

Faulty Systems of Hermeneutics

Some folks claim that we must only “literally” interpret the Bible, but provide no definition outside of how YOU understand the “literal” meaning.

The problem is: the “literal hermeneutic” system of interpretation _____ sound biblical exegesis. _____ separates the unity of the two Testaments.

The Old Testament was _____ to be complete without the New Testament.

H. E Rall, in his book Modern Pre-millennialism and the Christian Hope, quotes Dr. Torrey as saying, “All prophecy is to be ‘exactly and literally fulfilled’” (Rall 1920, 122).

If the fulfillment of all prophecy has to be literally true, then in the story of the fall and its consequence and its cure, in Genesis 3, there only would be _____ having a bruised head and _____ having a bruised heel.

This method of using ONLY the grammatical-historical method _____ how the Bible interprets itself, partly because it would mean that the Old Testament prophecies cannot have a spiritual fulfillment in the New Testament.

Genesis 3, and many other passages, is proof of this.

After his conversion to Christ, Paul, a strict Jew who was trained in the Old Testament, showed the unity of the two Testaments and demonstrated how the dependency of the Old Testament on the New Testament brought the Old Testament _____ through _____.

He wrote, 2 Tim. 1:9-10,

Share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own

purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

In other words, it has always been about _____!

This proves that it does take the New Testament to bring to light the writings of the Old Testament. It also becomes a hermeneutical key (_____) for the Old Testament.

An example of this is found in the interpretation of Hosea 11:1, “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.” The Holy Spirit, through Matthew, found the fulfillment of this verse in the young life of Jesus (Matt. 2:15). This gives us a key to the interpretation of other Old Testament prophecies as fulfilled in the New Testament.

To avoid this method of interpretation is to _____
the divine inspiration of Scripture.

Paul lays down another hermeneutical key (_____
_____) in 1 Corinthians 4:6 when
he says, “These things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to
myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us _____
_____.”

To go beyond what is written is to add something to the text that is
not there and convolute¹ the Word of God. It is man himself taking
the place of God and endeavoring to write Scripture.

Martin Kuske quotes H. F. Kohlbrugge as saying:

“There is no middle-of-the-road position. Either the
Lord, His apostles, and the first Christians interpreted the
writings of Moses and the prophets in completely the
wrong way, . . . or we have to understand and interpret

¹ convolute v: to change the meaning of or be vague about in order to mislead or deceive; "Don't twist my words" [syn: twist, twist around, pervert, convolute, sophisticate]

these writings very simply as they are, without taking away from or adding to them. . . . If one rejects the later option, he must realize what one does with the Lord and His apostles and that is destroying the basis of the Christian faith and the Christian hope as its foundation”

(Kuske 1976, 71)

Paul writes in Romans 15:4, “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” This, together with 1 Corinthians 10:1- 11, affirms that these Old Testament events bear a spiritual, (_____)
_____) significance in the New Testament.

There is a controversy over the literal and figurative (or spiritual) method of interpretation. The Jews of Jesus’ day were literalists, as is evident from John 3.

When Jesus talked with Nicodemus about being born again, Nicodemus only could think _____ of entering his mother's womb. When Jesus talked to the woman at the well about living water, she looked for a _____ vessel to draw water from the well. When Jesus said, "Destroy this temple and I will build it in three days" (John 2:19), the Jews responded by talking about a _____ temple.

This strictly literalist approach kept each of them from understanding the _____, as Jesus indicated in John 8:43.

Dispensationalist, J. Dwight Pentecost, in his book *Things to Come*, states, "The prevailing method of interpretation among the Jews at the time of Christ was certainly the literal method of interpretation" (Pentecost 1964, 17).

Pentecost could not have put it more clearly. But were the Jews right?

Born in 335 AD, Gregory of Nyssa said of _____
interpreters: “They have enveloped their ears with the Jewish
veil.” (see 2 Corinthians 3:14-16)

In 1 Corinthians 2:13, Paul states that the Bible is a spiritual
book and should be _____ discerned: “These things we
also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which
the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

Literalism would reduce many Scriptures to absurdity.

In John 6:53, Jesus said, “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son
of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.”

In John 10:9, Jesus said, “I am the door.”

To take either of these verses literally, would be _____
_____ and to say that Jesus _____
_____.

OTHER IMPORTANT POINTS

In Acts 2:16-21, when Peter interpreted the events of Pentecost, he said that the last days mentioned in Joel 2:28-32 were now being fulfilled. Therefore, _____ had to begin with the beginning of the _____. Hebrews 1:1-2 verifies this fact. After the last days, there can be no other days, or words are meaningless.

Joel 2:32 is interpreted in the New Testament as being the time when all who call on the name of the Lord shall be saved, Israel included. The prophetic fulfillment is seen in Romans 10:13 and _____.

In Isaiah 11:6-9, the kingdom of the Messiah is spoken of as a kingdom of peace, yet in Isaiah 9 and 11:14-15, the prophet speaks of the wars and victories of the Messiah's reign. A reference to the New Testament of the same prophet will show that Isa-

iah 9:5 is spiritually applied as it is related to verses 6 and 7, which speak of the Messiah on the throne of David.

In Acts 2:30, Peter _____ the throne of David to be the throne to which Christ ascended in heaven. There is no _____ here. Who then can truthfully say that all Old Testament prophecies must be literally fulfilled in a literal kingdom for the Jews here on earth? To do so would violate the New Testament application of these verses and destroy the divine inspiration of the Scriptures.

In Matthew 10:34, Jesus says, “Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.” What kind of a literal sword did Jesus bring? Or was Jesus _____ the word sword to mean the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (see Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12)?

Joseph Angus, D.D., states the following on the interpretation of prophecy:

It is the golden rule, that as prophecy is not self-interpretative (of private interpretation, 2 Pet. 1:20-21), each of the predictions of Scripture must be compared with others, on the same topic, and with history, both profane and inspired. Parallel predictions will often throw light upon one another, and recorded fulfillments will explain predictions or parts of predictions still unfulfilled. History and the New Testament will thus often fix the meaning of individual passages, and these will illuminate and explain their respective connections.

(Angus 1857, 294)

Eternal Principles of Biblical Interpretation

Paul, speaking to the Ephesian church, states that what was accomplished by Christ was God's eternal purpose (Eph. 3:11).

_____ takes God by surprise.

All of God's works from eternity are known to Him (Acts 15:18). In the Bible, the principles of God are eternal; they never change. However, the _____ of those principles changes from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant.

God's Word is always up to date. Paul, writing to the church in Corinth, lays down an eternal biblical principle of interpretation in 1 Corinthians 15:46: "However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual." Ira Landis puts it this way as he amplifies this rule of interpretation by seven analogies found in

1 Corinthians 15:47-49:

First The Natural, Then The Spiritual

THE NATURAL	THE SPIRITUAL
Sown in dishonor	Raised in glory
Sown in corruption	Raised in incorruption
Sown in weakness	Raised in power
Sown a natural body	Raised a spiritual body
First Adam, a living soul	Last Adam, a quickening Spirit
First man of earth, earthly	Second Man, Lord from heaven
Borne the earthly image	Bear the image of the heavenly

With a sweep of the past and a comprehension of the future, Paul saw that here was the _____ of God's dealings with man throughout the ages: "First the natural, afterward the spiritual" (Landis 1946, 81).

Isn't Paul saying that the rule of first the natural and then the spiritual applies from the "first Adam" on through to the "last Adam," and then on to that of bearing the heavenly image at the time of the resurrection?

The creation narrative (Gen. 1) is a type of redemption as seen in the New Testament (2 Cor. 4:6; Eph. 5:8; John 1:4-5; 3:19; 8:12; 1 John 1:5). In these references, we find no literalism in the fulfillment of God's dealings with man from the Old Testament to the New Testament.

This is enough to prove that the principles of God are eternal and that their functions change under the New Covenant. In addition, it shows that the physical or literal of the Old Covenant becomes a spiritual principle under the New Covenant.

GOD IS KING ETERNAL Ps.10:16; 103:19; Acts 15:18 The Bible Has One Theme—Redemption This Redemption God Expresses in Two Covenants		
← From Eternity		To Eternity →
The Old Covenant—the natural	Cross Rev. 13:8	The New Covenant—the spiritual
The first creation—heaven and earth, Gen.1		The second creation—a new heaven and earth, 2 Pet. 3; Rev. 21
The Edenic paradise lost, Gen. 3		Paradise restored, Rev. 21: 22
A bride for Adam, Gen. 2:20–23		A bride for Christ John, 3:29; Rev. 21:2
Animal blood sacrifice, Gen. 3:21		Blood of Christ, Matt. 26:26–29
Seed of the woman, Gen. 3:15		Christ is the Seed of the woman, Gal. 3:16; 4:4
The Mosaic covenant, Ex. 20		Christ's new covenant, Luke 22:20; Heb. 10:9
The Tabernacle, Ex. 30–40		Christ is the new tabernacle, John 1:14
The Temple, 2 Chron. 2–8		Christ is the new temple, John 2:19–21
Israel—God's people		The Church—God's people, 1 Pet. 2:10
Natural Israel, 1 Cor. 10:18		Spiritual Israel, Rom. 9:6; Gal. 3:1–29
Physical circumcision		Spiritual circumcision, Col. 2:11
Passover lamb, Ex.12		Christ is our Passover, 1 Cor. 5:7
Old Covenant of the letter, 2 Cor. 3:3, 6, 7, 9, 11		New Covenant of the Spirit, 2 Cor. 3:3, 6, 8, 9, 11
Ministry of death, 2 Cor. 3:7		Ministry of righteousness, 2 Cor. 3:8
Covenant of works (thou shalt)		Covenant of faith, Eph. 2:8–9

To suggest that the restoration of Judaism is the fulfillment of the Old Covenant after the New Covenant has been put in place is to have God walking backward instead of forward to a restored paradise and a new heaven and new earth.