Henry Virkler provides an excellent grid for any Christian teacher. In order to stay true to the text, spawning away from the original manuscripts, a Christian teacher must employ proper hermeneutics. The following information will help you understand ancient, modern, dangerous, and conservative methods in interpretation. Enjoy! *Jimmy Burnside* :)

Hermeneutics- the art and science of biblical interpretation

General Hermeneutics- the study of those rules governing interpretation of the entire biblical text.

Special Hermeneutics- the study of those rules that apply to specific genres, such as parables, types, and prophecy

Textual Criticism- the attempt to ascertain the original wording of a text

Historical (or higher) Criticism- the study of authorship and audience of a book, the date of its composition, the authenticity of its contents, and its literary unity

Exegesis- to arrive at a correct understanding of the text

Biblical Theology- the study of divine revelation as it was given through the Old and New Testaments

Systematic Theology- organizes the biblical data in a logical rather than a historical manner

Historic Christianity View- God worked through the personalities of the biblical writers in such a way that, without suspending their personal styles of expression or freedom, what they produced was literally "God-breathed" *theopneustos (Greek)*. Implications- hermeneutical skills possess great importance because they give us means for discovering more accurately the truths we believe Scripture possesses.

author and the human authors worked together (flowed together) to produce the inspired text.

Literal, Figurative, and Symbolic Interpretations of Scripture- The literalness with which we interpret the words of Scripture

The Question of Inerrancy- The most debated of all, the stance of full inerrancy and that of limited inerrancy.

Ancient Jewish Exegesis- At this period in time they interpreted four ways: literal, midrashic, *pesher,* and allegorical. The literal method was referred to as *peshat* while the Midrash type meant to search. *Pesher interpretation* was practiced among the Qumran community and borrowed midrashic practices but focused on end times. The Allegorical exegesis was based beneath the literal meaning of Scripture laying true to meaning.

New Testament Use of the Old Testament- The high esteem with which the New Testament writers regarded the Old Testament strongly suggests that they would not consciously or intentionally have misinterpreted the words that they believed God himself had spoken. The overwhelming method was *peshat* (literal).

Patristic Exegesis- (AD100-600) Allegorization (of the school of Alexadria) was one method that completely neglected the author's intended meaning and the literal understanding of a text in developing speculations the author himself would never have recognize. The Antiochian schools method believed that the spiritual meaning of a historical event was implicit within the event itself. However, the Western School of thought by way of Augustine (354-430) believed in a fourfold exegetical sense: historical, etiological, analogical, and allegorical.

Medieval Exegesis- (600-1500) Interpretation was bound by tradition, and the allegorical method was prominent. Four levels believed in every passage: The *letter* shows us what God and our fathers did; The *allegory* shows us where our faith is hid; The *moral* meaning gives us rules of daily life; The *anagogy* shows us where we end our strife.

Reformation Exegesis- (1500s) The fourfold previous sense was gradually abandoned and replaced with the principle that Scripture has but a single sense. Luther (1484-1546) and Calvin (1509-64) believed that spiritual illumination is necessary and regarded allegorical interpretation as a contrivance of Satan to obscure the sense of Scripture.

Post-Reformation Exegesis- (1550-1800) *Confessionalism*; theologians of this day read the Bible by the unnatural glare of theological hatred because of dogmatic refutes, *Pietism* had little relationship to authors intended meaning, and *Rationalism* was the development of reason that encroached exegetical methods.

Modern Hermeneutics- (1800 to Mid-Twentieth Century) *Liberalism and the Historical-Critical Method*: Rationalism in philosophy laid the basis for liberalism in theology which expressed itself by means of the historical-critical method. *Neoorthodoxy*: a twentieth-century phenomenon. *The New Hermeneutic:* developed since World War II. It is based on two assertions

    1. It claims that the author of the text is inaccessible to the reader therefore hermeneutics should not, and actually cannot, attempt to arrive at the authors intended meaning.

2. The reader is identified not as an objective outsider but as a contributor to the interpretive process.

Historical-cultural analysis- considers the historical-cultural milieu in which an author wrote in order to understand his allusions.

Contextual analysis- considers the relationship of a given passage to the entire passage surrounding it, since a better understanding of an authors intended meaning results from an acquaintance with the larger context.

Lexical-syntactical analysis- develops an understanding of the definitions of words (lexicology) and their relationship to one another (syntax) in order to understand more accurately the meaning the author intended to convey.

Theological analysis- studies the level of theological understanding at the time a revelation was given in order to ascertain the meaning of the text for its original recipients.

Literary analysis- identifies the literary from or method used in a given passage, such as historical narrative, letters, doctrinal exposition, poetry, or apocalyptic.

The six-step model that can be used to interpret any biblical text.

      1. Historical-cultural analysis

      2. Lexical-syntactical analysis

      3. Theological analysis

      4. Literary (genre) analysis

      5. Comparison with other interpreters

      6. Application

Three basic steps involved in historical-cultural and contextual analysis.

1. Determine the general historical and cultural milieu of the writer and his audience.

2. Determine the purposes the author had in writing a book.

3. Understand how the passage fits into its immediate context.

Three ways of discerning an authors intention for writing a specific book.

1. Note explicit statements or repeated phrases.

2. Observe paraenetic or repeated phrases.

3. Observe issues that are omitted or emphasized.

Secondary steps involved in contextual analysis.

1. Identify the major blocks of material in the book and show how they fit into a coherent whole.

2. Show how the passage fits into the flow of the authors argument.

3. Determine the perspective that the author intends to communicate— noumenological (the way things appear).

4. Distinguish between descriptive and prescriptive truth.

5. Distinguish between incidental details and the teaching focus of a passage.

6. Identify the person or category of persons for whom the particular passage is intended.

Two major reasons why lexical-syntactical analysis is important.

    1. Without it we have no valid assurance that our interpretation is the meaning

God intended to convey through the words of the biblical author.

    2. Nor do we have grounds for saying that our interpretations of Scripture are

more valid than those of heretical groups.

Seven steps involved in lexical-syntactical analysis.

    1. Identify the general literary form.

    2. Trace the development of the author's theme and show how the passage

under consideration fits into the context.

    3. Indentify the natural divisions of the text.

    4. Identify the connecting words within the paragraphs and sentences.

    5. Determine what the individual words mean.

    6. Analyze the syntax.

    7. Put the results of your lexical-syntactical analysis into nontechnical, easily

understood words that clearly convey the authors meaning to the English

reader.

Three methods of determining the meanings of ancient words, and compare the validity of each method.

    1. Study synonyms looking for points of comparison / contrast. For instance, the

beginning two Greek words for love: *agapao* and *phileo*.

      This method is a very effective one and is necessary.

2. Determine word meanings by etymology, to consider the historical roots of the word.　　　This method is effective as well and recommended for clarification.

3. Word-study analysis of the ways a word was used in other ancient literature: secular literature, the Septuagint, and other biblical writings by the same or different author.

Five methods of determining which one of the several possible meanings of a word was actually intended by an author in a given context?

1. Examine definitions or explanatory phrases that the authors themselves give.

2. Determine if the subject and the predicate of a sentence may explain each other.

3. Examine parallelism if it occurs within the passage.

4. Determine if the word is being used as part of a figure of speech.

5. Study parallel passages.

Lexical-syntactical analysis, syntax, lexicology, denotation, connotation, and figure of speech.

Lexical-syntactical analysis- the study of the meaning of individual words (lexicology) and the way those words are combined (syntax) in order to determine more accurately the authors intended meaning.

Syntax- the way thoughts are expressed through grammatical forms.

Lexicology- the meaning of individual words

Denotation- specific meanings (literal or metaphoric)

Connotations- additional implications often including the emotions associated with those specific meanings.

Figure of speech- convey a definite meaning just as surely as do literal usages.

Five steps in the process called theological analysis.

      1. Determine your own view of the nature of God's relationship to human beings.

      2. Identify the implications of this view for the passage you are studying.

      3. Assess the extent of theological knowledge available to the people of that time.

      4. Determine the meaning the passage possessed for its original recipients in light of their knowledge.

      5. Identify the additional knowledge about this topic that is available to us now because of later revelation.

The five representative theoretical systems.

      1. **The Theologies but no Theology Model**- believe over time that theology changes with ideas from one era to another.

      2. **Lutheran Theology**- major emphasis on law and grace that spawns understanding from these two categories.

      3. **Dispensational Theory**- focuses on the discontinuity between each era of time.

      4. **Covenantal Theory**- major emphasis on covenant of works and grace that spawns understanding from these two categories.

      5. **Epigenetic Model**- views the Bible as perfect in each age, stage, or era with its perfect harmony.

The four concepts which helps to determine your theological model.

1. **Old and New Covenants**- simultaneous alignment between the two.

2. **Understanding of Salvation**- understanding grace in OT and NT while considering five factors or parameters.

3. **The Church in the Old Testament**- conventional theologians believe the church has always existed however dispensationalist believe the church started at Pentecost.

4. **Hermeneutical Issues**- literal vs. symbolic, Jew, seed of Abraham, chosen people etc.

Type and antitype

Type- the Greek word *typos,* to which *type* is related, has variety of denotations in the NT. The basic ideas expressed by *typos* and its synonyms are the concepts of resemblance, likeness, and similarity.

Antitype- the corresponding figure (to the prefigurement of *type*)

Three distinguishing characteristics of a type.

1. There must be some notable point of resemblance or analogy between the type and its antitype.

2. There must be evidence that the type was appointed by God to represent the thing typified.

3. A type must prefigure something in the future.

Seven general differences between prophecy and apocalyptic literature.

1. The initial presentation of prophecy was usually in spoken form and was written at a later time. The initial presentation of apocalyptic literature was usually in writing.

2. Prophetic utterances most often are separate, brief oracles. Apocalyptic literature is often longer, more continuous; cycles of material may be repeated a second or third time in parallel form.

3. Apocalyptic literature tends to contain more symbolism, especially of animals and other living forms.

4. Apocalyptic literature places a greater stress on dualism (angels and the Messiah versus Satan and the antichrist) than does prophecy.

5. Apocalyptic literature primarily comforts and encourages the righteous remnant. Prophecy often castigates the nominally religious.

6. Apocalyptic literature is generally pessimistic about the effectiveness of human intervention in changing the present. Prophecy focuses on the importance of human change.

7. Apocalyptic literature was usually written pseudonymously. Prophecy was usually written or spoken in the name of its author.

Six controversial issues in the interpretation of prophecy.

Hermeneutical principles, deeper sense, literal verses symbolic, universality, conditionality, and single versus multiple meaning.

Associated Terms

Progressive prediction- the fact that although each prophetic passage has a single intended fulfillment, often a series of passages exhibit a pattern of chronological progress in the prophetic enactment.

Developmental fulfillment- the realization of a generalized, comprehensive prophecy in several progressive stages

Prophetic telescoping- refers to three time periods: near future, messianic, and eschatological. In comparison, when viewing a mountain range from a distance, the peaks appear to be quite near to one another. However, on closer examination it becomes evident that wide valleys and many miles separate the individual peaks.

Premillennialism- Christ returns before the millennium

Postmillennialism- Christ returns after the millennium

Amillennialism- A symbolic reference in between Christ' first and second coming, not a literal one-thousand years

Five guidelines for principlizing:

1. Focus on those principles implicit in a story that are applicable across times and cultures.

2. Develop the meaning from a careful historical, lexical analysis.

3. The story must be consistent with all other teachings of Scripture.

4. Principles derived by this method may be either normative or non-normative.

5. Texts have only one meaning but may have many applications.

Five suggestive steps to translate biblical commands from one culture and time to another.

1. Discern as accurately as possible the principle behind the command.

2. Discern whether the principle is trans-cultural or culture-bound by examining the reason given for the principle.

3. If a principle is transcultural, determine whether the same behavioral application in our culture will express the principle as adequately and accurately as the biblical one.

4. If the behavioral expression of a principle should be changed, suggest a cultural equivalent that will express the God-given principle behind the original command.

5. If, after careful study, the nature of the biblical principle and its attendant command remain in question, apply the biblical precept of humility.