

# THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING SCRIPTURE

By Chris Lawson

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***Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.  
Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.  
But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,  
are changed into the same image from glory to glory,  
even as by the Spirit of the Lord.***

*(KJV, 2 Corinthians 3:16-18)*

The following article was written as a class assignment while attending a Christian Bible Institute Edinburgh, Scotland. It was originally published in 2007 and was later published as an SRN Newsletter in May of 2010. Since then it has gone through two more brief revisions. One of the textbooks at the Bible Institute, which this article heavily references, was Roy Zuck's excellent work, *Basics of Bible Interpretation: A Practical Guide to Discovering Biblical Truth*.

For those interested in grasping a balanced overview of the history and methods of interpretation, as well as understanding the dangers of improperly interpreting Scripture, Zuck's book is an excellent resource. I recommend this book for beginners and serious students of the Bible alike. It has come in handy many times in my own personal studies, and I often refer to it when referencing names, dates, definitions and comparing material. Revisions in this article have been made to fix grammatical and punctuation errors and to give further attribution to Roy Zuck's work, which I have greatly benefited from. The endnotes will also help the reader more easily refer back to areas in Zuck's book that have been of inestimable value to me in my own learning, both in personal Bible study, in defending the faith, and in clarifying numerous issues that many in our day simply have no knowledge of – the history of biblical interpretation.

## INTRODUCTION

A simple definition of Hermeneutics from the online Oxford Reference dictionary is, “[t]he branch of knowledge that deals with interpretation, especially of the Bible or literary texts.”<sup>1</sup> The following article seeks to explain why a proper understanding of biblical hermeneutics is important. We will look at the qualities we should seek and bring to our Scripture reading and what we ought to leave behind.<sup>2</sup> We will also look at some of the hindrances to proper *exegesis* [interpreting Scripture]. We will then seek to explain Paul the Apostle's reasoning in 2 Corinthians 3:16-18, and how this passage shapes our hermeneutical goal of reflecting the glory of Christ, by His Spirit through us: “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18). When we as believers in Christ manifest the fruit of the Spirit of God (Gal. 5:22-23), we are progressively being transformed (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18) into the likeness of Jesus Christ. This is the goal of the Christian walk (Eph. 4:22-23; Col. 3:10).

## WHY IS AN UNDERSTANDING OF HERMENEUTICS IMPORTANT?

A proper understanding of hermeneutics is important for the simple reason that without a clear understanding of Scripture, one cannot understand the message God has given to mankind. We must know the *meaning* of Scripture before we can know the *message* of Scripture.<sup>3</sup> We must understand the *sense* of Scripture before we can understand the *significance* of Scripture.<sup>4</sup> We must *observe* what it says, *interpret* what it means, and *apply* what it says in a proper way. If we

do not have a balanced biblical hermeneutic (method of interpreting) we will end up twisting Scripture and producing faulty interpretations of what the Bible says. The end result may lead to one joining a cult or involving oneself in the world of the occult.<sup>5</sup> We must accurately handle the Word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15) as we seek to know the God of truth (Deut. 32:4). "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). "He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He" (Deut. 32:4).

Found inside the front cover of Henry H. Haley's excellent *Haley's Bible Handbook* is his memorable and very true statement, "The Bible is the most priceless possession of the human race."<sup>6</sup> It has also been stated that the Bible is the most abused book in the world. This is true in the sense that countless people use the Bible either ignorantly or in an abusive manner. People either read into the text what is not there or they fail to read the text in context. People end up misapplying the Scriptures or spiritualizing things that should not be spiritualized. The fruit of improper Bible interpretation can be clearly seen in the writings and claims of leaders of Christian cults and many Eastern gurus. Every pseudo-Christian cult leader has misinterpreted Scripture according to *their own private interpretation*. In every case of cultic Scripture twisting, the Person, work and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ is attacked in one way or another. The essential doctrines of the Christian faith are cleverly undermined and even refuted on false premises. The reason for this is simple, failure to *interpret* properly and/or failure to *apply* Scripture properly!

Just as Ezra and Nehemiah read the Scriptures and gave the proper sense (Neh. 8:8-9), so we too must strive to read the text as the original writer intended it to be read.<sup>7</sup> We must be very careful to interpret the Scriptures without destroying their original meaning. We must also understand the historical context in which they were written, taking into account the writers' original language, viewpoint, theology, culture, religious and political situation, etc.<sup>8</sup> We must also be sure to apply the Scriptures to our lives in a practical and balanced manner. If we fail at these basic things when we interpret Scripture then we will most assuredly fail at understanding the message God has given to us.

In our pursuit to know and glorify Christ, we must accurately handle (2 Tim. 2:15) the word of truth (John 17:17). In doing so, as we compare Scripture with Scripture, God's Word speaks to us. There are two things that effectively sanctify the true believer in Christ - the Word of God, and prayer. The Scriptures below show this completely. (Emphasis added):

#### **Sanctified by the word of God and prayer (1 Timothy 4:1-5)**

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: **For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.** If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained."

#### **The Word of God (John 17:14-19)**

"I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. **Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.** As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also

might be sanctified through the truth.”

### **Prayer (Hebrews 4:12-16)**

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. **Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.**”

### **QUALITIES WE OUGHT TO BRING TO OUR SCRIPTURE READING**

The following is to be read in conjunction with Roy Zuck’s book, *Basic Bible Interpretation*. The numbered entries correlate to Zuck’s numerous valuable points mentioned in his book.<sup>9</sup>

1. First and foremost, we must be saved, or born-again (John 3:1-5), if we are to truly glean spiritual truth in our Scripture reading. Mere intellect and human wisdom is not enough to comprehend the spiritual truths of the Word of God. We need the illumination of the Holy Spirit of God upon our minds and hearts as we study the Scriptures. The natural man, the person who is not born-again is spiritually blind (2 Cor. 4:4) and dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1). The natural man cannot understand the things of God for they are foolishness to him. “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14). Only the Spirit of the Living God can illuminate the conscience, heart and mind of an individual. This means that only the regenerate can truly welcome, believe and receive the word of God in order to know (*ginosko*) God personally and experientially.<sup>10</sup> “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:31).

2. We should seek to have a healthy fear/reverence, of/for God (Matt. 10:28; Eccl. 12:13-14).<sup>11</sup> We ought to sincerely desire to know God through knowing His word (Ps. 1; Prov. 1:7 and Prov. Ch. 2).

3. We ought to approach the Scriptures with a prayerful and humble attitude.<sup>12</sup> We must remember that we too can be guilty of misinterpreting Scripture as others have done in the past and are doing at present (2 Pet. 3:16-17; Rev. 22:18-19).

4. We ought to approach the interpretation of Scripture with a sincere willingness to obey God (Eccl. 12:13-14) and the Scriptures we are studying (Rom. 1:5).<sup>13</sup> We must desire and follow through in our attempts to obey God’s word, literally living out what we are learning. We must wholeheartedly depend upon the Spirit of God indwelling us; that He might transform our lives according to His word and His mighty power working in and through us (Rom. 12:1-2).

5. We must depend upon the Holy Spirit as we interpret Scripture.<sup>14</sup> This is absolutely essential as He is the Spirit of Truth and He has communicated to us the Word of Truth. The Holy Spirit is the Author of the Bible. Without His leading and guidance in interpreting Scripture we are left to ourselves in our fallen human wisdom. As God leads us by His Spirit we are to apply the proper hermeneutic skills to Scripture. In doing so, He can keep us from strange and unbiblical *private interpretations* that lead to error and confusion. We must also be willing to walk in obedience to the Holy Spirit in our practical appropriation of Scripture (Rom. 1:5).<sup>15</sup>

6. We must approach Scripture interpretation with the sober understanding that “sudden intuitive flashes of insight” in interpretation are not the norm.<sup>16</sup> Unbiblical visions and dreams, mystical experiences, and supposed words from God can mislead and damage people. Seeking for hidden and mysterious meanings, spiritualizing texts and unbiblical allegorizing can also lead to heresy and delusion. In contrast, cross-referencing, word-studies in Greek or Hebrew and

learning tenses and grammar usage bring deeper understanding and are encouraged. Balance is the key word when it comes to interpreting God's Word.

7. We must also have a willingness to "be diligent to present yourself [ourselves] approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). This includes doing in depth research in word studies, Bible backgrounds, culture, language, Bible and church history, theology, etc.<sup>17</sup>

8. A few other qualities we ought to bring to interpreting the Bible include "the use of sound judgment and reason" and a "willingness to learn from others who have gone before us."<sup>18</sup> At the same time we must seek to be objective in our approach to Scripture and not come to it with preconceived ideas of what *we want to find* in Scripture. For instance, do we approach Holy Scripture and let John Calvin speak to us; or do we come to the Scriptures and let the Holy Spirit speak to us? Comparing Scripture with Scripture and not reading into the text what *others have said* about the text is very important. We must never come to Scripture with preconceived *theological grids*, which we force unto the Biblical text. To view Scripture through someone else's *theological opinion* is unwise as it can corrupt the Word of God. Vast amounts of heresy have been contrived throughout church history simply because one person hijacked another's *theology* and then superimposed it upon the Biblical text.

9. Last but not least, we ought to have at least a basic understanding of how cults pervert texts of Scripture to their own demise.<sup>19</sup> Although Paul wrote some things that are hard to understand (2 Pet. 3:15-17), we have the hermeneutical principles and Biblical tools in order to not "twist the Scriptures" to our own destruction.

### **WHAT SHOULD BE LEFT BEHIND?**

1. We must reject the idea that the unregenerate can properly appropriate the truths of Scripture.<sup>20</sup> The unregenerate, those not made alive in Christ (i.e., not "born-again," or, "born anew"), cannot properly submit to the word of God because they are spiritually blind. The Apostle Paul said that unbelievers are blinded by the god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4) who is Satan. He also said that unbelievers are dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1-2) and they cannot understand the things of God because the things of God are to be spiritually discerned (1 Cor. 2:14).

2. We must reject a "lackadaisical and cavalier attitude" toward the Bible.<sup>21</sup> To not treat the Scriptures as holy (2 Tim. 3:15) and to approach them without a holy reverence and fear of the God who gave them to us is unsafe. To think less of God's word than God does dishonors God, grieves the Holy Spirit and sets a horrible example for others.

3. More examples of things we can leave behind when we come to the Scriptures are prayerlessness and pride, unwillingness to obey Scripture and lack of dependence upon the Holy Spirit. Trusting in mystical experiences and "sudden flashes of insight" is unwise as well.<sup>22</sup> We must leave behind any ideas that diligent study, cross-referencing and background research is a waste of time; it is not. We must also leave behind the idea that the valid teaching of others is not a valuable asset to us.<sup>23</sup> The Holy Spirit is able to lead others in their interpretation of the Word and we can glean from their learning. Elitist views, unscriptural speculations and imbalanced theological perspectives are to be avoided.<sup>24</sup>

### **SOME HINDRANCES TO PROPER EXEGESIS (INTERPRETATION)**

One of the first major hindrances to proper exegesis is when an individual places his own ideas and opinions above Scripture. This type of attitude stems from pride and ignorance and manifests itself in an unwillingness to learn from the mistakes of Bible interpreters of the past. Many pastors and teachers throughout the ages, as well as self-appointed apostles and prophets of today, have made many mistakes because of an improper attitude in interpreting the Scriptures. Sadly, many seek for *new revelations* and they often come up with *vain imaginings* of their own mind (Jer. 23:16-40). These unbiblical interpretations are rooted in human pride and arrogance. Scripture says that pride and the love of "self" (2 Tim. 3:2) will characterize false teachers and those who twist Scripture unto their own destruction (Emphasis added):

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. **For men shall be lovers of their own selves**, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as their's also was.” (2 Tim. 3:1-9)

In regards to other Bible interpreters, “History shows that erroneous principles have often spoiled the exegetical work of fine men, some of whom are great saints. This should be a warning to us against careless interpretation. There is less excuse for us because we can profit by the lessons of the past.”<sup>25</sup> Simply stated, when people cast off the basic principles of a normal, grammatical, literal and historical approach to Bible interpretation confusion, misinterpretation and misapplication are the result. Allegorizing texts when the *immediate* text does not call for it, the *spiritualization* of texts, and forcing theological *speculations* upon Scripture are all to be avoided at all costs.

Furthermore, the bad fruit of allegorizing Scripture can be clearly seen throughout church history. We must learn from these mistakes ourselves as well as warn others of them. Roy Zuck states in his book *Basic Bible Interpretation*:

“It becomes clear from these late church fathers that Jerome, Vincent, and Augustine paved the way for the two emphases that were to endure for more than a thousand years – allegorization and church authority. Cassian, Eucherius, Adrian, and Junilius built on Augustine’s allegorical approach to Scripture, thus entrenching this approach to the Bible throughout the coming centuries of the Middle Ages.”<sup>26</sup>

This allegorical approach to Scripture was never completely rejected during the hermeneutic based Protestant Reformation. The result has been the proliferation and acceptance of unbiblical doctrines for hundreds of years.<sup>27</sup>

Today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a hybrid Christianity has emerged across the world. This global counterfeit Christianity has emerged from allegorizing Scripture and has produced Amillennialism and false church authority.<sup>28</sup> This global *ecumenical* church entity has a spiritualized view of Christ’s Second Advent and the Millennium and is being absorbed into Roman Catholicism (i.e., Romanism) in the name of *separated brethren* (Protestants) that need to allegedly “[r]eturn home to Rome.”<sup>29</sup>

For those that are unaware, this false global Christianity is open to all except those who take the Bible literally (unless the immediate context dictates otherwise) and who are discerning enough to see great apostasy in our age. Allegorizing and spiritualizing Scripture, unbiblical church authority and replacing ethnic Israel with “the church” (Replacement Theology) have cemented this error in place across the globe. Altogether, the allegorizing of Scripture has been an inception point through the centuries for all manner of unbiblical perversions, false teachings, and subtle as well as blatant anti-Semitism, which Replacement Theology inevitably produces. Truly, the growing global Inter-Spirituality movement is one of Satan’s great masterpieces. It will one day find it’s ultimate fulfillment, *and judgment*, just as the Book of Revelation says (Emphasis added):

“And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having

great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. **Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.** And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, **Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.**" (Revelation 18:1-10)

Another major area that hinders proper exegesis is *experienced based* Christianity. When individual subjective experiences and unbiblical manifestations are forced upon Biblical texts, people make Scripture say anything they want it to. This is justified in the name of *eisegesis* and *a word from the Lord*. A perfect example of this was the Toronto movement, which can be categorically paralleled in the world of entertainment and the world of the cults and the occult. In actuality this is abusing the Bible and misleading people. This type of *showmanship* has nothing to do with Bible interpretation and exegesis at all. Countless churches today do this very thing and say that *God is leading them* and that they have *revelation knowledge*.

In *Basic Bible Interpretation*, Roy Zuck includes a comparative chart entitled *Historical Time Line of Major Bible Interpreters*. This chart shows a timeline of numerous hindrances to proper exegesis and includes, but is not limited to, the following (Zuck's notes are also included on pages 55 and 58). My brief notes here reflect the material in Zuck's text in Chapter Two, primarily from *The Post Reformation Era* (p. 49-50) to the *Modern Era* (p. 51-58).

### **Main Hindrances to Proper Exegesis**<sup>30</sup>

**Allegorical Method** – This largely neglects the literal.

**Traditional Method** – This largely neglects the individual.

**Rationalistic Method** – This largely neglects the supernatural.

**Subjective Method** – This largely neglects the objective.

### **Other Hindrances to Proper Exegesis**<sup>31</sup>

**Neo-Orthodox Method** – Denies propositional truth, the inerrancy of Scripture and the infallibility of the Bible. The Bible *becomes* the Word of God in man's existential encounter experience. Truth exists *existentially* in that a person *experiences* it, not in written form.

**The New Hermeneutic** – Denies propositional truth. The Biblical text can mean whatever the reader wants it to mean, i.e. "That's your interpretation, but I have mine." The goal is to have an existential *experience* in order to get to the *religious-experience core of the*

*Bible*. This movement imposes meanings upon Scripture, will not submit to Scripture, and tries to rule over Scripture.

**Mythological** – Denies literal, grammatical, historical interpretation as well as miracles.

**Structuralism** – This approach ignores the historical background of Biblical texts. It also views the Bible as having the same fundamental structural elements inherent in fictional narratives of all cultures and ages.

**Liberation Theology** – Seeks to interpret much of the Bible from the vantage point of people who are politically and economically oppressed.

**Feminist Theology** – Seeks to analyze and interpret Scripture from the viewpoint of those oppressed by sexism.

**Ethno-hermeneutics** – Looks for supra-cultural meanings encoded in Scripture.

**Mysticism/Mystical Hermeneutics** – Man can have direct knowledge of and communion with God by his or her *subjective* experience apart from the Scriptures. The focus is on experiences, not Bible interpretation.

**Pietism** – Focus is on *inner spirituality*.

**Liberalism** – Takes a rationalistic and higher critical approach to Scripture and views the Bible as a *human book*, not given by divine inspiration. Liberalism teaches that supernatural elements in the Bible can be explained rationally. Sin, depravity, and hell are to be rejected for these *offend people*. Darwin's theory of evolution is applied to Israel's religion, in which Israel is seen as having evolved from polytheism to monotheism. The Liberal view of Jesus is that Jesus is not the savior from sin, but only a moral and ethical teacher.

These things listed above are the fruit of a disregard for Scripture and the God of the Bible. When man's wisdom, rationalism and human experience (subjectivism) are placed above God's revelation, "God is robbed of His supernatural character, and the Bible is robbed of its authority."<sup>32</sup>

## **2 COR 3:16-18 AND SHAPING OUR HERMENEUTICAL GOAL**

The goal of Paul's reasoning in 2 Corinthians 3:16-18 is to communicate to believers the truth about the life transforming, *progressive sanctification* that we have as believers. This glorious transformation occurs in the lives of believers and is rooted in and through our relationship with Jesus Christ. It is by the Word of the Lord and the Spirit of the Lord that we are transformed "from glory to glory" into His image (2 Cor. 3:18).

In the text here Paul is speaking about being "transformed from glory to glory" – from one stage of sanctification to the next, or from one stage of Christ-likeness to the next. He also contrasts the glory of the New Covenant with the glory of the Old Covenant. The Old Covenant was glorious in that it revealed God's holiness as well as the standard by which men *ought* to live. The Old Covenant could never give life, it could only condemn when the standards of holiness were not met. Even so, this Old Covenant was holy and glorious. Paul then talks about the new life giving covenant through Christ which is much more glorious.

Paul makes mention that the Law was and still is glorious. However, the Law does not have the power to transform the life of a believer. Only the Spirit of the Lord can do this. Paul says in verse 16 that as a new believer turns to the LORD (Yahweh), the "veil" (of spiritual blindness) is taken away. When this occurs a person is set free by the Spirit of the Lord. Upon believing, a

person is immediately set free from the power of sin (although not “sinless” until in heaven) and the futile attempts at keeping the demands of the Law as a means of attaining righteousness. The believer in Christ thus becomes totally freed from the Law’s condemnation as well as the kingdom and power of Satan. Spiritual blindness therefore is supernaturally removed, not by attempting to live up to the glorious Old Covenant Law, but by the much more glorious Spirit of the Lord.

As the Holy Spirit liberates one from the bondage of sin and the condemnation of the Law, the believer is transformed “from glory to glory” through a continual, progressive sanctification, into the image of Christ. Again, this is not an attempt at gaining righteousness before God, for the believer is already justified and declared blameless in Christ. This *sanctification* is a glorious working of the Spirit of the Living God within an individual’s inner most being. The purpose of this day-by-day transformation is to be made into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

In summary then, in contrast to the glory of the Old Covenant, the Spirit of God has given us the New Covenant through Christ, which far surpasses the glory of the Old. The Old Covenant slew men, not because it is not holy and just and good, but because men and women in their humanity consistently fall short of living the Law perfectly. The New Covenant however, not only sets people free from the condemnation of the Law, it provides the power to live the Christian life. This far surpassing glory of the New Covenant is able to transform us ‘from glory to glory’ as by the Spirit of the Lord. The goal therefore in the Christian’s life is to be transformed into the image of Christ. This occurs “from glory to glory.” In other words, from one level of sanctification to the next, until we are transformed into the image of Christ.

This then ought to be our primary motivation and goal in studying the Scriptures - to be made into the image of Christ, and in doing so, to glorify *Him*. Our biblical hermeneutic ought to lead us down a lifelong journey of being transformed into His image by the renewing of our minds. Working together, the Word of God and the Person of the Holy Spirit are able to transform us “from glory to glory” into the image of Christ. It is this, coupled with a holy reverence for God and a heart of loving worship towards Him that ought to be the ultimate end of our hermeneutical goal.  
- SRN

### **Selected Scriptures**

#### **HOW CAN YOUNG MAN CLEANSE HIS WAY?**

How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Praise be to you, O LORD; teach me your decrees. With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth. I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches. I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word. (Psalm 119:1-16)

#### **BE A GOOD EXAMPLE**

Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. (2 Timothy 2:14-19)

#### **DESCRIPTION OF FALSE TEACHERS AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TRUE TEACHER**

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils [demons]; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. (1 Timothy 4:1-10)

#### **“DO NOT NEGLECT THE GIFT”**

For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. These things command and teach. Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee. (1 Timothy 4:11-16)

#### **Endnotes:**

- <sup>1</sup> Oxford Reference, “Hermeneutics,” <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095932785> .
- <sup>2</sup> Roy Zuck, *Basics of Bible Interpretation: A Practical Guide to Discovering Biblical Truth* (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications Ministries, 1991), 22-26.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid., 10.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> Walter Martin, *Kingdom of the Cults, Revised Edition* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers), 1985.
- <sup>6</sup> Henry H Halley, *Halley's Bible Handbook (Formerly called "Pocket Bible Handbook): An Abbreviated Bible Commentary*, Twenty-Third Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1962), Front-page.
- <sup>7</sup> Roy Zuck, *Basic Bible Interpretation*, 9-10.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid., 59-67.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., 22-26.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., 22-23.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., 23.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., 23-24.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid., 24.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., 24.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., 24-25.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid., 25-27.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., 9-10.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid., 22-23.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., 23.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., 24.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., 25.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid., 25.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., 27. Roy Zuck quoting from A. Berkeley Mickelsen, *Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963), 20.
- <sup>26</sup> Roy Zuck, *Basic Bible Interpretation*, 41.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., 27-58. The material from Zuck's book in Chapter 2, *Bible Interpretation – Then and Now* is extremely insightful. It covers a vast range of varying interpretations, including *Jewish Interpretation, Hillel and Shammai, Jewish Allegorization, Early Church Fathers, Alexandrian and Antiochene Fathers, Antiochene Fathers, Late Church Fathers, Middle Ages, The Reformation (Allegorizing vs. Paul's Allegory), The Post Reformation, The Modern Era*. This section also includes several comparative charts.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., 55, 231-232.
- <sup>29</sup> The New Evangelization: Building The City of Love, [http://www.ewtn.com/new\\_evangelization/](http://www.ewtn.com/new_evangelization/) . See also, Catholics Come Home, <http://www.catholicscomehome.org> .
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., 55.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid., 55-57.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid., 56-58.