



BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS

(English)

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Hermeneutics



1. Interpretation by *speech itself*: incapacity of human language to express God's mind

2. Interpretation through the *translation*:

3. Interpretation by *commentary and explanation*:

4. Exegesis: Greek verb *Exegeomai* means to draw out, to develop, to explain.

Why is Biblical Interpretation Necessary?

- The Bible was originally written to people who lived in a different place, in a very different culture,
- Because the Bible is God's word in history revealed to people
- The goal of interpretation is to discover the original intended meaning of a passage
- The key to doing good exegesis is reading the text very carefully

The Present Need of Biblical Interpretation and the Problems

1. Mythical Language

2. Contradictions and Repetitions in Biblical Accounts:

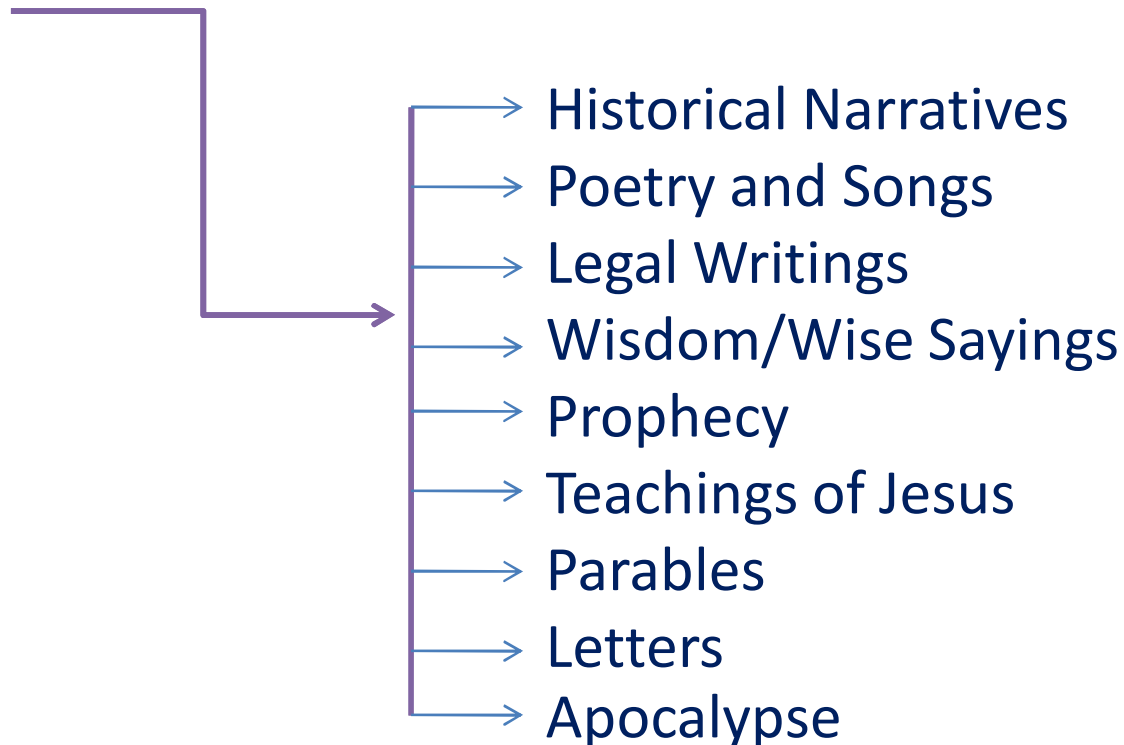
- i) In Gen 1:1-1:2:4a (P) and 2:4b-25 (J)
- ii) In the flood stories (Gen 6-9)

3. The Problem of Religious Language

4. There are Obscure and Difficult Passages in the Bible

Text and the Process of Communication

Identification of Literary Genre



Observation



1. Historical Context
2. Literary Context
3. Determining the Meaning
4. Application

Presuppositions & Pre-understandings

- i) Informational Pre-understanding
- ii) Attitudinal Pre-understanding
- iii) Ideological Pre-understanding
- iv) Methodological Pre-understanding

Certain considerations

1. The biblical texts are historical in a double sense:
a) with their own history of composition, b) They also refer to certain specific historical events (e.g. Monarchy, Exile).
2. The present reader is not the first reader of the text. The text, enriched by the redactors, is the text for interpretation.
3. Clarity concerning the purpose and the context in which the reading takes place is important.

1. Although the text is dependent on prior readings, the text itself functions as a separate entity within the interpretation process.
5. As the original author is not present, the interpretative interaction takes place between the text and (present) reader.
6. Understanding the original speech event is the prerequisite for its appropriation in the contemporary situation.

Early Biblical Interpretation

Judaism of Inter-Testamental Period

Targum and Midrashim

Targumim: an Aramaic translation

Midrash has two Divisions: a) Halakah b) Haggadah

Halakah: Halakah is a commentary on torah

Haggadah – Commentary on moral issues

Pesharim: It is a type of line-by-line interpretation

New Testament Interpretation of the OT

1. Jesus is the true and definite exegesis of the Father
2. The exegesis of the apostolic Church, especially St. Paul (see Gal 4:21-31- the two wives of Abraham)

Early Church

Literal Interpretation: It Looks for the Explicit Sense of the Text

Ancient Christian Schools of Interpretation

- Theological School of Alexandria
- Antiochean School of Syria

Hearing and Seeing the Word of God

First Stage

- The Greek “Seeing Culture
- The Hebrew “Hearing Culture

Second Stage: The Patristic Era (Alexandrian and Antiochian Schools)

Third Stage: The Medieval Period

Fourth Stage: The Reformation

Fifth Stage: From the Enlightenment to the Modern Era

Sixth Stage: Late Modern to Postmodern

Seventh Stage: A Future Threats and Hopes

The Various Senses of the Bible

The literal (historical sense)

Spiritual (Christological) Sense

Typological Sense

Fuller Sense

Sensus Plenior

Philosophical and Theological Hermeneutics

- Schleiermacher (1768-1834)
- Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911)
- Karl Barth (1886-1968)
- Rudolph Bultmann (1884-1976)
- Edmund Husserl (1859-1938)
- Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)
- Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-1986)



Audio Ergo Sum

**Hearing the Word of God
in the Light of Vatican II**



Vatican II: Aims

- Resourcement - Return to the sources
- Aggiornamento (updating)
- Return to source is accomplished by returning to the Scripture and Tradition



Vatican II bishops and others assembled in St. Peter's Basilica, Rome.

Photo: Bruno di Rione, Rev. Gustave Weigel, S.J., Papers, Georgetown University Library

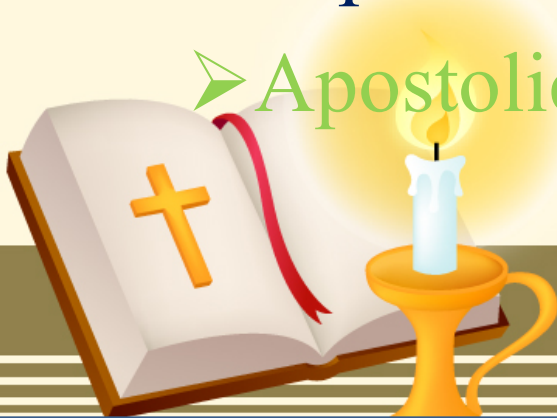
Vorlage of DV

- Two councils: Trent (1546-53) and Vatican I (1869-70)
- **Three documents: Providentissimus Deus (Nov. 18, 1893), by Leo XIII**
- **Divino Afflante Spiritu (Sept. 30, 1943) by Pope Pius XII**
- **Sancta Mater Ecclesia: An instruction on the Truth of the Gospels. (April 21, 1964) by PBC**



DV: Major Themes

- **6** Chapters and **26** numbered paragraphs
- **Christian faith** - God has revealed himself to human
 - In the creation itself
 - In the **biblical testimony** of sages, poets, historians, and prophets
 - Especially in the **humanity of Jesus**
 - **Apostolic witnesses.**





Unique Features

1

Revelation is extended to Creation:

Liber natura



2.

DV corrects the past four centuries Catholic Church, which was not a Bible-reading or Bible-quoting denomination. It Claims that the church has always venerated the divine scriptures as it has venerated the Body of the Lord. (Cf. also LG, 7).



3. Reconciliation of the Seeing and Hearing epistemology

- **The Greek “Seeing Culture:”** Plato did not just hear words; he saw them. Words like idea and theory come ultimately from the Greek *verba videnti*. An idea is a concept you can see in your mind.



4. The divine and human authorship of the Bible is analogous to the mystery of the incarnation



5. Not Inerrant but Without Error

The term inerrancy is not used rather says Bible is **“without error”** for the truth for the sake of our salvation.



6. Despite a perennial Marcionite temptation to dismiss the Old Testament as irrelevant for Christians), **Dei Verbum** re-asserts the authenticity of the OT.

Sie sind beidewege-hinoffnen



7 Principles of Biblical Interpretation

1. The Bible is the word of God couched in human language and it is to be read and interpreted with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
2. The Bible is an inspired book having authority for the people of Christian faith.
3. iii) The Bible represents a restricted canon of authoritative texts and the interpretation must take into account the unity of the whole Scripture.

7 Principles of Biblical Interpretation

4. It is given by God to his people for their edification and salvation.
5. The Spirit who inspired the human author also guides the community of interpreters and believers (the Church) to understand its text.
6. Through the Bible, God continues to speak to the readers of every generation.
7. The Bible is properly expounded only in relation to the living tradition of the church from which it has evolved.

Benedict XVI: *Verbum Domini*

Purpose of *Verbum Domini*

Structure

Part One: *Verbum Dei* (The Word of God)

Interpretation of Scripture in the Church

Part Two: *Verbum in Ecclesia* (The Word in the Church)

Part Three: *Verbum Mundo* (The Word to the World)

Biblical Interpretation: Ecclesial Hermeneutic of Faith

Exegetical Methods and Approaches

Historical-Critical (Diachronic) Method

- Textual Criticism
- *Source Criticism*
- *Tradition Criticism*
- *Redaction Criticism*

Literary Criticism

- Linguistic and Semantic *Criticism*
- Form (Genre) Criticism

Modern Methods of Literary (Synchronic) Analysis

Narrative Analysis

Structuralist (semiotic) Analysis

Modern Contextual Interpretations

Reader-response criticism



A white dove with its wings spread wide is flying over an open book that lies on a green field. The background is a bright, hazy sky with soft clouds. The dove is positioned centrally, with its wings extending towards the top corners of the frame. The open book is at the bottom, with its pages fanned out. The overall scene is peaceful and symbolic, representing the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

8. Finality of Revelation

The continuing the story of God's revelation climaxes in the incarnation and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Finality under Criticism?

- **Reimundo Panikkar:** Incarnated Jesus is only a means for getting access to the mystery of the Trinity. Preach Jesus alone is Jesusology, idolatry and denial of divinity
- **Stanley Samartha:** One should not limit Christ to Jesus nor elevate Jesus to the status of God, because in the former we turn Christ into a tribal God of the Christians and in the latter we fall into Christo-monism



Finality under Criticism

- There is a growing tendency among the scholars to **deny** the significance of the historicity of the **Christ-event**
- **Knitter** is more concerned with **Jesus' of praxis**
- **Hick** is most concerned with **Jesus' consciousness of God.**
- **Pluralists** present **Jesus not as personal** but as a **metaphysical principle.**



DV and Dominus Iesus



- Definitive and complete character of the revelation of Jesus Christ.
- In the mystery of Jesus Christ, the full revelation of divine truth is given.
- DV - Christ, who is at the same time the mediator and the fullness of all revelation
- *Redemptoris missio* - the definitive self-revelation of God is the fundamental reason why the Church is missionary
- The distinction made by *Dominus Iesus* between *theological faith* and *belief* (DI, 7).



Gerald O'Collins, SJ,



- In one sense, to be sure, Jesus Christ embodies and communicates the fullness of revelation, but in another sense he does not. The final vision of God is still to come, as we are reminded in 1 John 3:2 and 1 Cor 13:12. The problem arises only when we try to contradict between what is revealed and what is yet to be revealed.



9. Against the *Bibliolatry* of the Protestants DV insisted on *Prima Scriptura*. It pointed out that “Sola scriptura” is :-

- unbiblical
- unhistorical
- unworkable

Notion of canon comes from outside
Scripture



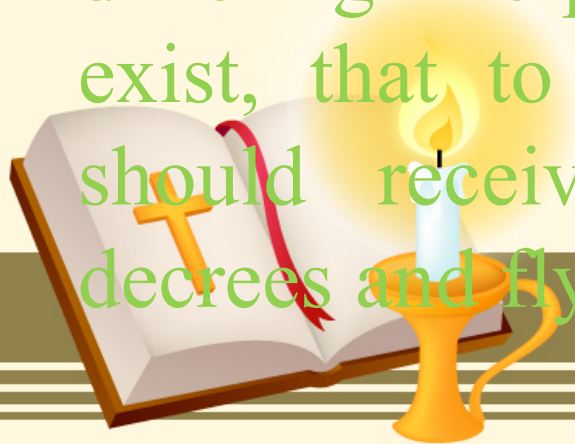
Pope Damasus I: The architect of Biblical Canon



Martin Luther



In a letter to **Ulrich Zwingli**, he complained bitterly about the doctrinal anarchy that was even then rampant among Protestants: "If the world lasts, it will be necessary, on account of the differing interpretations of Scripture which now exist, that to preserve the unity of faith, we should receive the [Catholic] councils and decrees and fly to them for refuge



Present Challenges of Hermeneutics

- **New Epistemology:** A shift in epistemology: active readers give texts their meaning – It is similar to the traditional *eisegesis*.



- Denial of Revelation – Both the text and the author are insignificant
- Docetic Approach: historical issues are not really all that important
- Deconstructionism: a theory of textual interpretation that denies there is any single correct of a text. two primary ideas are at work: All truth is relative and there is no such thing as absolute truth. The result is a subjective interpretation of the text



Derrida:

- Distinguishes between deciphering a text to discern its true meaning and setting the text in play, which he regards as true to anti-metaphysics.



2. Pastoral Hermeneutical Challenges

- *Megale* Mania
- Youth Ministry and Clericalism
- Hermeneutics of the renewal movements
- the Poor, Women and the children are
- Diminishing Birth rate and vocation, Flux to Sects



