, the Son of God, and therefore by implication, the New Testament

writers see this psalm as referring above all to the greatest of the Songs of David, the Lord Jesus.

But these are royal psalms that were sung. And again, you have the same thing. Even as the people rejoiced in the city of David being representative of God's presence, so they also rejoiced in the king, who God had set upon the throne and was the Son of David, whom God chose to lead the people.

So there was a sense of great joy and delight and rejoicing in the royal psalms over the king God had given to lead them and direct them. You find this at times with rulers where people rejoice in the ruler that God has set over and who is leading them in a great direction, one way or the other.

But as I said, by implication, what is true of this king is even more true of the greatest of the David's successors - the one born of the virgin Mary.

There are hymns to God. Let me give you uh... 19, 24, 29, 47, 95-100, and 104.

Let me just read to you one of these. Psalm 100

1 Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth.
2 Worship the LORD with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.
3 Know that the LORD is God.
It is he that made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise.
Give thanks to him, bless his name.
5 For the LORD is good;
his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.

There are Wisdom Psalms. Psalm 1, 37, 49, 73, 112, 127 and 28. 133. Psalm 127.

1 Unless the LORD builds the house,
those who build it labor in vain.
Unless the LORD guards the city,
the guard keeps watch in vain.
2 It is in vain that you rise up early
and go late to rest,
eating the bread of anxious toil;
for he gives sleep to his beloved.
3 Sons are indeed a heritage from the LORD,
the fruit of the womb a reward.

4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
are the sons of one's youth.
5 Happy is the man who has
his quiver full of them.
He shall not be put to shame
when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

The Penitential Psalms are really the difficult ones. Psalm 6, Psalm 32, Psalm 38, Psalm 51, Psalm 102 and Psalm 130.

The penitential Psalms where you are asking God for forgiveness and are in penitence for your sin.

1 Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.
2 Happy are those to whom the LORD imputes no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.
3 While I kept silence, my body wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.
5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not hide my iniquity;
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"
and you forgave the guilt of my sin.
6 Therefore let all who are faithful
offer prayer to you;
at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters
shall not reach them.
7 You are a hiding place for me;
you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with glad cries of deliverance.
8 I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.
9 Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding,
whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle,
else it will not stay near you.
10 Many are the torments of the wicked,
but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the LORD.
11 Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, O righteous,
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

Think of all those who have read this psalm after a period of falling into sin, where their lives were miserable, day and night God's hand was heavy upon them. Their bodies seemed to be wasting away. And they acknowledged their sin and they came and found forgiveness.

This psalm is a delightful one for that situation.

The most difficult of all the Psalms – the imprecatory Psalms. Psalm 35, Psalm 58, Psalm 69, Psalm 83, Psalm 109 and Psalm 137.

I think I will just read Psalm 137. Its uh... pretty self-evident.

1 By the rivers of Babylon —
there we sat down and there we wept
when we remembered Zion.

{ Dr. Stein [interjects]: The exiles. Jerusalem has been destroyed and the exiles have been taken away for 100s of 100s of miles away into Babylon. }

2 On the willows there
we hung up our harps.
3 For there our captors
asked us for songs,
and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying,
"Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"
4 How could we sing the LORD's song
in a foreign land?
5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither!
6 Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth,
if I do not remember you,
if I do not set Jerusalem
above my highest joy.
7 Remember, O LORD, against the Edomites
the day of Jerusalem's fall,
how they said, "Tear it down! Tear it down!
Down to its foundations!"
8 O daughter Babylon, you devastator!
Happy shall they be who pay you back
what you have done to us!
9 Happy shall they be who take your little ones
and dash them against the rock!

Not the kind of psalm you usually read for Scripture reading in church. What you have to remember – what is being described here is not that unusual. This is what happened when you overthrew a dynasty. The offspring were all killed so that the dynasty would end and it could not continue.

And what the Psalmist is doing, is asking not for personal vengeance, but that God's justice would be done.

Those who had destroyed the city. Those who had been so brutal. He is asking that God's justice come upon them. And not only that their king and leadership come to an end, but also that the children who would be their successors will be coming to an end as well.

And I tell you that in the texts of one of the portraits – there are carvings in the wall, where an ancient king is sitting on his throne where the captives are coming and they are all kneeling before the king and he is... they are in submission because his foot is upon their heads.

But its not his own foot. On his lap is this little boy, and this little boy's feet are on those people. So if you are going to get rid of this evil dynasty you can't stop with the king. It also extends to the boy. And so this is what he is asking for. This evil rule of Babylon and others should come to an end.

It is not the way we usually think. We should be forgiving and kind and yet sometimes I wonder if we also have a sense of God's justice and realize that if you do honor God, you want His justice to be manifested in the world.

And if you love God's glory and honor, then there is a sense in which you have to want that righteousness will take place and righteousness requires evils like this one to be punished.

So many of us have been removed from this kind of brutality. I think you have to start thinking of, when ... if you had been Jewish and during World War II, you experienced the holocaust, and you saw your family, you saw your younger brother, your sister get brutally killed and you are the only survivor left.

Isn't there a sense in which you say, "This is evil. God has to - if He is God bring judgment upon it"? And there is a sense in which you are praying that God's justice would come and evil would be punished.

Now sometimes it slips into personal vengeance and I know that that is not right. But I think that there are also times when you really are asking that God will bring this evil to an end and if its going to come to an end, then those who are the perpetrators of evil will be brought to justice in some way. Do you have a question about that?

Audience: We are always taught that an eye for an eye doesn't work anymore [hard to hear] what makes it hard ...?

In 1994, there was the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp in Poland. And at that celebration, there were a lot people present and a Jewish Rabbi was asked to pray and he prayed, this prayer – a facsimile of it:

"Oh God we know that you are a God of great love and compassion and you delight in forgiveness but we here pray that you will never forgive those people who did these things."

Some Christians say “Boy! That’s not a very compassionate prayer.” But before you do that, ask yourself, how many of your people died at this camp? How many of your relatives suffered here? And when you see the brutality and the evil, that the Nazi’s performed, you just have to say that God’s justice will punish these. I think my personal willingness to forgive must be understood as being separate from God’s holiness as the supreme Judge, do justice, which means he must punish.

Sometimes I think we get so involved in our personal willingness and relationship to what should happen here and lose sight of what God as the Judge of Heaven and Earth carrying out what is right will bring him honor and I think that’s what some of these imprecatory psalms are doing.

Again there is a difference between you and i in relationship to others. And the supreme judge of Heaven and earth and His justice. And even here there is only one way that God can do that and that is that this evil has to be crushed and dealt with. But he can be merciful because He punishes Jesus on our behalf.

Audience: Should we pray for the salvation of those that ??? [inaudible]

Dr. Stein: Oh yeah. I have no problem with that. I have no problem. I think civil law and order of law on the planet has to. The people who do those things must be punished. But I can still pray that God and His mercy will reach these people so that they may be forgiven. That doesn’t mean that we can just neglect what they have done and just write it off. It doesn’t have to be that.

But they are hard – the Imprecatory Psalms. There are some Praise psalms. Let me just give you some hymns and then we will look at some Lament Psalms.

Praise Psalms: Psalm 106, 111, 13. There is one I’d like us to look at quickly and that is Psalm 146.

Psalm 146 which is a Praise Psalm. Notice that the beginning and the end are the same and that forms what we call an inclusio. The Psalm begins

1 Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD, O my soul!

And it ends: “Praise the Lord.”

Now in between you have various descriptions of various things to be done.

2 I will praise the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my God all my life long.
3 Do not put your trust in princes,
in mortals, ...

And so forth.

5 Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD their God,

There are ... well let me see.

I have some 34 Praise Psalms. Some of them are Praise psalms for individuals where individuals praise God. Individuals praise psalms - let me give them to you and you just write them down, I am not going to ask you a question on it. 8, 18, 30, 32-34, 40, 66, 75, 81, 92, 103-4, 106, 108, 111-13, 116, 118, 135, 138, 145-50.

Now there are group praise psalms which envision the community doing this. Psalm 65, 67, 107, 114, 117, 124, 136.

Finally lets look at what we call Lament Psalms. The Lament Psalm has a particular kind of form. There are five aspects of it. You have the beginning of a lament psalm, where you have been addressed to God. This is followed by the lament or description of the problem. Then you have a prayer for help. A confession of confidence. Are you sure that God will do this and carry it out? And then you have a vow or confession of praise of some sort.

Best way of looking at three Psalms that are essentially Lament Psalms. Psalm 13:1. The address to God is 13:1a:

1 How long, O LORD?

Then the rest of 1 and 2 is the lament or description of need.

Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

2 How long must I bear pain in my soul,
and have sorrow in my heart all day long?

How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

And then in verses 3 and 4 you have a prayer for help.

3 Consider and answer me, O LORD my God!

Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,

4 and my enemy will say, "I have prevailed";
my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.

5 is the confession of confidence.

5 But I trusted in your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.

Then you have the vow or confession of praise.

6 I will sing to the LORD,
because he has dealt bountifully with me.

Notice that the confession of praise in v. 6 is a prophetic kind of profession. He is not yet been delivered. But he is confident and he says, "I will sing to the Lord because he has dealt bountifully". Already I know He has heard my prayer and He has dealt with me according to my request.

Psalm 71 – Another Lament Psalm.

Verse 1 – the address to God.

1 O God, why do you cast us off forever?

Then you have in verses 1-11, the lament of the description of the

1 In you, O LORD, I take refuge;
let me never be put to shame.

2 In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me;
incline your ear to me and save me.

3 Be to me a rock of refuge,
a strong fortress, to save me,
for you are my rock and my fortress.

4 Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked,
from the grasp of the unjust and cruel.

5 For you, O Lord, are my hope,
my trust, O LORD, from my youth.

6 Upon you I have leaned from my birth;
it was you who took me from my mother's womb.
My praise is continually of you.

7 I have been like a portent to many,
but you are my strong refuge.

8 My mouth is filled with your praise,
and with your glory all day long.

9 Do not cast me off in the time of old age;
do not forsake me when my strength is spent.

10 For my enemies speak concerning me,
and those who watch for my life consult together.

11 They say, "Pursue and seize that person
whom God has forsaken,
for there is no one to deliver."

Let us jump to v. 18 to see the prayer for help. 18-23

17 O God, from my youth you have taught me,
and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.

18 So even to old age and gray hairs,

O God, do not forsake me,
until I proclaim your might
to all the generations to come.
Your power 19 and your righteousness, O God,
reach the high heavens.
You who have done great things,
O God, who is like you?
20 You who have made me see many troubles and calamities
will revive me again;
from the depths of the earth
you will bring me up again.
21 You will increase my honor,
and comfort me once again.
22 I will also praise you with the harp
for your faithfulness, O my God;
I will sing praises to you with the lyre,
O Holy One of Israel.
23 My lips will shout for joy

And then 12 through 17 is this confidence

12 O God, do not be far from me;
O my God, make haste to help me!
13 Let my accusers be put to shame and consumed;

And so forth and so on. Now one other one which is shorter. Lets look at that one. And then we will talk about these kinds of Psalms in general.

Psalm 142.

1 With my voice I cry to the LORD;

Ok, the address to God. And then the rest of the verses 1- 4, the lament or description.

with my voice I make supplication to the LORD.

2 I pour out my complaint before him;
I tell my trouble before him.

3 When my spirit is faint,
you know my way.
In the path where I walk
they have hidden a trap for me.

4 Look on my right hand and see —
there is no one who takes notice of me;
no refuge remains to me;
no one cares for me.

Then 5a and 6.

5 I cry to you, O LORD;

Verse 6

6 Give heed to my cry,
for I am brought very low.

Then the confession of confidence. The rest of verse 5 and we jump.

5b

I say, "You are my refuge,
my portion in the land of the living."

Then verse 7

7 Bring me out of prison,
so that I may give thanks to your name.
The righteous will surround me,
for you will deal bountifully with me.

And the confession of praise is the 1st part of 7a and b.

7 Bring me out of prison,
so that I may give thanks to your name.

You notice that they are not always perfect. Sometimes this is the content. But the order is not always necessarily the same.

Now let me just make a comment about the number of Psalms that are lament psalms. There are 48 lament psalms out of a 150. Almost 1/3 of all the Psalms are Lament Psalms. Now let's stop here and think.

What would happen in your church if one of the deacons prayed on Sunday, in the Sunday morning service and he started "O Lord, How long will you forget us? How long will you be far away from us? Have you forgotten us? We suffer and no one cares. We see tragedy. Have you turned away from us?"

If you did a lament prayer, what would the people of the congregation think?

He is not going to pray in our church? We don't want that stuff here? Right? When you think of the choruses. I had come across a lament chorus, but I think it was sung once or so and they dumped it or something like that, because we don't like Lament Psalms, unless you are going through the Valley of the Shadow. Then you like them.

In our worship, there doesn't seem to be any room for this. I remember teaching at my home church in Minnesota, when we lived up there. I taught on the Lament Psalms and the pastor said, "This Sunday is..." I don't know what anniversary it was of the, Roe v. Wade decision. Would you lead us in a lament?" And I said, "You know. That would be a great idea, but I am committed. I am not going to be here next Sunday."

But, are there times, when we need as a congregation to lament and experience this. I think that we just don't allow room for this. And the result is that when people do go through a period like this, they have nowhere to turn. They do not know. They think that there is something wrong with them. They think. I must be a terrible Christian because I am going through this experience. And if I really were a good Christian, I would be praising the Lord, singing one of the praise Psalms and so forth.

The Psalmist, who wasn't too undevout. [inaudible?] The Psalms collection, almost a 1/3rd of them are Lament Psalms. And I think that the reason for that is that they are a part of life. I think that people go through these as believers.

And if you have never gone through that and if you never will, you are blessed. The fact is that the vast majority of us are going to go through it. And when we go through it, where do we go? I want to tell you, there is a place to go and its called the Psalms.

And the Psalmist says, "I have gone through that. Why don't you get some comfort in knowing that some of us have experienced this. We know what you have gone through. I give you these Lament Psalms as a gift.

To realize that there are times where people go through the Valley of the Shadow. They wonder where God is. There are times when even the most devout pray at Gethsemane, "If there is another way, let it come."

I hope you have room in your faith for mourning and sorry and crying out to God, for you see, if you can't cry to god in you need where do you go? The is no left. And if you feel you have to act out some relationship to god when you are really hurting, then you need to be pitied

The Psalmist – he doesn't come in despair, he comes in great need and anguish, but he comes in hope. Notice how each of the lament Psalms ends.

There was a time that Critical scholars thought that all of these endings, where you have this vow of confession of praise, were later added by some editorialist to make them "fit nicely". Then they realized "no they were there from the beginning". The Psalmist pours out his heart, but he knows he is going to end there, because he comes to God in hope.

And its not despair, but in confusion and need, questioning where God is, but he is confident nonetheless. God is going to see him through this. And thats the greatness I think of the Lament Psalms. Teach your people the Lament Psalms. You don't preach them every Sunday, but you have to have them know, when the time comes, where can

they go, and you say, “Why don’t you go to David? Go to the Lament Psalms. You can identify with them.”

People find great comfort with the Psalms. They should be part of our religious faith. Alright. Comments, questions? On the Lament Psalms?

Question from audience: Inaudible.

I think I list them in the text. All 48 of them or something like that. My general understanding without getting into specifics, would be, I think Jesus knows the Psalms and He identifies Himself with the Psalmist. He identifies Himself as the Lord’s anointed with the Psalmist as well and therefore He prays and says this is true of me as well.

I don’t think it was a Psalm that never was applicable to anybody until Jesus. I think it was applicable to David, and to his successors, and it was above all applicable to the greatest of David’s successors and David’s Lord.

Question from audience: Inaudible.

Don’t know exactly how to work some of those out. You have to realize that some of the language there which may be literal for Jesus may be metaphorical for someone before Him. I just don’t think that those Psalms are there and had no relevance for anyone for a 1,000 years until Jesus comes and that people knew that one day this would refer to the messiah. Only Him but not to the present king. I think that they would see that this is applicable to the present leaders in general.

End of Lecture 35

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Hermeneutics and the Canon of Scripture \(Part 1\)](#)

I want to begin tonight by talking about the Canon of Scripture. We started that last session, we had together. And then after that we will talk about an overview of the class and of the exam that will be coming.

The handout on the Canon of Scripture – there were extras around. They seem to have disappeared. There is still one or two there if you need them.

We talked about how at the time of Jesus, the Old Testament was pretty much defined – understood as consisting of the Law, the Prophets and the Writings, with subdivisions of the Law, subdivisions of the Prophets – the former and the latter Prophets – and the latter Prophets also having the Major and the Minor prophets.

We also talked about the various numbering of the Old Testament – it depends on how you number them. For instance we number each individual book and so we get 39, but for Jews in the time of Jesus the Minor Prophets talked about as a book in general and therefore you have 12 books that are not thought of as individual book but as one book and already you have 11 less than in our Canon.

We talked about those books not found in the Protestant Bible but in the Catholic Bible – the books of the Apocrypha. And we noted that in 1546, they became a part of the Roman Catholic clearly defined scriptures and Protestants in general have seen them as not being scripture because they are not included in the Jewish Old Testament Canon.

We want to begin tonight's books as part of their scriptures. The New Testament never quotes any part of them as Scriptures. No book in the Apocrypha is ever quoted and introduced by "As it is written" or "Scripture says." They may quote them the Apocrypha but they can quote Greek poets, but they don't quote them as Scripture so the New Testament writers do not seem to think of them as being part of the Canon of Scripture .

Then we also pointed out that there is a difference in quality between them. Great to read. It teaches us much about the religion of Jesus' day, about Jewish piety – I love the book of Tobit which I told you about, but there are things in it . . . magic and wizardry. . . kinds of things that are different and sometimes just plain statements of facts that are in error.

So by the time of Jesus' the Canon of Scripture was established. There is later a Council of Jamnia in AD 90 and some people have sought to argue that it is at that point that the Old Testament canon was established and made clear to the Jewish people, but that is an incorrect understanding of what happened.

What happened at Jamnia was not a coming together as to which books should be included in the Canon of Scripture, but questions about specific books in that Canon of Scripture such as the book of Esther in which the name of God is not mentioned. Then we talked about the origin of the New Testament Canon, pointing out that the Church always had a Bible, from the Day of Pentecost they had a Bible – the Old Testament.

But they also had in addition to that the Jesus Traditions. And Jesus' words, His deeds were passed on and circulated with great care. Later inscripturated in 4 Gospels and becomes part of the written Canon of the New Testament, but they always had that as part of their authoritative teaching.

In the Gospels course that period which we call the period of Oral Tradition or which Form Criticism deals with after the death and resurrection of Jesus, that period between that event and the writing of the Gospel and the New Testament – the Oral Period is discussed in your New Testament Introduction I course and if you haven't had that it will be forthcoming.

We then talked about the writing of the New Testament books that Paul's letters were written 50, 55, 60, 65 – the Gospels, Mark, I understand as being the earliest, 65 to 70 as tradition says, shortly after Peter's death. Matthew and Luke using Mark after that and John according to Tradition very late as he is an old man.

James then would have been written by before 62.

It claims to be written by a James – the only James that was famous enough to simply talk about himself being named James would be the brother of our Lord and he was the leader of the church in Jerusalem.

Hebrews probably before AD 70 because of the lack of any mention of the temple's destruction. Now the rest of the New Testament no later ... in my understanding ... through 95 although some critical reconstructions would have books like 2 Peter very late, maybe 135 to 50.

We then come up to the rise of the Canon and I mentioned several of the factors – not that caused people to think that there was a Canon of Scripture but to become concerned about the delineation of the Canon of Scripture. One was the rise of the heresy of Marcion. 140 AD. He is a Gnostic, a Christian heretic, and he has a Bible consisting of the Gospel of Luke and 10 letters of Paul and this is being waved around as their Bible.

Well if they have this Bible, then it makes you start thinking “Well. What is our Bible? How is it different?” That no doubt caused people to think about the question of the Canon and of Scripture.

The discovery of a new form of writing material called the Codex in which you could put a great deal more material than in a simple scroll. Technically you could make the scroll as big as you wanted if you had a derech (?) to turn the thing, but practically a scroll was from 6 – 20 feet.

But once you had a codex form you could include many other things. If you value Matthew, Mark, Luke or John, as the word of God, you want to make sure that you do not put anything next to it that is not of the same quality and so what books belong together in the codex causes the church to wrestle with that problem as to which books are canonical.

And then we talked about the persecution of the church and the desire of opponents of the church to destroy the sacred writings of the church. And now the question comes up as to which book are you willing to die to save?

I kind of ended it at that point where we will begin.

Any questions up to this time?

Alright well let us look at a couple of examples of material in the New Testament itself which indicates the passing on of the traditions and the beginning germ form of a canon of Scripture. In the book of Colossians, in Colossians 4, Paul writes to the church, beginning at verse 14, makes the comment, “Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you, Give my Greetings to the Brethren at Laodicea and to Nympha and the church in her house.”

Then he says “And when this letter has been read among you, have it read also in the Church of the Laodiceans. And see that you read also the letter from Laodicea.”

Well that indicates that already in the ministry of Paul, during his life and ministry, his letters were being exchanged in churches and that is very important because now we don't wait until a century later but already during the lifetime of Paul, the churches are beginning to collect his letters.

For instance, if you were from Laodicea and you were on a business trip and you visited Corinth and you met with the brethren in Corinth and they were reading from Paul's letter to the Corinthians, you have never heard of this letter and you want this letter from the apostle of JC, Paul for your church back in Laodicea. And when somebody from Corinth found out that there was a copy of a letter written to the church at Colossae, they would want a copy of the Colossian letter, so churches now begin to collect the letters of Paul.

You have also in 1st Thessalonians 5:27, another such statement. Paul writes, “I adjure you by the Lord that this letter be read to all the Brethren.”

So here the brethren are to all hear the letter be read. And I can't imagine that this means only the brethren in Thessalonika, but also the brethren in nearby Philippi or something of that nature. So here you have something of the idea – the letters of Paul being read among various churches not just to the church that it was originally written to.

Now in 2 Peter 3:16, we have a very important statement, a very much debated and argued statement. Beginning at v. 14, Peter writes... “

“Therefore beloved. Since you wait for these be zealous to be found by Him without spot or blemish and at peace and count the forbearance of our Lord for our salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, speaking as he does in all his letters.”

Is the knowledge of Paul's letters – not just a single letter or so.

“There are some things in them - in Paul's letters - that are hard to understand ...”

It's encouraging when an inspired writer of Scripture says, “I don't get some of these things that Paul says. It makes me feel not so dumb after all.

“There are some things in his letters that are hard to understand which the ignorant and the unstable twist to their own destruction as they do the other Scriptures.”

Now in the Canon of the New Testament, this is the first and only reference to a writing of the New Testament being specifically being referred to as Scriptures. Paul’s letters are understood as Scriptures.

Now, that raises all sorts of problems with regards to a more radical approach to the New Testament. If this is so, well this must mean that 2 Peter has to be a very late letter. It would have to be a late letter so that Paul’s letters could be gathered around. That they have begun to be esteemed highly no doubt after his death they have become revered. And given a few decades or given say a century or so then they are begun to be understood as Scripture. And now we are dealing with 2 Peter being very late, written maybe around 150 or something like that.

There are problems with regard to 2 Peter that you need to be aware of in the New Testament that will be discussed for you, but as it stands this is the clearest reference to Paul’s writings as Scripture within the text of the New Testament itself.

Now there is another reference that is important and that is found in 1 Timothy 5:18. Beginning at verse 17:

“Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,’ and, ‘The laborer deserves his wages.’”

Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain,’

Now that is a reference found where in your footnoted Bible? Deuteronomy 25. Fine. No problem. Scripture says this. Ok. But now the next statement says, “The laborer deserves his wages.” You have a little reference there.

Well. It comes from both Matthew 10:10 and Luke 10:14. And actually Matthew 10:10 has “the laborer deserves his food”, but Luke has, “the laborer deserves his wages”.

Now here is the question. Is this a reference then in 1 Timothy to the written Gospel of Luke?

Could be. Must it be? What other possibilities are there?

Oral Tradition. Right. Remember when Paul says. “Now say I, yet not I, but the Lord” and then he quotes Jesus’ saying on divorce. Well this is written in 50. And Jesus’ teaching on divorce if it is written in the Gospel then ... not too many of our people date any of our Gospels at 50. So it could very easily be an oral tradition.

There is an Oral Tradition for instance in Acts that has to be an Oral Tradition.
“Remembering the words of our Lord who said ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’ I think it is Acts 20:35, but I wouldn’t be sure of it.

There is no quotation of Jesus like that in any of our Gospels. It must be an oral tradition that came down from the Lord and that Paul is quoting.

Is this what we have here, not only that it is being quoted by Paul, but also later on this very quotation is written down in the Scriptural accounts, whereas the one in Acts 20:35, again if that’s the right reference, isn’t.

I don’t think its possible to be dogmatic and say “this proves that Luke was written by the time Paul wrote this.” I think it means that, the author of 1st Timothy, Paul in my understanding, is quoting a saying of Jesus that he knew. But.

That it comes from the Lord, indicates that it is Scriptural. It has the authority of Scripture. Just like the Old Testament. So that its an early indication that Jesus’ words are equated along with the Old Testament, as Scripture, but not necessarily that the written Gospel is so quoted because we don’t know if this is being quoted from a written Gospel.

Question: [inaudible]

Even those who ask for an early dating of Luke, right around 62 or 63, that’s kind of tight here too. Its really hard to fit it into a timeframe before Paul wrote this letter. Now that doesn’t mean that that is the final factor. I think we have to say, there are oral traditions and we have places where they quote oral traditions, like when Paul quotes Jesus’ saying on divorce, I am sure that He is not getting that from Matthew or Luke, because now you have to have before 50.

And that becomes very very early. Especially since the earliest dating of Acts could possibly be around 63 and Luke seems to have been written fairly close to that time not a decade or so before.

I think it does show however that the Jesus traditions are understood as part of the Canon of Scripture. That its canonical material. What Jesus said is like the Old Testament, its Scripture. It’s the Word of God for the early church.

Now beginning in 96 and following we have some of the writings of the early church Fathers. In 1st Clement written in 96 – most people are pretty certain of the dating – he refers to the books of Romans, 1 Corinthians, Hebrews, probably also Luke and Acts.

He is the leader of the church as Rome, and it seems quite clear that the Roman library so to speak, in their church, among the scrolls that they held, as part of their Scriptural setting, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Hebrews, probably Luke and Acts are also included. That doesn’t mean that its only those. These are the ones that he clearly quotes and refers to. There maybe more. There maybe more. He just doesn’t quote them specifically.

In the Didache which was written sometime between 75 and 125 - that's a very difficult one to date. In these references in 8:2, 15:3 and 15:4, there are several possible references to the various Gospels. Papius around 135 quotes:

Do I have "2 maybe 3 gospels down printed out?" "3 maybe 4" "Change it to 2 maybe 3"

Papius quotes 2 maybe 3 Gospels. What he quotes is found in Eusebius and let me read the passage to you.

"And the presbyter – one of the people that he knew – used to say this. Mark became Peter's interpreter and wrote accurately all that he remembered, not indeed in order of the things said or done by the Lord. For he had not heard the Lord nor had he followed Him, but later on as I said followed Peter. He used to give teaching as necessity demanded but not making as it were an arrangement of the Lord's oracles so that Mark did nothing wrong in thus writing down single points as he remembered them. For to one thing he gave attention, to leave out nothing of what he had heard and make no false statements in them."

This is related by Papius about Mark and about Matthew, this was said, "Matthew collected the oracles in the Hebrew language and each interpreted them as best as he could."

So here we have references to Mark and Matthew for sure there may be another reference but that's only a possibility.

Papius wrote 6 volumes which were commentaries on the Gospels. Only one we know of that we have some fragments of. But if you write a commentary on a Gospel does that suggest that you think it is Scriptural? That its part of the Canon of Scripture?

Probably.

Marcion – the heretic we talked about – had his Canon of Scripture by about 140. That included Luke and 10 Pauline letters. So now you have by the middle of the 1st century, a Bible beginning to develop much like ours.

In the epistle of Barnabas written around 70 to 150 ... again, the dating is difficult. He quotes Matthew 22:14 and he quotes it as if it was Scripture. Let me read it to you.

"Moreover consider this as well, my brothers, when you see that after such extraordinary signs and wonders were done in Israel, even then they were abandoned. Let us be in guard, lest we too should be found as it is written, "Many are called, but few are chosen."

"Many are called, but few are chosen" comes from Matthew 22:14 and it is introduced by "As it is written" so it is clear that Barnabas here sees Matthew's Gospel as Scripture. In 2nd Clement written about 100 – 150 with 150 pretty much being the end dating. 2nd Clement writes the following:

“And another Scripture says, ‘I have not come to call the righteous but sinners.’” That comes from Matthew 9:13 and it is specifically referred to as Scripture here. So that – by the early beginnings of the 2nd Century, the Gospels are quite freely being referred to as Scripture as such.

Tatian wrote a work, the Diatesseron. Dia is Greek for “through” and tesseron is Greek for “four”. It is “through the four Gospels”.

22:00???

It is a harmony in which what he did – apparently he had four accounts of the feeding of the 5,000. You could save a lot of space if you could eliminate 3 of them and combine all the information you have in all four together. And you could do the same with all the other stories.

Now the fact that he does that, indicates that by 170, the church has four Gospels. These are the only four that he is interested in doing this to. And the fact that he puts this together, it seems quite clear that he seems the 4 gospels as Scripture and seems to work and make a continuous story of them.

At the end of the 2nd century, a manuscript fragment which has been called the Muratorian canon was written. Muratori was a cardinal in the Roman Catholic Church. In 1740, 1500 years later, he found the diary of an 8th century monk, a kind of scrapbook of things, and as he was leafing through it, and reading it, he found this scrap of paper which lists the books of the Bible that were understood as being Scripture.

And this scrap has been called the Muratorian Canon. That lists the books that Muratori discovered in 1740. He is not the one that originates it. He just gets the name for finding it. The fragment begins this way. I will read parts of it. I won’t read all of it. The document has lost the first part – the first few parts because it begins,

“The 3rd book of the Gospel according to Luke.”

He had a pretty good idea what was before this. Luke is the 3rd. He must have talked about Matthew and Mark earlier. After the ascension of Christ, Luke the physician whom Paul had taken along with him as a legal expert wrote down in his own name in accordance with Paul opinion. The 4th Gospel is by John, one of the disciples.

“...skipping...”

The Acts of all the apostles have been written in one book addressing the most excellent Theophilus. Luke includes one by one the things that were done in his own presence as he shows plainly by omitting the passion of peter and also Paul’s departure when he was setting off from the scene from Spain.

As for the letters of Paul, first of all he wrote to the Corinthians forbidding schisms and heresies. Then to the Galatians forbidding circumcision. To the Romans he wrote at a greater length about the order of Scripture and also insisting that Christ was their primary theme.

“It is necessary for us to give an argued account of all these, since the blessed apostle Paul himself, following the order of his predecessor John, but not naming him, writes to 7 churches in the following order: First to the Corinthians, second to the Ephesians, third to the Phillipians, fourth to the Colossians, fifth to the Galatians, sixth to the Thessalonians. Seventh to the Romans. Strange Order. But although the message is repeated to the Corinthians and the Thessalonians by way of reproof, yet one church is recognized as diffused throughout all the world. For John also while he writes to 7 churches in the Apocalypse yet speaks to all.

Moreover Paul writes one letter to Philemon, one to Titus, two to Timothy in love and affection. There is said to be another letter in Paul’s name, to the Laodiceans. And another to the Alexandrines. Both forged in accordance with Marcion’s heresy. And many others which cannot be received into the catholic church since it is not fitting that poison should be mixed with honey. But the letter of Jude and the other two subscribed with the name of John are accepted by the catholic church.” “Catholic” means here, universal church, the whole church, not the Roman Catholic church.

Wisdom also, the Wisdom of Solomon, the Apocrypha written by Solomon’s friends in his honor are accepted. The Apocalypse of John we also receive and that of Peter, the apocalypse of Peter, which some of our people will not have to be read in church. But the Shepherd was written by Hermas in the city of Rome quite recently in our own time when his brother Pius had occupied the bishop’s chair of Rome, and therefore it may be read indeed, but it cannot be given out to the people of the church either among the Prophets since their number is complete or among the apostles at the end of time.

But none of the writings of Arsenius or Valentinus or Milteities do we receive at all. So here you have a fragment dating back to the end of the 2nd century and it looks like from that fragment that already the Church has its basic New Testament. You have 4 Gospels. You have Acts. You have Paul’s letters. You have Jude to Johannine Revelation, the Wisdom of Solomon, and the Apocalypse of Peter.

At the same time, one of the more orthodox leaders of the church, a man by the name of Ireneus describes the situation by 200. Here he refers to the homolegoumena, those universally confessed by the church.

Homo1, legoumena confessed, spoken of. The Gospels, Acts, Paul, 1st John, 1st Peter. The Anti-legomena in your notes, sometimes I have made a mistake spelling.

Homolegoumena should be l-o-g-o-umena.
Antilegomena should be l-e-g-o-m.

The Antilegomena – anti – against legomai – to speak – the books that some speak against. It doesn't mean everybody rejects these. It means whereas everybody except the 1st group, universally recognized.

There are some who have problems with these and there are some who speak against them. And they involve James, Jude, 2nd and 3rd John, 2nd Peter, Hebrews and Revelation. And sometimes other books come up, books like the Shepherd of Hermas, the Didache, 1st Clement, the Epistle of Barnabas.

So these books then, by 200, our Bible is very close to what we have. Jude is not that big a deal. You have the Gospels, you have Paul's letters, you have Acts, 1st John, 1st Peter, Hebrews would have been included in Paul's letters at the time and you have a substantial essence of the New Testament.

The clarification of the Canon that develops

Eusebius was a church historian in 325. He was – no – he was not a church historian – he was THE church historian and if you want to know about early people in the church, Eusebius is the person that usually refers to them in some way. And Eusebius, has a section here in which he talks about the Canon of Scripture and I would like to read it for you.

In his book, he wrote The Ecclesiastical History – the history of the Church, book 3, chapter 25. At this point, it seems reasonable to summarize the writings of the New Testament, which have been quoted. In the first place should be put the holy tetrad of the Gospel. Four – holy tetrad. No one would question of course whether it is Matthew, Mark, Luke and Amos or something like that. To them, follows the writing of the Acts of the Apostles. After this should be reckoned, the Epistles of Paul. Following them, the epistle of John, called the first, and in the same way should be recognized the epistle of Peter.

In addition to these should be put if desirable, the revelation of John; the arguments concerning which we will expound at the proper time. These belong to the recognized books, the Homologoumena. Everybody acknowledge these, but John is a little strange role. The revelation of John is a strange role. Of the disputed books, the Antilegomena, which are nevertheless known to most. In other words, some people have reservations about the Antilegomena, but the majority accept these.

Its not like everybody talks about these and reject these. The Antilegomena means the majority accept it, but there are some who have reservations and argue against them. The Homologoumena – everybody accepts them. Period. No one speaks against them. Alright, so now in the disputed books, the Antilegomena, which are nevertheless known to most, are the epistles called of James, that of Jude, the 2nd epistle of Peter, and the 2nd and so called 3rd epistles of John, which may be the so called evangelist or some other with the same name. Alright that's the 2nd category. The majority of those people accept those as canonical scripture.

The 3rd group among the books which are not genuine. These are the Nothas(?) – greek word, must be reckoned the Acts of Paul, the work entitled the Shepherd of Hermas, the Apocalypse of Peter, and in addition to them, the letter called Barnabas, and the so-called teaching of the Apostles - the teaching of the apostle, is another word for Didache. And in addition, as I said, the Revelation of John, if this view prevailed. For as I said, some reject it, but others count it among the recognized ones.

The book of Revelation was a really interesting book. Everybody that has spoken in favor of it or that it was heretical. There was no one in between, that said, I have questions about it. You were not lukewarm about the book of Revelation. You were either hot or cold.

And so it was recognized or it was completely heretical. There was no in between position on the book of Revelation and the reason for that is because of the historical situation. There happens to be in the church beginning in the 3rd century, a group of Montanists and others who became 2nd coming enthusiast types. The world is about to end and they went to all sorts of excesses and their favorite book was the Book of Revelation. So now if you hear, the majority of times you hear the book of revelation preached, its preached by people who are weird, saying sell all you have, get a white robe and meet us on the mountain. The Lord is about to come. You start to shy away from the book of Revelation and that's what happens, so people are hot or cold for it, there is no lukewarm emphasis on it.

Have you ever wondered why when people say “the Lord is about to come” they sell everything and convert it to gold. And gold we take when the Lord comes? And not paperback? I don't know. Its really strange to me. Alright.

End of Lecture 36

Course: [Biblical Hermeneutics](#)

Lecture: [Hermeneutics and the Canon of Scripture \(Part 2\)](#)

So with Eusebius, you have then, the homolegoumena, and the Antilegomena making up our New Testament. The Antilegomena, some have reservations about these, but the majority think it is Scripture.

Later on you start having Jerome, 400 A.D., the greatest biblical scholar of his day. Augustine, the greatest theologian of his day – probably the greatest theologian between Paul and the Reformers. The Church Council of Hippo, of Carthage, all recognizing our 27 books as the canonical.

So that gives you a kind of a development of how the recognition of books of the New Testament take place in the thought of the church. Alright, let us stop here.

Sometimes this is very disturbing to students. On the other hand, though when you think of it, you really wouldn't have expected that they came down as gold tablets and everybody recognized them right away. These are the books of the apostles of Jesus Christ as they were written in various places. As time goes on, they are brought together and the majority part of the New Testament was never questioned in any sense of the word.

Now, let me go on and talk about just some of the factors that are involved in the formation of the Canon.

A major theological issue comes up between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism and it can be summarized in a simple question and how you answer it depends on what perspective you come from.

~ Is the New Testament, an authoritative collection of books or a collection of authoritative books?

Now the way you answer that is extremely important in your understanding of divine authority on all issues. Where now do you think the Roman Catholic view would be?

Authority of collection and the authority comes in the collectors of it who then give their authority, the Church's authority to it. The Reformers argued, "No", the authority of the books comes from God directly and all that we do is to recognize the authority of these books.

So what the church does in not make an authoritative collection, but recognize the authority of certain books and therefore the Church does not pass on authority to the books, they simply recognize these books are authoritative.

The church does not make the books authoritative, but they recognize them as such. Now in the process of recognizing which books were authoritative, there were a number of factors that played a role.

One was apostolic authorship. People said, "Was this book written by an apostle?"

Now when you go through the New Testament, you have – alright – you have Matthew ...

We are talking not about a critical analysis of the New Testament, but the Church's popular understanding of who wrote these books.

Matthew is an apostle.

Mark is not, but Mark is the right hand man of Peter who is an apostle.

Luke is not, but Luke is the right hand man of Paul who is an apostle.
You have John.

Acts goes back to Luke.

Then you have the Pauline letters.

Romans, 1,2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1,2nd Thessalonians, 1,2nd Timothy, Titus, Philemon.

Hebrews tended to be associated as 2nd/3rd Century on, primarily in the Western Church which is Rome in the center, not so much the Eastern church.

Hebrews was associated with Paul, so it comes in on Paul's shirt sleeves.

1st and 2nd Peter, 1st, 2nd and 3rd John, Jude and then Revelation.

So all of them are in some way associated with apostles and this is very influential on the church.

Another factor which leads the church in recognizing which books are authoritative is the continuous usage of these books by the church.

In other words, these books were not Johnny-come-lately's. They were not for instance hot items in one part of the world, like say in Egypt, it was a best seller, but no one was reading it in Macedonia or the like.

But from the beginning these books were always being used by the church. Continuous usage in the church. No Johnny-come-latelys.

One book that was a Johnny-come-lately was the Shepherd of Hermas. It was an apocalyptic book, like Daniel, Revelation, so some people got very very excited by it. It came like a meteor in the sky and it burned out just as quickly but not continuous usage. People didn't get very excited about that as a possibility.

Another factor would be, the unity and agreement with the rest of the Bible. If for instance you know that Paul's letters in the Gospels are authoritative – the Word of God for you – then you are not going to be able to accept a book which you think conflicts those books. So these other books would have to be in harmony with these books of Scripture.

And then finally there is something which - not something provable - but it seems highly likely in my understanding and that is what I would call the Superintendence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church.

Let me just say that – somehow what I have come to believe - that God sent His son into the world to die for the sins of the world. That He raised Him triumphantly from the dead. I just cannot conceive at that point that God in His superintendence of history would say something like "I sure hope somebody will write something."

But in the providence of God, He would guide, so that people would write these things down. And He would inspire them in so doing. What every doctrine of inspiration in someway, I would think, you know, God would agree to look after the record of what happened to His only begotten Son, He would see that these were written down accurately and carefully.

Now once you say that, it doesn't seem to be far to say well I think at that point you would say, "I hope they are not lost." In the superintendence of history, guide that they would be preserved and furthermore that they would be recognized, so that in a general way I think you could say the superintendence of God's spirit in the life of the church would guarantee that the New Testament would be in harmony with God's inscripturated Word.

I don't think I would want to go so far as to say that in His own presence as He shows an infallible – uh – perfect kind of a canonical development but a general development at least I think can be argued in a strong way.

As to the New Testament books themselves, they are not arranged in chronological order. They are arranged in logical order. I mean where would you start except the Gospels? Matthew, Mark and Luke would be brought together because they are look alike Gospels, and John doesn't look like that so it would be the fourth one.

Acts, after you talk about the life of Jesus, you want to say "Well. What about those who were His followers? What did they do? And you have an overall history of the church in the book of Acts.

Also that is the nearest place you can put the two books by the same author, Luke. You don't want to put way way from the book of Luke so Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts.

Then you have Paul's letters. These again are not arranged according to the dates, but if you look at them, what do you notice about Romans and Philemon?

Romans is big. Philemon is small.

1st Corinthians, 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, are big and so what you have is the arrangement according to size primarily. After that if Hebrews is associated with Paul, it would be put near Paul's letters certainly. Then you have what are called the Catholic Epistles.

Again – don't understand Roman Catholic, but catholic in the sense of the universal nature of that Word.

And the books of James to Jude are not written so much to specific churches like Ephesus or Rome or Corinth but to the Church in general. To the universal church. And that's why its called the catholic epistles or the universal epistles.

And then Revelation which brings us to the end of history and is as good a way of ending as you can imagine.

Alright, that gives us kind of an overview of information as an introduction and then we will talk a little about some other questions.

When people talk about the completion of the Canon – you have to be careful about words here. When was the Canon of the New Testament completed?

Yeah. When the last book would have been written . . .
When was it recognized? We talked about universal recognition maybe around 400. But it is completed with the last book.

When you talk about the Bible being our final authority, let me read to you from the Westminster Confession of faith briefly:

“Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testaments, which are these:”

And it lists them all.

“All which are given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.”

“The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the Scripture, and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.”

The Anglican – the Episcopal Church in its articles of religion read somewhat similar but not exactly.

“The Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament . . . “

And then they are listed.

Then he says ...

“And the other books Jerome said the Church reads for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine.”

In other words, they are profitable for reading and it goes a bit further than the Presbyterian Westminster Confession of Faith but you don't get doctrine from it.

And he says,

“Such are the following:”

The Third Book of Esdras

First Esdras or Third Esdras

The Fourth Book of Esdras; Fourth Esdras

The Book of Tobit

The Book of Judith

The rest of the Book of Esther; the additions to the book of Esther

The Book of Wisdom; The Wisdom of Solom

Jesus the Son of Sirach

Ecclesiasticus

Baruch the Prophet

The Song of the Three Children

Susanna

Bel and the Dragon

The Prayer of Manasses

The First Book of Maccabees

The Second Book of Maccabees

Ok. Now. Lets go on to one more comment here.

“The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed depends not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God which is truth itself; the author thereof. And therefore it is to be received as the Word of God.”

In other words, they are not an authorized collection but a collection of authorized books of authority that comes from God Himself.

Now when we talk about the Bible being inspired, infallible, inerrant – that raises a question. What exactly do we mean by that?

The 66 books. What do you mean by those 66 books?

When you talk about the Bible being without error - are you talking about the English translation?

Are you talking about the books they were thinking of in the fourth century?

Well. I think for the most part, they are very close but. If something is inspired, it must be the original autographs read by “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ” when he wrote that. And because we are able to arrive at a 99.44, 100% pure + kind of thing, our present Bible, we can pretty much say is without error and if we understand it, we understand the Scriptures as such, but ultimately you would have to say, it is the original autographs, because a copyist could have made an error somewhere along the line.

If you had a professor and you were at a secular university at this time and he asked you this question:

“Now we talked about the Canon of Scripture, but let me ask you something. Do you really believe that when Paul wrote 1st Corinthians – that he thought 2,000 years later, this will be part of a common Bible and that this will be equated just as authoritatively as the books of Moses?”

How would you respond to that?

Student comments: difficult to hear.

Dr. Stein’s responses to students:

You want to go further than he believed what he meant, because Karl Marx did too.

You are arguing that Paul thought he was inspired as he wrote.

You are saying that he didn’t think there would be Scripture 2,000 years later.

It is really a tricky way of putting it, because whether Paul thought 2,000 years from now, anything is irrelevant to the real issue. The real issue that you have to wrestle with is – did the writers of the New Testament when they wrote, did they think that their work should be treated in the way that we say Scripture should be treated.

Lets look at a couple of references. Final authority – what we used to have in mind.

We have read already in 1 Thessalonians 5:27 that Paul thought that his letters should be read in all the churches.

“I adjure you by the Lord, that this letter be read by all the brethren.”

But yeah. That’s why we understand it as Scripture. That’s why this letter should be the brethren. It is not just something written to a specific church back then. When he says, his letters should be read to all the churches, in our terminology, we would say yes. We think this is a canonical rule for all the churches. It is to be read in all of the churches.

In 2nd Thessalonians 3:14, Paul looks at his letters and he says, if anyone refuses to obey what we say in this letter, note that man and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. Yeah. We think, Paul’s letters should be obeyed. They are canonical. You wouldn’t say, everything that Stein writes, we should obey. Good Grief.

What Paul writes, should be obeyed, because that’s the way Scripture is treated and we think because it is to be obeyed, that is really Scripture.

When you go to 1st Corinthians 14:37, you have another reference here

“If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord.”

What he writes comes from the Lord. It's a command that God Himself gives. It is Scripture.

In 1st Corinthians 7:17, "Let everyone lead the life which the Lord has assigned to Him and which the Lord has called him. This is my rule in all the churches."

We think that what he says is authoritative. And what he writes to all the churches and we still believe is authoritative in all the churches and therefore we understand it as canonical.

1st Corinthians 7:17 and then finally 1st Corinthians 7:40.

"But in my judgment, she is happier if she remains as she is" He has just given advice and then he says, "Humbly, I think that I have the Spirit of God."

And we believe that Paul has the Spirit of God and therefore it is to be understood as authoritative Scripture in this way.

Therefore the question, did Paul think that his works would be read along with the books of Moses and Scripture 2,000 years later. The answer is, I don't know what he thought about 2,000 years later, but he did think his works were to be obeyed just as Moses' works were to be obeyed. And therefore I think that they are part of the common order of faith that we have as a believing community and they are a part of the Canon of Scripture .

Now the final question. There are a number of places in the New Testament, where Paul refers to somethings we don't apparently have. In 1st Corinthians he writes

"I wrote to you earlier" and what he wrote he now describes that they should not fellowship with immoral people is not found in the earlier part of 1st Corinthians. He is referring to something that he had written before 1st Corinthians.

I make a kind of lighthearted way of understanding that. Without changing 1st Corinthians, lets call that other work, ½ Corinthians because it is before that.

Well, in 2nd Corinthians he refers to a letter he wrote that's not 1st Corinthians so there is a 1-1/2 Corinthians as well. Suppose you found ½ Corinthians or 1-1/2 Corinthians.

Of course it wouldn't be written, Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ to the ½ Corinthians church or something like that or something of that nature, but remember, we also read in Colossians about a letter written to the Laodiceans. We do not have the Laodicean letter.

Now, possibly, that might be a reference to the letter Paul wrote to the Ephesians. If you look at the material in the Ephesians letter, the best manuscripts do not have the word Ephesians in it. A number of scholars have thought that there may have been a blank there that you were to fit in

Now lets imagine that there was a Laodician letter and that

What would happen if you found it?

What would happen if you found ½ Corinthians?

When you shipped it to the museum, packed it better than, so that it won't deteriorate ... but here we have this and it begins

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the church at Laodicea, grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

"I give thanks to every remembrance (?) of you as I think of your joy and faith in Christ."

Ok. The conclusion "What do you do with the letter?"

"It would be worth more... I mean ... if you were going to sell it... it would be nice to have, 'Paul an apostle' rather than just 'Paul'" ?

"Do you think if he said Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ, then this would then make it canonical?"

Audience answer: "Not necessarily. There would be people who would dispute it."

Dr. Stein: "Well. Yeah. There would be people who would dispute it, but lets imagine everybody agreed and said that there is a DNA test where we took from his bones and we see some fragments of it, skin here and ... the DNA matches... that's impossible, but anyhow ..."

Audience response: "If you go back to the superintendence of the Holy Spirit wouldn't it have already been included if it was intended to be?"

Dr. Stein: "Yeah see. You have one argument, apostolic authorship. You have another argument guidance and superintendence of the Spirit and it seems hard in some ways to think that for 2,000 years, God would have permitted this to have been lost."

Or something like that ... there could be a test in it. Supposing you found them saying something that was contrary to Romans. That would be very unlikely but that would certainly make it "No way this one!" He had a bad hair day or something like that.

So you would say "No. It doesn't fit the teachings of Scripture and therefore, it is not part of the common faith of the church." That would be an issue.

Let me just say however hypothetical question which shows that the arguments for recognition of the Canon of Scripture – some of them would say no to this. Some of

them would support it as being included in the Bible but we are not going to find it, so its nice to think, hypothetically about it.

But don't lose a lot of sleep over it, because it is not going to happen in that way. Alright ... uh... comments and questions?

Yeah.

Student: [hard to hear]

Dr. Stein. I think I'd go further than that. And that is that claims that later divine inspired books would be added to it are very contrary to the New Testament which says that the next thing we await is not new revelation of the glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ – that is the next effect – not tablets from heaven, new revelation or something like that.”

Question from audience: Did everything that Paul write – would it be considered inspired or was it only at certain times? This letter is inspired, but that letter isn't. He wrote more than what we have. He probably wrote a 100 letters, so would you consider everything he wrote to be inspired or only certain things. Was it like a light switch? How would that work?

Dr. Stein: What do you think?

Student: I have got about 30 more classes and I will let you know.

Dr. Stein: Let me ask a different one. Did everything the baby boy Jesus said, 'Is that inspired?'

There is a difference between being inspired and being truthful. Right? I hope sometimes to think that I am truthful, but I am not inspired. Would you want to find everything that Jesus said and put it in the Bible?

Student: And that is what I was thinking about. Not everything. Everything was inspired but I am going to eat lunch at 12.

Dr. Stein: Yeah. Okay. There is a sense in which we would say, I think that when Paul wrote 1 Cor. He was led by God to write it. And what he wrote was inspired scripture. He could have written other things like

“Timothy go down to the store and get some bacon and eggs and ham. I am free. I want to enjoy my non-kosher freedom” or something like that.

That wouldn't be inspired. So there may be something in which, without reacting too negatively at first that he might speak and write with divine imprimatur – At that time

Much as when a Pope gives a pronouncement. Not everything the Pope says is infallible, but at this point it is.

There may be things like, not everything Paul said would have been. But when he writes this in that capacity as an apostle of Jesus Christ, he is not speculating about mathematics, the shape of the world or something like that, but he writes as God's servant, but he does that infallibly at that point.

Student: And he makes it clear in the letter?

Dr. Stein: Yeah. But again. The other letters – we don't know anything about. There is a sense in which I am perfectly willing to say that in the providence of God, God saw fit not to have them preserved this way, because there was no necessity of it.

Student: [hard to hear] Concerning those portions of Scripture that don't have a whole lot of external ??? Would there be a justifiable point where you would say the evidence is just so strong?

Dr. Stein: I know what you are saying, I would word it differently because I don't think when you remove 1st John 5:7, you are taking anything out of Scripture. I think you are not letting anything into Scripture that shouldn't be there. I would want to emphasize and I think that's important in how you word that for your congregation. This somebody later added to the Bible in the 5th, 6th century, and the Latin texts and later in the 13th, 14th in the Greek texts. I think the Bible is too precious to have people add things to it. John did not write that and therefore it should not be part of John.

But what I am doing there is I don't think we should add things to the Bible. Because the warning that people give

“Well you know. If you remove 1st John 5:7, there is a curse in the book of Revelation. Woe be that person who removes things from this book. He probably means Revelation, but I think you could say that for the whole Bible.

But don't forget that “also adds” or “adds to it.” I think, 1 John 5:7 was added to it. I don't think we should add things to the Bible.

Student: But isn't the only way to be sure about that is to actually have the autographs? In other words does the internal evidence so great that you can ??? [hard to hear]

Dr. Stein: Well. [Makes comments about a marking pen unrelated to lecture topic]
[Drawing something on the wall]

Lets imagine a timeline. This is John's original letter. We are working our way down the centuries. At this point in 4 manuscripts we have 1 John 5:7 written in the margin – in the margin not in the text. Somebody later added it.

Then you get down to the 16th century, and you have the only one that is written in the text itself, and by that I mean, between the previous verse and the following verse. Now all of these up here – omit it.

From your judgment should you follow this line of tradition or this one here? That's fairly simple isn't that up here?

The biggest problem we have is that the King James follows this one. That's the problem, and that's been the Bible, that we are familiar with.

So as pastors you need to teach your people not this particular problem. You should spend sometime in the history of how we got our English Bible, with no axe to grind, with no particular passage to teach, but talk about Wycliffe and Tyndale and the others. And talk about the King James Version. What a great translation it was.

Give them an understanding of where these all came from. Let them raise questions and prepare them for that because sometimes this question is going to come up:

“Why not here but here?”

But they don't even know this. You have to share that with them.