

BIBLE STUDENTS

Useful Articles for Bible Students

Evangelist

Lorenzo Luévano Salas

1st edition, February, 2024

Volviendo a la Biblia Publications

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ON SYNTAX



What is syntax?

Syntax is a branch of grammar that deals with the structure of sentences and the arrangement of words in them. In other words, syntax studies how words are combined to form sentences and how those sentences are structured to convey meaning. It focuses on the rules and principles that govern the formation of grammatically correct sentences in a given language.

Syntax addresses questions about the grammatical relationship between words in a sentence, the function of each word within the sentence structure, and how sentences are organized to express meaning. Some of the key elements that the syntax considers include:

1. Word order: Study how words are arranged in a sentence and how that arrangement affects the meaning. For example, saying, "The poor man," is not the same as saying, "The man is poor." Here the order of the words implies a nuance and even a different idea.

2. Grammatical functions: Examine the functions that words play within a sentence, such as the subject, the verb, the object, the complement, etc. Regarding this, saying, “I don't believe in God” is not the same as saying, “No, I believe in God.”

3. Agreement: Refers to how words agree in gender, number and person. For example, in Spanish, “boy” (singular, masculine) agrees with “plays” (third person singular).

4. Complex sentence structures: Analyze how simple sentences are combined to form compound or complex sentences, using connectors and conjunctions (cf. Acts 2:38).

5. Grammatical Elements: Examine the use of grammatical elements such as pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, etc., and how they affect the structure of the sentence.

Syntax is essential for effective communication, as it provides the rules that allow the construction of understandable and coherent sentences in a specific language. Furthermore, the study of syntax contributes to understanding how language is organized and processed in the human brain.

Why is syntax important?

Syntax is a fundamental aspect in the study and use of any language. Since it studies the grammatical structure of sentences and how words are combined to form meaningful units, this makes it extremely important.

The importance of syntax lies in several aspects:

1. Effective communication: Syntax provides the rules and structures necessary to construct sentences clearly and coherently. Correct syntax facilitates effective communication, allowing messages to be understood precisely and unambiguously.

2. Understanding the meaning: Syntax helps determine the meaning of a sentence. The proper arrangement of words and the grammatical relationship between them influence how a message is interpreted. Incorrect

syntax can lead to misunderstandings and a wrong interpretation of what is meant.

3. Expression of complex ideas: Strong syntax allows for the expression of complex ideas and subtleties in language. It allows the creation of complex sentences that convey detailed information, causal relationships, and abstract concepts.

4. Correct interpretation of texts: The ability to understand and apply the rules of syntax is essential for the correct interpretation of written texts. Lack of understanding of syntax can make it difficult to read and understand texts, as the underlying structure is lost.

5. Production of quality texts: Having a good knowledge of syntax is crucial for the production of quality written texts. It allows the construction of grammatically correct and coherent sentences, which is essential in academic, professional and creative contexts.

6. Facilitates the learning of other languages: By understanding the syntax of a language, the learning of other languages is facilitated, since many share similar grammatical structures. Knowledge of syntax provides a solid foundation for acquiring skills in different languages.

In short, syntax is crucial for effective communication and correct interpretation of language. It plays a fundamental role in constructing sentences, conveying meaning, and expressing ideas, contributing to quality and clarity in verbal and written communication.

What example can we point to illustrate its importance?

New Testament Greek, for example, being a variant of Koine Greek, presents some syntactic peculiarities that are specific to biblical texts. Here are some of the most notable syntactic features:

1. Frequent use of the definite article: New Testament Greek tends to use the definite article more frequently and distinctively than other forms of Greek. Used to emphasize and clarify references. Example: ὁ λόγος (ho logos) - "The word."

2. Word order and emphasis: Although it largely follows subject-verb-object word order, the Greek New Testament may alter the order to highlight certain elements and provide emphasis: ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος (in arche in ho logos) - "In the beginning was the word."

3. Use of infinitive constructions: The New Testament often uses infinitive constructions to express purposes, results or circumstances: Εἰς τὸ διδάξαι ἡμᾶς τὴν σωτηρίαν. (Eis to didaxai hemas ten soterian) - "To teach us salvation."

4. Participles and their use in temporal clauses: Participles are frequently used in the New Testament to indicate actions concurrent or subordinate to the main action: ἐλθὼν δὲ αὐτὸς ἐπὶ τὴν ἑωυτοῦ πατρίδα. (elthōn de autos epi tēn heautou patriida) - "When he returned to his homeland."

5. Use of parallel constructions: Many New Testament passages use parallel constructions to emphasize ideas or concepts: Εὐλογητὸς εἶ ἐν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, καὶ εὐλογητὸς ὁ καρπὸς τῆς κοιλίας σου. (Eulogētos ei en tois anthrōpois, kai eulogētos ho karpos tēs koilias sou) - "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."

Of course, the use and mastery of this subject will not be easy, but requires study and practice. May God help us to be better qualified for the good of his work.

ON EXEGESIS



What is exegesis?

Exegesis is a discipline that focuses on interpreting and explaining texts, especially those that have religious or legal meaning. The term comes from the Greek "ἐξήγησις", meaning "interpretation" or "explanation". Exegesis involves carefully analyzing a text to understand its meaning, historical, cultural and linguistic context.

In the religious context, exegesis is commonly applied to the interpretation of sacred texts, such as the Bible. Religious scholars use exegetical methods to delve deeper into the meaning of biblical passages, considering factors such as historical context, grammar, culture, and the author's original intent.

In addition to the religious sphere, exegesis can be applied to other types of texts, such as legal, literary or philosophical documents. In general, exegesis seeks to discover the deepest and most precise meaning of a text, providing a grounded and contextualized interpretation.

Exegesis involves the use of various methods to interpret and understand a text more deeply.

Exegetical methods.

I. Linguistic Analysis.

A. Grammar: Examines the grammatical structure of the text, including syntax and grammar, to understand the relationship between words and sentences.

B. Semantics: Focuses on the meaning of words and how they can change depending on the context.

II. Historical and Cultural Context.

A. Historical-Critical Method: Investigate the historical context in which the text was written, considering events, customs and political situations of the time.

B. Cultural Context: Examines the cultural practices, beliefs and values that may influence the interpretation of the text.

III. Literary Context.

A. Literary Genre: Analyze the type of literature to which the text belongs (narrative, poetic, prophetic, etc.) to better understand its purpose and style.

B. Text Structure: Examines the layout and internal organization of the text.

IV. Comparison of Texts.

A. Comparison with other passages: Compare the text in question with other passages within the same document or with similar texts from other sources to obtain a more complete understanding.

V. Theological Analysis.

A. Theology of the Author: Examines the theological beliefs of the author and how they may influence the interpretation of the text.

B. Theology of the Text: Consider the specific theological content of the passage and its relationship with the work as a whole.

VI. Hermeneutics.

A. Principles of Interpretation: Apply general hermeneutical principles to understand how to correctly interpret the text, taking into account context, coherence and clarity.

VII. Literary criticism:

A. Stylistic Analysis: Examines the literary style of the text, including the use of metaphors, symbolism, and figures of speech.

These methods are often used in conjunction and complementary, as a multidimensional approach can provide a more complete and accurate interpretation of a text. The specific application of these methods may vary depending on the type of text and the purpose of the exegesis.

John 11:35 in the light of exegetical methods.

John 11:35 is a short and well-known verse in the Bible that says, "Jesus wept." This verse is found in the context of the story of the resurrection of Lazarus. We will apply some exegetical methods to obtain some interesting data from this verse:

1. Linguistic Analysis:

A. Grammar and Semantics: We observe that the verb "wept" indicates an action of Jesus, and this leads us to consider the reason for his tears. Are they tears of sadness, compassion or some other feeling?

2. Historical and Cultural Context:

A. Historical-Critical Method: We wonder why Jesus would weep in this specific situation. What were the funeral customs of the time? How was mourning experienced? From a cultural and emotional point of view, Jesus' weeping in John 11:35 could be interpreted in relation to his deep sense of empathy and compassion towards the situation. In the context of the verse, Jesus is facing the death of his friend Lazarus. Several cultural and emotional factors could contribute to this moment of weeping:

a). Empathy for the Pain of Others: In the culture of the time, expressing empathy and sharing the pain of others was valued. Jesus, by weeping over the death of Lazarus, shows his emotional connection to the grief of family and friends.

b). Solidarity in Grief: Crying during a funeral or in the context of the death of a loved one was a way to show solidarity with those who were grieving. Jesus, by participating in the lament, joins the community's pain.

c). Humanity of Jesus: The humanity of Jesus is a recurring theme in the Gospels. Weeping is a human expression of sadness and loss, and Jesus' weeping highlights his full understanding and experiencing of human emotions.

d). The Affection of Death: Jesus' weeping can also be interpreted as a reaction to the reality of death and its impact on humanity. Although Jesus has the power to raise the dead, his weeping underscores the pain inherent in death and separation.

3. Literary Context:

A. Literary Genre: We consider the genre of the gospel of John and how the inclusion of this brief verse contributes to the development of the story.

4. Comparison of Texts.

A. Comparison with Other Passages: We look at other accounts of Jesus' life to see if there are similar situations where he expresses himself emotionally.

5. Theological Analysis:

A. Theology of the Author: We reflect on John's theology and how this verse aligns with other theological themes present in his gospel.

6. Hermeneutics:

A. Principles of Interpretation: We apply hermeneutical principles to understand the purpose of including this verse in the story and how it relates to John's overall message.

7. Literary Criticism:

A. Stylistic Analysis: We consider John's literary style and how he uses emotional expression to convey a deeper message.

In summary, by applying these exegetical methods to John 11:35, we could arrive at a richer and more complete interpretation of the meaning of Jesus' tears in the specific context of the raising of Lazarus. This involves exploring not only the literal meaning of the words, but also the cultural, theological, and literary context surrounding the verse.

History of exegesis.

The history of biblical exegesis is long and complex, spanning thousands of years and reflecting a variety of interpretive approaches over time. Here I offer you a general summary of its evolution:

1. Ancient Period (6th century BC - 5th century AD): In ancient times, biblical exegesis focused on the oral interpretation of sacred texts within Jewish communities. Interpretive traditions developed, such as rabbinic exegesis in Judaism, that sought to understand and apply religious law and tradition to everyday life. In early Christianity, New Testament writers and Church Fathers used allegorical and typological methods to interpret the Old Testament in relation to the person and work of Jesus Christ.

2. Middle Ages (5th - 15th centuries): During the Middle Ages, biblical exegesis developed in the context of scholastic theology and the authority of the Catholic Church. Theologians and commentators, such as Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas, used allegorical and allegorical-

moral methods to interpret Scripture and apply it to the spiritual and moral lives of believers.

3. Protestant Reformation (16th - 17th Centuries): The Protestant Reformation of the 16th century marked a significant change in biblical exegesis by emphasizing the supreme authority of the Scriptures and direct access to them by believers. Men such as Martin Luther and John Calvin promoted the literal interpretation of the Bible and the importance of understanding the historical and linguistic context of the original texts. Hermeneutical methods such as grammatical-historical interpretation were developed to understand the original meaning of biblical texts.

4. Modern and Contemporary Era (18th - 21st Centuries): In modern times, biblical exegesis has experienced significant diversification and specialization, influenced by advances in fields such as linguistics, archeology and textual criticism. A variety of exegetical methods have been developed, including the historical-critical approach, literary analysis, and socio-historical study, which seek to understand the original context and intention of the biblical authors. Feminist exegesis, liberation theology, and other critical perspectives have also enriched the field by highlighting marginalized voices and alternative interpretations of Scripture.

In summary, the history of biblical exegesis is a complex journey that reflects the evolution of religious, theological, and academic interpretations of Scripture over time. As the discipline continues to develop, it remains a vital and ever-evolving field of study for understanding and applying biblical texts in contemporary life.

ON HERMENEUTICS



What is hermeneutics?

Hermeneutics is the philosophical and linguistic discipline that deals with the theory and interpretation of texts, especially with regard to the understanding of meanings and correct interpretation. The word "hermeneutics" comes from the ancient Greek "hermeneutikē", which refers to the art or science of interpretation.

Hermeneutics is applied to a variety of fields, including philosophy, theology, literature, law and social sciences. Its main objective is to develop methods and principles that guide the appropriate interpretation of texts, taking into account the author's intention, the cultural and linguistic context, and the reader's understanding.

Some key concepts associated with hermeneutics include:

1. **Hermeneutic Circle:** The idea that understanding one part of a text is related to understanding the whole and vice versa. It is an iterative process in which understanding is refined as interpretation progresses.
2. **Pre-understanding:** The set of beliefs and prior knowledge that an interpreter carries with them when approaching a text. Hermeneutics

recognizes that interpretation is always carried out from a pre-existing context.

3. **Horizon of Expectations:** The notion that both the author and the reader have different horizons of expectations, which influence interpretation. Hermeneutics seeks to understand and overcome these differences to arrive at a valid interpretation.

4. **Critical Interpretation:** Hermeneutics seeks a critical interpretation that not only understands the apparent meaning of a text, but also questions, analyzes and reflects on its deeper implications.

In the religious field, biblical hermeneutics is a specific discipline that focuses on the interpretation of sacred texts, such as the Bible. In general, hermeneutics plays a crucial role in understanding and applying information contained in complex and contextual texts.

Basic methods of hermeneutics.

Hermeneutics involves a series of methods and approaches to interpreting texts. Below are some basic hermeneutical methods:

1. **Literal or Grammatical Hermeneutics:** Focuses on the literal interpretation of the text, paying attention to grammar, syntax and the direct meaning of the words. This method seeks to understand the normal and ordinary meaning of the text.

2. **Historical-Critical Hermeneutics:** Examines the historical and cultural context of the author and the original audience. Consider factors such as the social, political and economic environment, as well as the circumstances in which the text was written.

3. **Theological Hermeneutics:** It focuses on interpretation from a theological perspective. Consider the theological beliefs and doctrines present in the text, as well as their relationship with other theological passages and concepts.

4. **Contextual Hermeneutics:** Analyzes the text within its broader context, considering the relationship between different parts of a document or the connection with other literary works of the same era.

5. Phenomenological Hermeneutics: Emphasizes the reader's experience when interacting with the text. It seeks to understand how the text resonates with personal experience and how it is perceived subjectively.

6. Dialectical Hermeneutics: It is based on the dialogue between the text and the reader. It proposes that interpretation is an interactive process in which the ideas of the reader and the author influence each other.

7. Existential Hermeneutics: Focused on the understanding of human experience and the personal application of the text. It seeks to discover how the text relates to the existence and daily life of the reader.

8. Critical Hermeneutics: Adopts a critical approach to the text, examining issues such as power, ideology and social structure that can influence the production and reception of the text.

9. Postmodern Hermeneutics: Recognizes the subjective and interpretive nature of knowledge. It questions objective ideas of truth and seeks to explore the multiple possible interpretations of a text.

These are just some of the basic hermeneutical approaches, and they are often combined in practice to achieve a fuller and richer interpretation of a text. The choice of method will depend on the type of text, the purpose of the interpretation and the perspective of the interpreter.

Jewish hermeneutics.

The Jewish hermeneutical method, also known as Jewish hermeneutics or rabbinic interpretation, refers to the interpretive approach used by Jewish scholars and teachers to understand and apply the Hebrew Scriptures, especially the Tanakh (the Old Testament for Christians). This approach is based on a long tradition of study and analysis of sacred texts, and has developed over thousands of years within the Jewish community.

The Jewish hermeneutical method is characterized by several principles and interpretive techniques:

1. Literal and contextual interpretation: Great importance is given to the literal meaning of the texts, as well as the historical, cultural and linguistic context in which they were written. Jewish commentators seek to

understand the original meaning of Hebrew words and phrases, as well as their historical and cultural context.

2. Use of Rabbinic Exegesis: Traditional methods of rabbinic exegesis, such as midrash and halacha, are used to interpret and apply Scripture. Midrash focuses on the exploration and development of hidden or underlying meanings in texts, while halacha focuses on the practical application of Jewish law to daily life.

3. Emphasis on oral tradition: The importance of oral tradition in the interpretation and transmission of Scripture is recognized. The Mishna, Talmud, and other rabbinic texts are considered authoritative sources of interpretation and application of Jewish law and tradition.

4. Diversity of approaches: Although there are certain common principles in the Jewish hermeneutical method, there is also a diversity of interpretive approaches within the Jewish tradition. Different groups and schools of thought may emphasize different aspects of interpretation and apply different hermeneutical methods.

5. Dialogue with tradition and community: Jewish interpretation takes place in the context of Jewish community and tradition, with an emphasis on dialogue and debate between scholars and teachers. The interpretation of Scripture is considered a continuous and dynamic process that involves the active participation of the community in the interpretation and application of sacred texts.

In summary, the Jewish hermeneutical method is a rich and diverse interpretive approach that draws on a long tradition of study and analysis of the Hebrew Scriptures. This method is characterized by its emphasis on the literal and contextual meaning of texts, the use of rabbinic exegesis and oral tradition and dialogue with the Jewish community and tradition.

Greek hermeneutics.

Greek hermeneutics refers to the interpretive approach used by the ancient Greeks to understand and analyze literary and philosophical texts. Although Greek hermeneutics did not focus specifically on the Hebrew Scriptures as Jewish hermeneutics did, it greatly influenced the later

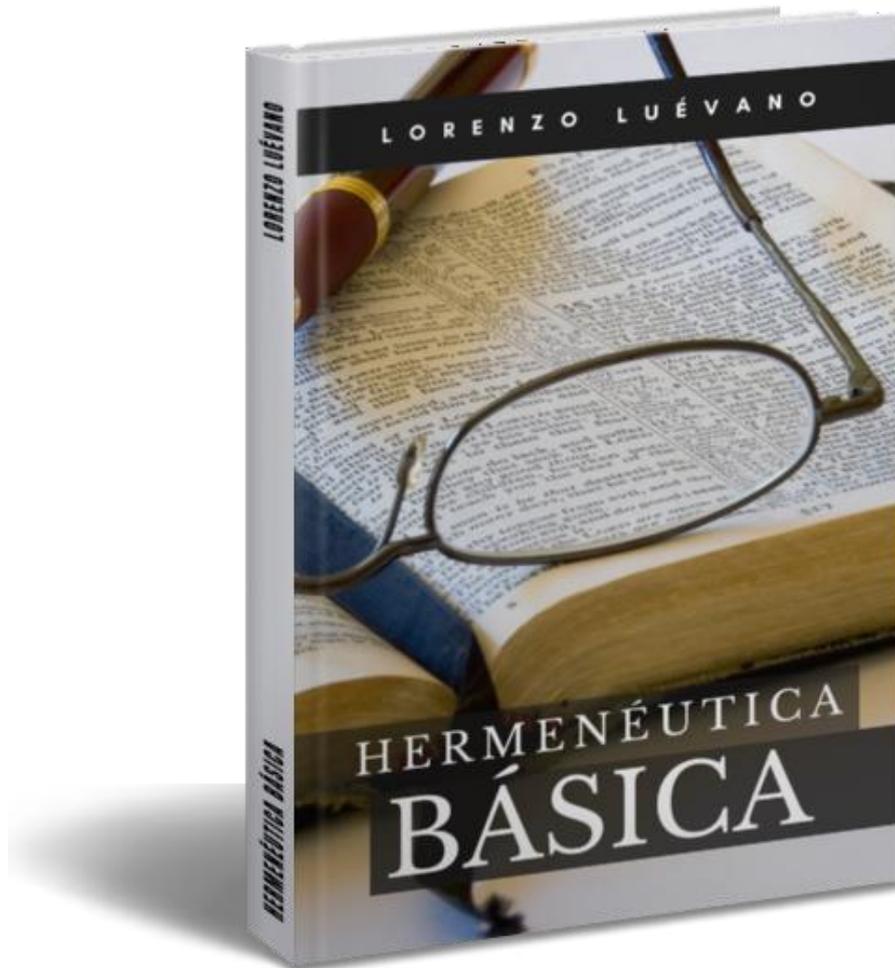
development of Western hermeneutical theory and had a significant impact on the interpretation of religious and philosophical texts.

Some key aspects of Greek hermeneutics include:

1. **Philosophical approach:** Greek hermeneutics developed in the context of classical Greek philosophy, especially among the sophists and philosophers of ancient Greece. The Greeks had a deep interest in the interpretation and analysis of literary and philosophical texts, and developed methods and techniques for understanding the meaning of texts and their relevance to human life.
2. **Emphasis on rational interpretation:** The Greeks valued reason and logic as fundamental tools for interpreting texts. They believed that it was possible to achieve a deeper understanding of texts through rational analysis and critical reasoning.
3. **Dialectic and debate:** Greek hermeneutics was characterized by dialogue and debate between interpreters. The sophists, in particular, were known for their ability to argue and persuade through the skillful use of rhetoric and dialectic.
4. **Interest in the interpretation of literary and philosophical texts:** The Greeks had a deep interest in the interpretation of literary, poetic and philosophical texts. They developed techniques and methods to analyze and understand the meaning of these texts, as well as their importance to Greek culture and society.
5. **Influence on Western Hermeneutics:** Greek hermeneutics had a lasting influence on Western hermeneutical theory, especially through figures such as Plato, Aristotle and the Sophists. Their ideas and methods were adopted and developed by later philosophers, theologians and scholars, and continue to influence the interpretation of texts today.

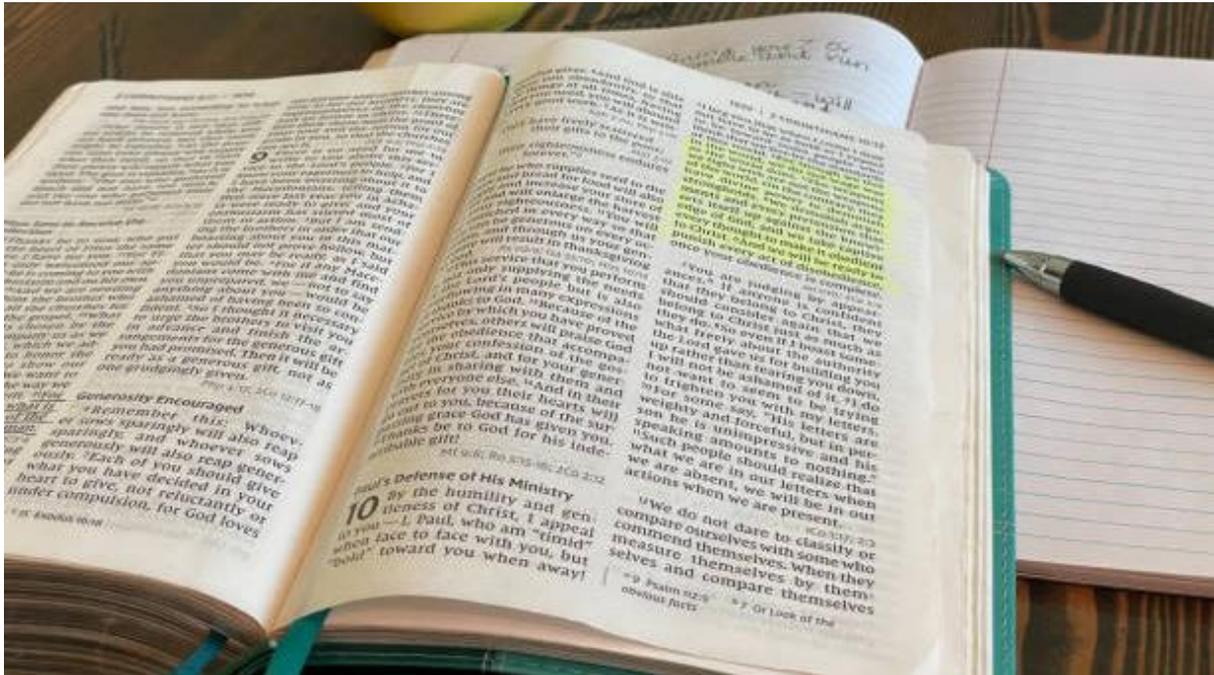
Thus, Greek hermeneutics is the interpretive approach used by the ancient Greeks to understand and analyze literary and philosophical texts. It is characterized by its philosophical approach, emphasis on rational interpretation, dialectics and debate, interest in the interpretation of literary and poetic texts, and its lasting influence on Western hermeneutical theory.

If you wish to begin your studies in the field of biblical interpretation, I recommend my work, “Basic Hermeneutics” available on Amazon.



www.returningalabiblia.com.mx/2022/09/22/hermeneutica-basica/

ON CONTEXT



What is context?

Context refers to the environment, circumstances or conditions that surround a specific event, situation or information and that provide a framework for its understanding. In the field of interpreting texts, whether literary, historical, religious or otherwise, context is essential to fully understand the meaning and importance of what is being studied.

There are several types of contexts that may be relevant depending on the specific context:

1. Historical Context:

- It refers to the conditions and events that occurred in the past and that may have influence on the interpretation of certain facts or texts. Understanding historical context provides information about the circumstances under which an event occurred or a text was written.

2. Cultural Context:

- Includes the norms, values, beliefs and practices of the culture in which an event takes place or a text is produced. Cultural context can affect how certain words, actions or symbols are perceived.

3. Social Context:

- Considers the relationships and social structures present in a society at a given time. It includes aspects such as social hierarchy, family relationships, institutions and social dynamics.

4. Linguistic Context:

- Refers to the use of language in a certain context. The interpretation of words and expressions may vary depending on the linguistic context in which they are used.

5. Literary Context:

- Involves the relationship of a work with other literary works, as well as its internal structure and style. Understanding literary context helps interpret specific elements of a work.

6. Biographical Context:

- Consider the life and experiences of the author or the people involved in an event. A person's biography can shed light on their motivations and perspectives.

7. Spatial Context:

- Related to the physical location of an event. Spatial context can affect how a situation unfolds and how it is perceived.

Proper understanding of context is essential to avoid misunderstandings and to accurately interpret information. In many cases, the meaning of a word, action or event can change significantly depending on the context in which it is found.

Examples with word study.

The change in the meaning of a word depending on the context is known as polysemy. Polysemy occurs when a word has multiple meanings related to each other, and the specific meaning that applies in a particular context depends on factors such as the environment, situation, culture and communicative intent. Here are some ways a word can change meaning depending on context:

1. Change of Figurative Meaning:

- A word can have a literal meaning and, at the same time, a figurative meaning. For example, the word "light" can refer to both electromagnetic radiation and understanding or clarity in a figurative context.

2. Semantic Change:

- A word can experience changes in its meaning over time due to linguistic and cultural factors. These changes are known as semantic changes. For example, the word "gay" has undergone a semantic shift over the decades, going from meaning "happy" to referring to a certain preference within the LGBTQ+ community.

3. Change of Linguistic Register:

- The meaning of a word can vary depending on the linguistic register, that is, the level of formality or informality. For example, the word "abandon" may have different connotations in a formal context, such as in a legal document, compared to a colloquial context.

4. Cultural Change:

- Words can take on different meanings in different cultures. A term that is neutral or positive in one culture may have negative connotations in another. For example, the word "individualism" may be viewed positively in certain cultural contexts and negatively in others.

5. Change of Grammatical Context:

- The grammatical function of a word in a sentence can affect its meaning. For example, the word "key" may refer to an object used to open a door, but in the context of a conversation about music, it could refer to the key of a composition.

6. Play on Words and Double Meanings:

- In some cases, intentional ambiguity can give rise to a double meaning or play on words. For example, a word can have a literal meaning and a figurative meaning in the same context.

So, polysemy and changes in meaning depending on the context are common phenomena in language. Accurately interpreting a word requires considering the context in which it is used to understand its specific meaning in that particular situation.

The importance of context.

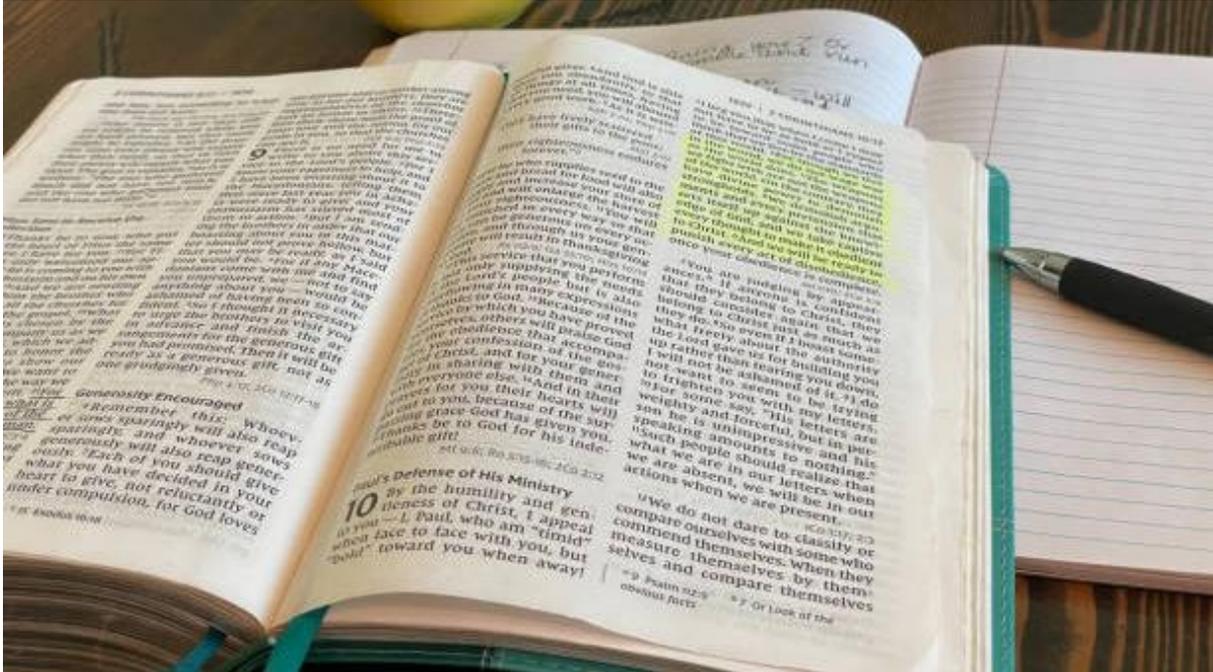
Context is essential for the proper understanding of any message, whether in literature, oral communication, interpersonal relationships or the interpretation of sacred texts. In all of these areas, context provides the necessary framework to understand the full and precise meaning of what is being communicated.

In text interpretation, context encompasses a variety of aspects, including historical, cultural, linguistic and situational context. The historical context helps us understand the circumstances in which the text was written and the influences that may have affected the author. The cultural context allows us to understand the customs, beliefs and values of the society in which the text was produced. The linguistic context helps us interpret the meaning of the words and expressions used in the text, taking into account their use at that specific time and place. And situational context refers to the specific environment or situation in which the message was communicated.

The importance of context lies in the fact that it provides clarity and depth to the meaning of a text. Without taking context into account, we run the risk of misunderstanding or distorting the original message. For example, a word or phrase can have different meanings depending on the context in which it is used. Likewise, an action or event can be interpreted differently depending on the context in which it occurred.

In the interpretation of sacred texts, such as the Bible, context is especially crucial because of the complexity and depth of the texts and their importance to the faith and religious practice of millions of people around the world. Understanding the historical, cultural, and linguistic context in which these texts were written helps us interpret them more accurately and apply their teachings meaningfully to our lives.

ON TEXTUAL CRITICISM



What is textual criticism?

Textual criticism is an academic discipline dedicated to the study and editing of ancient texts and manuscripts with the goal of determining the most accurate and authentic form of the original text. Its objective is to reconstruct the original text as it was written by the author, identifying and correcting errors and variants that have arisen over time due to incorrect copies, omissions, additions or accidental or intentional modifications.

Textual criticism involves several processes and methods, including:

- 1. Manuscript Compilation:** Gather and examine existing manuscripts of a particular work, whether originals or ancient copies, to compare variants and establish a basis for critical editing.
- 2. Paleographic Analysis:** Study the writing and style of the manuscripts to determine their date, origin and authenticity. Paleography helps establish the age and reliability of manuscripts.

3. Comparison of Variants: Compare the differences between different manuscripts and versions of a work to identify transmission errors, interpolations and omissions.

4. Use of External Testimonies: Examine external sources, such as quotes from other authors, to verify and corroborate the text in question.

5. Establishment of the Critical Text: Based on the analysis of the manuscripts and variants, an attempt is made to reconstruct the original text, eliminating errors and correcting discrepancies.

6. Linguistic Analysis: Examines linguistic, grammatical and stylistic aspects of the text to guarantee coherence and cohesion.

7. Critical Edition: Produces a critical edition of the text, presenting the base text and any significant variants, along with explanatory notes and comments on editorial decisions.

Textual criticism is especially important for ancient texts, such as classical, religious or historical works, where available manuscripts may be scarce and fragmentary. By accurately reconstructing the original text, textual criticism helps preserve the integrity and authenticity of literary and academic works over time.

Pioneers of textual criticism.

The first textual critics of the Bible were primarily religious scholars and scholars working in antiquity and the Middle Ages. These individuals were interested in preserving and understanding biblical texts in their most authentic and accurate forms. Some early textual critics of the Bible include:

1. Origen (circa 185–254 AD): Origen was a Christian theologian and scholar in Alexandria, Egypt. He is known for his work in textual criticism of the Bible and for his Hexapla, an edition of the Hebrew Bible with six columns that included different versions and translations.

2. Jerome (circa 347–420 AD): Jerome was a Christian scholar and theologian known for his work translating the Bible into Latin, known as the

Vulgate. During his translation work, Jerome undertook a careful review and comparison of the available Hebrew and Greek texts.

3. Tyconius (4th century AD): Tyconius was a biblical scholar and Christian commentator known for his commentary on Revelation and for his focus on allegorical interpretation of Scripture. He is also credited with being one of the first to apply critical principles to biblical exegesis.

4. Augustine of Hippo (354–430 AD): Augustine was an influential Christian theologian and philosopher. Although he did not focus specifically on textual criticism, his exegetical work and his emphasis on the importance of understanding the historical and linguistic context of the Bible contributed to the development of hermeneutics and biblical criticism.

These early textual critics of the Bible laid the foundation for the later development of textual criticism and biblical exegesis in the Middle Ages and beyond. Their efforts were instrumental in preserving and understanding biblical texts in their most authentic and accurate form possible.

Modern proponents.

1. Bruce M. Metzger (1914-2007): Metzger was a noted New Testament scholar and an expert in textual criticism. He is known for his significant contributions to the field of biblical textual criticism, including his involvement in revising and editing several versions of the Bible, as well as his numerous scholarly works on the subject.



2. Bart D. Ehrman (born 1955): Ehrman is a renowned scholar of the New Testament and author of numerous books on textual criticism and the history of early Christianity. He is known for his critical and provocative approach to his work, as well as his ability to communicate complex academic topics to the general public.

3. David C. Parker: Parker is a British scholar known for his work in New Testament textual criticism. He is the author of numerous books and scholarly articles on the subject, and has conducted significant research on Greek New Testament manuscripts and textual transmission.



4. Daniel B. Wallace: Wallace is a New Testament scholar and professor of New Testament studies at Dallas Theological Seminary. He is known for his work in textual criticism and has been involved in important research projects related to New Testament manuscripts and textual transmission.

5. Eldon Jay Epp (1935-2017): Epp was an influential New Testament scholar and an expert in textual criticism. His work has contributed significantly to the field of biblical textual criticism, and he is known for his rigorous approach and ability to address complex issues in the discipline.



His contributions have been fundamental to the advancement of the field and to a more complete understanding of the transmission and development of ancient texts.

Old Testament books that have been the subject of controversy in the field of textual criticism.

Several biblical texts of the Old Testament have been the subject of controversy in the field of textual criticism due to textual variants, linguistic difficulties, discrepancies between manuscripts and questions of interpretation. Some of the most notably controversial texts include:

1. The Books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles: These books contain numerous textual variants and chronology problems, especially regarding the succession of the kings of Israel and Judah.

2. The Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy): Particularly the book of Genesis, has generated debate around the historicity of certain stories, such as the story of creation and the flood, as well as the authorship and composition of the Pentateuch as a whole.

3. The Book of Isaiah: Textual criticism of Isaiah focuses on the division of the book into the sections of "Proto-Isaiah" (chapters 1-39), "Deutero-Isaiah" (chapters 40-55) and "Tritus-Isaiah" (chapters 56-66). Some scholars question the unity of authorship and date of composition of these sections.

4. The Book of Daniel: The dating and authorship of the book of Daniel have been the subject of debate, especially in relation to the prophecies and the interpretation of historical events.

5. The Psalms: Some psalms present textual variants between different manuscripts and ancient versions, which has raised questions about the authenticity and interpretation of certain verses.

6. The Minor Prophets: These books, which include Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, have been the subject of critical study due to linguistic difficulties and differences between manuscripts.

These are just a few examples of biblical texts from the Old Testament that have been the subject of controversy in the field of textual criticism. Continued research and critical analysis of these texts contributes to a deeper understanding of Old Testament history, literature and theology.

New Testament books that have been the subject of controversy in the field of textual criticism.

In the field of New Testament textual criticism, some texts have been the subject of controversy due to significant textual variants, translation difficulties and issues related to authorship and authenticity. Here are some examples:

1. The End of the Gospel of Mark (Mark 16:9-20): The final passage of Mark, which includes accounts of the resurrection of Jesus and apostolic commissions, is the subject of controversy due to the presence of textual variants and the question about if this passage is part of the original text of Mark.

2. The Comma Johanneum (1 John 5:7-8): Also known as the Johannine Comma, this passage is the subject of controversy due to the presence of a comma which appears in some manuscripts and versions but is absent in older manuscripts and most modern translations. This comma has been used in the past to support the doctrine of the Trinity, but many scholars consider it to be a later addition.

3. The Pericope of the Adulterous Woman (John 7:53-8:11): This story, which narrates Jesus' encounter with an adulterous woman and his interaction with the Pharisees, is the subject of controversy due to the absence of this passage in some of the oldest manuscripts. Some scholars question its authenticity and suggest that it was added later to the text of John.

4. The Text of Luke 22:43-44: These verses, which describe the agony of Jesus in Gethsemane and the appearance of an angel who strengthens him, are the subject of debate due to variability in ancient manuscripts and their absence in some of the oldest.

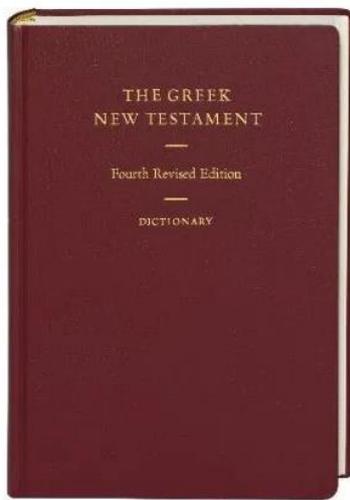
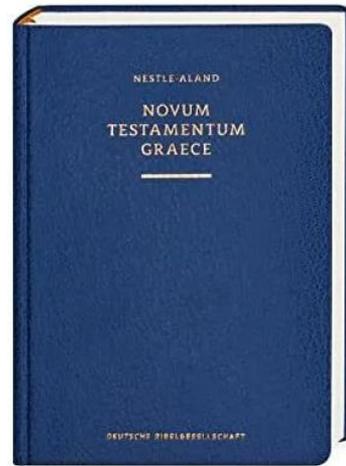
5. The End of the Gospel of John (John 21:25): The final verse of the Gospel of John mentions that Jesus did many other things that are not recorded in this book. Some scholars have speculated that John 21:25 may be a later addition to the original text.

These are just a few examples of New Testament texts that have generated debate and controversy in the field of textual criticism. Continued research and critical analysis of manuscripts and textual variants contribute to a more accurate and complete understanding of the New Testament texts.

Critical editions of the New Testament.

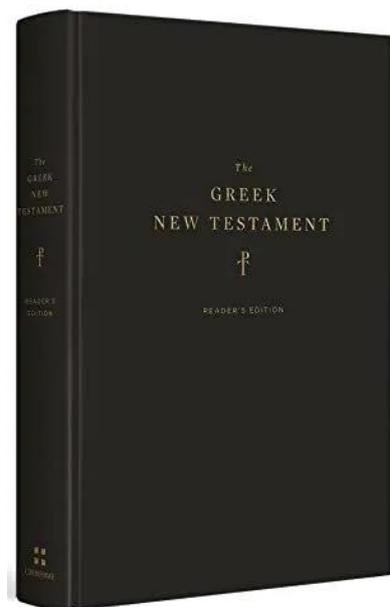
Textual criticism of the New Testament has led to the production of several critical editions and reconstructions of the Greek text of the New Testament. These editions are based on the analysis of ancient manuscripts and textual variants, with the aim of providing the most accurate representation possible of the original text. Some of the most well-known and widely used critical editions include:

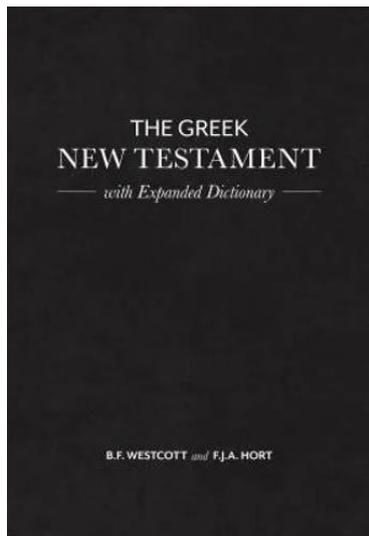
1. Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece (NA28): The Nestle-Aland edition is one of the most respected and used critical editions of the Greek New Testament. NA28 is the twenty-eighth edition of this series and represents a comprehensive review of the Greek text based on the latest advances in textual research.



2. United Bible Societies Greek New Testament (UBS5): This critical edition of the Greek New Testament, developed in collaboration with the United Bible Society, is similar to the Nestle-Aland edition and is based on the same set of manuscripts. UBS5 is used by many Bible translators as a basis for translating Scripture into modern language.

3. Tyndale House Greek New Testament (THGNT): This edition of the Greek New Testament, developed by a team of scholars led by Dirk Jongkind at Tyndale House, Cambridge, presents a text-critical approach slightly different from that of Nestle-Aland and UBS. It strives to represent a text that is closer to what the New Testament authors originally wrote.





4. Westcott and Hort Greek New Testament: Westcott and Hort 's Greek New Testament, published in 1881, has been one of the most influential critical editions in the history of New Testament study. It was prepared by Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort , two 19th-century New Testament scholars, and was based on principles and methodologies of textual criticism that they developed and applied.

Some important features of Westcott and Hort 's New Testament include:

Textual Methodology: Westcott and Hort applied a rigorous approach to textual criticism that focused on the identification and classification of ancient Greek manuscripts. They highly valued older manuscripts and considered older textual readings to be more likely to be authentic.

Testimony of the Manuscripts: They gave great weight to the Alexandrian manuscripts, especially the Codex Vaticanus (B) and the Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲙ), considered two of the oldest and best preserved manuscripts of the New Testament. They also paid attention to other ancient testimonies, such as ancient versions and quotations from the Church Fathers.

Reconstruction of the Text: Based on their textual analysis, Westcott and Hort produced an edition of the Greek New Testament that represented their best attempt to reconstruct the original text of the New Testament. This included adopting certain readings not found in most later texts, but which they considered more authentic.

Critical Notes: The Westcott and Hort edition includes a detailed critical apparatus providing information on textual variants and manuscript sources. These notes help readers understand the rationale behind editorial decisions and evaluate the textual evidence for themselves.

Westcott and Hort 's New Testament has been criticized and surpassed in some respects by later editions, it remains an important work in the history of New Testament textual criticism and has influenced the way the texts are studied and understood. Greek biblical His emphasis on the age

and quality of manuscripts and his systematic approach to textual criticism have left a lasting mark on the field.

Each of these editions offers a careful and academically rigorous presentation of the Greek text of the New Testament, based on evidence from ancient manuscripts and textual research.

About the end of Mark.

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Marcos 16:8

Ψ ΚΑΤΑ Ψ
 ΔΑΡΚΟΝ Ψ

Marc. XV, 43—XVI, 8.

- 69 -

The ending of the Gospel of Mark, which runs from Mark 16:9 to the end of chapter 16, has been the subject of debate among biblical scholars due to the presence of textual variants and the question of whether this passage is part of the original text of Mark. Here are some arguments for and against the authenticity of Mark's ending:

Arguments in Favor:

- 1. Manuscript Evidence:** Some ancient manuscripts include the end of Mark, suggesting that this section was present in some of the earliest copies of the Gospel.
- 2. Early Testimonies:** There is evidence that some of the early Church Fathers, such as Irenaeus of Lyon and Justin Martyr, were familiar with the end of Mark, indicating that this passage may have been in circulation since the early centuries of the Christianity.
- 3. Theological Consistency:** The content of the end of Mark, which includes references to the resurrection of Jesus and the apostolic commission, is consistent with the rest of the Gospel and with other New Testament narratives, suggesting that it could have been written by the same author.

Counterarguments:

- 1. Absence in Ancient Manuscripts:** Some of the oldest and most reliable manuscripts of the Gospel of Mark end in verse 8 of chapter 16, not including the ending found in many modern Bibles.
- 2. Style and Vocabulary:** The style and vocabulary of the end of Mark differs from the rest of the Gospel, suggesting that it may have been added later by a scribe or editor.
- 3. Variability of the Manuscripts:** The manuscripts that include the end of Mark present notable variability in terms of the specific content of this section, suggesting that it could have been subject to interpolations and modifications over time.
- 4. Copyists' Conscious Knowledge:** Some of the manuscripts that include the end of Mark show signs that the copyists were aware that this passage was problematic, such as marginal notes or marks to indicate that the authenticity was questionable.

In summary, debate over the ending of the Gospel of Mark continues among biblical scholars, and there is no definitive consensus on its authenticity. While some argue for its originality based on manuscript

evidence and early testimonies, others question its authenticity due to its absence in some of the oldest manuscripts and discrepancies in style and content.

Complexities of textual criticism.

Textual criticism is a complex and rigorous discipline that seeks to reconstruct ancient texts as accurately as possible. However, like any field of study, textual criticism is not free from potential pitfalls or challenges. Some of the common errors that can occur in relation to textual criticism of the Bible include:

1. Interpreter Bias: The personal or theological prejudices of the textual critic can influence their editorial decisions and the interpretation of textual variants. This bias can lead to subjective editorial decisions that do not accurately reflect the original text.

2. Lack of Sufficient Evidence: In some cases, the lack of manuscripts or textual evidence can make it difficult to accurately reconstruct the original text. This can lead to editorial decisions based on inference or guesswork rather than solid evidence.

3. Transcription Errors: Human errors in transcribing manuscripts can introduce incorrect textual variants in subsequent copies. These errors may include omissions, additions, misunderstandings of similar words or letters and other copying errors.

4. Later Interpolations: In some cases, parts of the text may have been added later by later copyists or editors. Identifying these interpolations can be difficult and can lead to debates about the authenticity and integrity of the text.

5. Lack of Academic Consensus: Textual criticism of the Bible often involves debates and disagreements among scholars over issues such as the authenticity of certain passages, the authorship of biblical books and the dating of manuscripts. The lack of consensus can make it difficult to reach definitive conclusions.

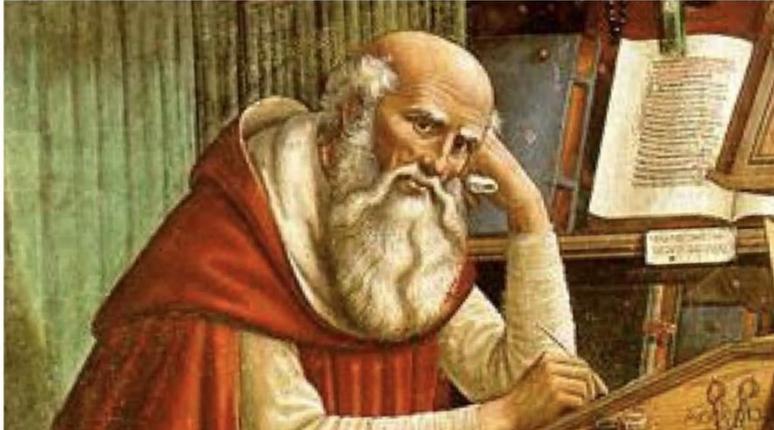
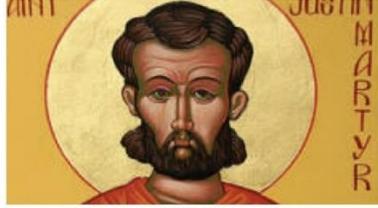
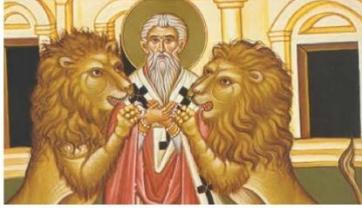
6. Linguistic and Cultural Limitations: Complete understanding of ancient texts can be difficult due to linguistic and cultural differences

between the ancient and modern world. Some concepts and expressions may be difficult to translate or interpret accurately.

It is important to recognize that textual criticism is a continuous and evolving process that requires academic rigor and care in the interpretation of available evidence. While errors may occur, textual criticism remains an invaluable tool for understanding and preserving ancient texts, including the Bible.

As preachers of Christ, it is important to have basic knowledge about this matter, since both sectarian preachers and brothers who propose a strange doctrine will present some argument based on textual criticism to support their errors.

ON PATRISTICS



What is patristics?

Patristics is a field of study within theology and church history that focuses on the study of the writings of the Church Fathers, also known as the Patristic Fathers. These Church Fathers were prominent figures in the early centuries of Christianity, from the early apologists to the theologians and ecclesiastical leaders of the first ecumenical councils.

Patristics covers a period of time generally extending from the first centuries of Christianity to about the 8th century, although some definitions may also include later figures. During this period, the Church Fathers played a crucial role in the formulation and development of doctrine, as well as in defending the faith against heresies and doctrinal controversies.

Some important topics addressed in patristics include the nature of God, the Trinity, the incarnation, salvation, the church and the sacraments, among others. The writings of the Church Fathers are an invaluable source for understanding the history and evolution of religious thought in the early centuries, as well as for examining how they met the theological and ethical challenges of their time.

Notable Church Fathers include figures such as Augustine of Hippo, Irenaeus of Lyon, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Athanasius of Alexandria, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom and Jerome, among others. His writings have left a lasting legacy in theology and continue to be studied and venerated in both Eastern and Western traditions.

The Antiochian Fathers.

The Antiochian Fathers are a group of Christian theologians and writers who lived and taught primarily in the city of Antioch during the first centuries of Christianity. Although they do not form a homogeneous group in terms of theology or approach, they share certain characteristics and important contributions to the development of Christian thought. Some of the most notable Antiochian Fathers include:

1. John Chrysostom (c. 347-407). He was one of the greatest preachers and exegetes of the ancient church. He served as archbishop of Constantinople and is known for his practical and accessible sermons and biblical commentaries. Chrysostom emphasized the importance of direct preaching of Scripture and a practical and ethical Christian life.

2. Diodorus of Tarsus (c. 350-394). Diodorus was a bishop and theologian of the church of Antioch. He is known for his exegetical and theological approach, which emphasized a literal and historical interpretation of Scripture. His exegetical approach influenced later theologians, such as Theodoret of Cyrus and Theodore of Mopsuestia .

3. Theodoret of Cyrus (c. 393-457). Theodoret was bishop of Cyrus and a prolific writer and biblical commentator. He is known for his exegetical commentaries on various parts of the Bible, as well as his theological and apologetic treatises. Theodoret was also an advocate of a literal and historical interpretation of Scripture.

4. Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 350-428). Theodore was an influential theologian and exegete of the School of Antioch. He is known for his exegetical and theological approach, which focused on the literal and historical interpretation of Scripture. His influence extended throughout church history, although some of his teachings were later the subject of controversy.

The Antiochian Fathers contributed significantly to the development of theological and exegetical thought in the first centuries of Christianity. His emphasis on a literal and historical interpretation of Scripture, as well as practical and moral preaching, had a lasting impact on the theological tradition.

The Greek Fathers.

The Greek Fathers are a group of Christian theologians, writers, and church leaders who lived and taught primarily in the Greek-speaking world during the early centuries of Christianity. These figures exerted a great influence on the development of theological thought, doctrine and Christian spirituality. Some of the most prominent Greek Fathers include:

1. Clement of Alexandria (c. 150 - c. 215). He was a Christian theologian and philosopher who taught at the Catechetical School of Alexandria. His writings address a wide range of topics, from apologetics to ethics and spirituality. Clement was one of the first theologians to attempt to integrate the Christian faith with Greek philosophy, especially Platonism.

2. Origen (c. 184 - c. 253). Origen was an influential scholar, exegete and theologian from Alexandria. He is known for his allegorical approach to the interpretation of Scripture, as well as his vast output of exegetical, theological and apologetic works. Although some of his teachings were controversial, his influence on Christian thought was significant.

3. Athanasius of Alexandria (c. 296 - 373). He was one of the most prominent leaders of Christianity in the 4th century and one of the main defenders of the doctrine of the Trinity against Arianism. Athanasius participated in the Council of Nicaea and wrote extensively on theological topics, especially in defense of the divinity of Christ.

4. Basil the Great (c. 330 - 379). Basil was bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia and one of the Cappadocian Fathers, along with Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa. He is known for his theological and ascetic writings, as well as his influence on the development of Christian monasticism in the East.

These are just a few examples of the Greek Fathers, who played a crucial role in formulating doctrine, interpreting Scripture, and defending the

faith during the early centuries of Christianity. Their contributions remain fundamental to theology to this day.

The Western Fathers.

These are a group of theologians, writers and church leaders who lived and taught primarily in Latin-speaking regions during the early centuries of Christianity, particularly in the west of the Roman Empire. These figures played an important role in the development of theological thought and the expansion of the church in the Latin-speaking world. Some of the most notable Western Fathers include:

1. Tertullian (c. 155 - c. 240). Tertullian was a prolific Christian writer and apologist of Carthaginian origin. He is known for being one of the first theologians to write extensively in Latin, and his works cover a wide range of topics, from apologetics to ethics and Trinitarian theology.

2. Cyprian of Carthage (c. 200 - 258). Cyprian was bishop of Carthage and one of the leaders of the African church in the 3rd century. He is known for his defense of episcopal authority and his emphasis on church unity. His writings address topics such as church government, discipline, and church unity.

3. Ambrose of Milan (c. 340 - 397). Ambrose was bishop of Milan and an influential figure in the Western church during the 4th century. He is known for his role in the conversion of Augustine of Hippo and for his defense of ecclesiastical authority against secular power. His writings address a wide range of topics, including theology, morality and liturgy.

4. Jerome (c. 347 - 420). Jerome was a Christian scholar, translator and exegete who is best known for his translation of the Bible into Latin, known as the Vulgate. He also wrote extensively on theological, ethical and ascetic topics and his commentary on the Book of Psalms is especially well known.

5. Augustine of Hippo (354 - 430). Augustine was one of the most influential theologians in the history of Western Christianity. He is known for his theological, philosophical and autobiographical works, including "Confessions" and "The City of God." His writings address a wide range of topics, from grace and sin to the Trinity and political theology.

These are just a few examples of the Western Fathers, who played a crucial role in the formulation of Roman doctrine, the interpretation of Scripture, and the defense of the faith during the first centuries of Christianity in the Latin-speaking world. Their influence remains significant on theology and spirituality to this day.

Literary works.

The Church Fathers produced a wide variety of literary works spanning various genres, including theological treatises, biblical commentaries, homilies, apologies, letters and ascetic writings. These works not only reflect the richness and diversity of Christian thought of the early centuries, but have also had a profound influence on the development of Christian theology and spirituality. Here are some notable literary works of the Church Fathers:

- 1. "Confessions" by Augustine of Hippo.** This autobiographical work is one of the most influential in the history of religious literature. Augustine recounts his spiritual journey and conversion to Christianity, exploring themes such as sin, grace, divine providence and the nature of the human soul.
- 2. "The City of God" by Augustine of Hippo.** This extensive theological treatise addresses the relationship between the City of God and the earthly city, exploring topics such as history, politics, morality and divine providence. The work is a response to pagan criticism of Christianity after the sack of Rome in 410.
- 3. "Homilies on the Gospel of John" by John Chrysostom.** These homilies are a collection of sermons on the Gospel of John preached by John Chrysostom in Constantinople. They are noted for their eloquent style, spiritual depth, and pastoral approach.
- 4. "Comments on the Epistles of Saint Paul" by Origen.** Origen wrote extensive exegetical commentaries on many of Paul's epistles, which are an important contribution to the study of Scripture in the religious tradition.

5. "Apology" by Tertullian. Tertullian wrote several apologies in defense of Christianity against pagan criticism and persecution. His "Apology" is one of the most notable, defending the Christian faith against accusations of immorality and atheism.

6. "The Divine Institutions" by Lactantius . This theological treatise by Lactantius addresses a variety of topics related to Christian doctrine, morality and philosophy. It is one of the first Christian works to systematically address Christian theology.

These are just some of the most notable literary works of the Church Fathers, who have left a lasting legacy in the theological and spiritual tradition of Christianity. Their influence remains evident in Christian theology, liturgy and spirituality to this day.

Apologetic works.

The Fathers of the Church produced numerous apologetic works in defense of Christianity against pagan criticism and persecution. These works are important testimonies to the faith and perseverance of the early Christians, as well as examples of theological and apologetic argument. Here are some notable apologetic works of the Church Fathers:

1. "Apology" by Justin Martir. This work is one of the first Christian apologies and is addressed to the Roman emperor Antoninus Pius and his son, Marcus Aurelius. Justin defends the Christian faith against accusations of immorality, atheism, and heresy, and argues for the truth of Christianity based on reason and divine revelation.

2. "Apology" by Tertullian. Tertullian wrote several apologies in defense of Christianity, including one addressed to the Roman emperor and another addressed to provincial governors. These works defend the Christian faith against accusations of immorality, atheism and betrayal of the state, and argue for religious freedom and justice.

3. "Against Celsus" by Origen. This apologetic treatise by Origen is a response to the work "The True Word" of Celsus, a pagan philosopher who attacked Christianity in the second century. Origen refutes Celsus' arguments and defends the truth of Christianity, presenting a rational and theological apology for the faith.

4. "Apology" by Athanasius of Alexandria. Athanasius wrote an apology in defense of the Christian faith during the period of the Arian controversies in the 4th century. In this work, he defends the divinity of Christ against Arian heresies and argues for Trinitarian orthodoxy.

5. "Apology" by Augustine of Hippo. Augustine wrote several apologies in defense of Christianity, including, "Against the Pagans" and "The City of God." These works address a wide range of topics, from the existence of God to the relationship between the Christian faith and the state, and defend the Christian faith against pagan criticism and persecution.

These are just some of the most notable apologetic works of the Fathers of the Church, which show their commitment to the defense and propagation of Christianity in a hostile context. Their writings are important testimonies to the faith and testimony of the early Christians, as well as examples of theological and apologetic argumentation that remain relevant to this day.

Its importance.

Without granting them more authority than the Holy Scriptures, I can well say that the study of patristics is important for several reasons:

1. Understand the roots of Christian thought from the 3rd to 8th centuries. Patristics offers invaluable insight into the early centuries of Christianity and how many of the fundamental doctrines and beliefs of the faith of that time were developed and formulated. Studying patristics helps us understand the roots of that thought and how it has evolved over time.

2. Know the development of church history. Patristics provides crucial information about the history of the early church, including its teachings, practices, challenges, internal struggles and detours. This knowledge helps us better understand how the early church faced and overcame adversity and how it laid the foundation for later tradition.

3. Address theological and doctrinal issues. Many of the theological and doctrinal debates that took place in the early centuries of Christianity remain relevant today. The study of patristics gives us a deeper understanding of these questions and helps us address them in an informed and reflective manner in the contemporary context.

4. Respond to contemporary challenges. Many of the issues and challenges facing the church today have their roots in the early centuries of Christianity. The study of patristics provides us with a solid foundation to address these challenges and to develop a more complete understanding of our faith in the modern world.

5. Enrich spirituality. The writings of the Church Fathers offer a wealth of spiritual wisdom and practical teachings that can enrich our spiritual lives and our relationship with God. Studying patristics allows us to access this spiritual wealth and helps us deepen our understanding and practice of faith, with its natural exceptions.

The study of patristics is crucial to understanding the historical and theological roots of Christianity from the 3rd to 8th centuries and later, addressing contemporary issues, enriching spirituality and strengthening our faith in God. Of course, every student of patristics must question and review the entire doctrinal content of such theologians in light of the Scriptures, as they would with the teaching of any modern preacher.

ON HOMILETICS



It's history.

Homiletics, or the art of preaching, has its roots in ancient times, in the oral traditions of various cultures and religions. However, its development as a systematic discipline within Christianity dates back to the early centuries of the church.

1. Apostolic and Patristic Era (1st to 5th centuries). In the first centuries of Christianity, preaching played a central role in the transmission and teaching of the faith. The early Christians relied on the teachings of Jesus and the apostles, as well as the Hebrew Scriptures, to proclaim the Gospel and build the community of believers. Prominent figures such as Paul, Peter and John left a legacy of sermons and epistles that laid the foundation for preaching. During this period, the so-called Church Fathers, such as Augustine, John Chrysostom and Jerome, developed a rich tradition of biblical exegesis and homiletics, offering commentaries and sermons that would influence preaching for centuries.

2. Middle Ages (5th to 15th centuries): During the Middle Ages, preaching continued to be an important part of religious life, but was influenced by scholastic theology and liturgy. Sermons focused on the explanation of

Catholic doctrine and the allegorical interpretation of Scripture, with an emphasis on morality and devotion. Sermons were delivered primarily in Latin and were intended to instruct and exhort the faithful in their faith and religious practice.

3. Reformation and Post-Reformation (16th and 17th centuries). During the Protestant Reformation, preaching experienced a significant revival, as reformers emphasized direct access to Scripture and the importance of preaching in the life of the church. In the time of Martin Luther, John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli, specific methods and techniques for preaching were developed, and sermonaries and treatises on homiletics were published.

4. Modern and Contemporary Era (18th to 21st centuries): In modern and contemporary times, homiletics has continued to evolve in response to cultural, social and theological changes. The Enlightenment, the rise of critical and scientific thinking, and religious diversity have influenced preaching approaches and styles. Contemporary preaching is characterized by a greater diversity of styles and approaches, from expository preaching to thematic, contextual and narrative preaching. Advances in communication, psychology and education have also contributed to the practice of preaching, providing new tools and perspectives for preachers in their task of communicating the Gospel message in relevant and transformative ways.

The history of homiletics is a story of evolution and adaptation in response to the challenges and opportunities of each age. Throughout the centuries, preaching has been an integral part of the life of churches, transmitting the faith, instructing believers, and proclaiming the message of salvation through Jesus Christ.

A brief definition.

Homiletics is the discipline within theology and preaching that deals with the art and science of preparing and delivering sermons or preaching. Its goal is to train preachers to effectively communicate the Gospel message and edify the congregation. Homiletics covers a variety of topics, including *biblical interpretation, sermon structure, rhetoric, oral communication, practical application of Scripture and proper management of language and tone.* In

short, homiletics seeks to equip preachers to proclaim the Word of God in a way that is clear, relevant and transformative to the lives of listeners.

Interpretation and homiletics.

Within homiletics, biblical interpretation plays a fundamental role in the preparation and delivery of effective sermons. Biblical interpretation refers to the process of understanding and explaining the meaning of Bible passages, applying sound hermeneutical principles and considering the historical, cultural, linguistic and literary context of biblical texts.

In the context of homiletics, biblical interpretation is crucial for several reasons:

1. Authority of Scripture: Christian preaching is based on the authority of Scripture as the Word of God. Therefore, it is essential to faithfully interpret biblical passages to accurately convey the divine message.

2. Relevance and Application: Proper biblical interpretation allows preachers to extract timeless truths from the Bible and apply them in relevant ways to the contemporary lives and situations of the congregation.

3. Doctrinal consistency: Sound biblical interpretation contributes to doctrinal consistency in the church's teaching and preaching, ensuring that biblical truths are presented consistently and accurately.

4. Avoid distortion and abuse: Misinterpretation of Scripture can lead to distortion of the biblical message or abuse of biblical teachings. Homiletics seeks to avoid such errors through careful and responsible interpretation of the Bible.

To integrate biblical interpretation into homiletics, preachers typically follow a process that includes researching the historical and literary context of the passage, analyzing the original meaning of the text in its original language, identifying relevant themes and teachings, and applying practice of the Word of God to the lives of listeners.

Furthermore, it is important to take into account the hermeneutical principles established for a solid biblical interpretation, such as grammatical-

historical interpretation, consideration of the immediate and global context, coherence with the rest of Scripture.

Thus, biblical interpretation within homiletics is essential to the preparation and delivery of sermons that are faithful to the Word of God, relevant to the congregation, and transformative to the lives of the listeners.

Structure of a sermon.

The structure of a sermon can vary depending on the style and preferences of the preacher, as well as the specific context and purpose of the sermon. However, a commonly used structure is the following:

1. Introduction. Capture listeners attention with an anecdote, a provocative question, a relevant quote or a short story. The introduction of a sermon is not the exposition of the “preaching plan,” nor an irrelevant guide to the order of the assembly or the preaching plans. The introduction establishes the title or question to be discussed. The introduction creates an emotional or intellectual connection with the audience to generate interest and engagement.

2. Exposition of the Biblical Text. Read the biblical passage that will serve as the basis of the sermon. Explain the historical, cultural and literary context of the text. Analyze the original meaning of the passage and its theological and practical implications. Extract principles and truths applicable to the lives of listeners.

3. Development of the Theme. Develop the main points or sub-points of the sermon that are derived from the biblical text. Explain and develop each point with arguments, examples, illustrations and additional references to Scripture. Apply the teachings of the text to contemporary situations and circumstances, showing their relevance to the daily lives of listeners.

4. Practical Application. Challenge listeners to apply the biblical truths learned in their personal, family, work and community lives. Offer practical advice and concrete suggestions for living according to the principles taught. Inspire and motivate the audience to take concrete steps to grow in their faith and obey the Word of God.

5. The Conclusion. Briefly recap the main points of the sermon. Restate the theme and purpose of the sermon. Offer a call to action, an invitation to commitment to God or a final reflection that inspires the audience. Conclude with a prayer of blessing, commitment or invitation to response.

It is important to remember that this structure is flexible and can be adapted depending on the needs and preferences of the preacher, as well as the specific context of the sermon. The most important thing is that the sermon is clear, relevant, faithful to the Scriptures and aimed at transforming lives.

Rhetoric and homiletics.

Rhetoric plays an important role in homiletics as it focuses on the art of persuasive and effective communication. In the context of preaching, rhetoric is used to convey the Gospel message in a way that is clear, compelling and relevant to the audience. Here are some ways rhetoric is applied in homiletics.

1. Use of language. Preachers use a variety of linguistic devices, such as metaphors, analogies, vivid images and emotive language, to capture the audience's attention and convey the message in a powerful way. Poetic, evocative language can help make spiritual truths come to life and resonate in the hearts of listeners.

2. Sermon Structure: Rhetoric influences the organization and structure of the sermon, helping the preacher construct a coherent and persuasive narrative that guides the audience from introduction to conclusion effectively. Elements such as the powerful introduction, clear main points and memorable conclusion contribute to the effectiveness of the sermon.

3. Emphasis. Rhetoric helps the preacher make important points and emphasize key truths through the use of repetition, cadence, rhythm, and intonation. Proper emphasis can help maintain the audience's attention and reinforce the central messages of the sermon.

4. Connection with the audience. Rhetoric facilitates the emotional and intellectual connection between the preacher and the audience, allowing the preacher to adapt his message to meet the needs, concerns and

experiences of the listeners. Using relevant examples, personal anecdotes and cultural references can help make the message more accessible and meaningful to the audience.

5. Persuasion and call to action. Rhetoric is used to persuade the audience to seriously consider the Gospel message and respond with faith and commitment. Preachers use persuasive techniques, such as logical argumentation, emotional appeals and calls to action, to motivate listeners to make decisions that transform their lives and their relationship with God.

Rhetoric thus plays a crucial role in homiletics by helping preachers persuasively and effectively communicate the Gospel message. By using linguistic, structural and persuasive devices, preachers can connect with audiences, convey spiritual truths in impactful ways and motivate listeners to respond with faith and commitment.

Communication.

Communication, especially oral communication, plays a fundamental role in homiletics, since preaching involves the verbal transmission of the Gospel message in an effective and convincing manner. Here are some important considerations about oral communication in homiletics.

1. Clarity and coherence. It is essential that the preacher be clear and consistent in his communication. This involves using clear and accessible language, avoiding jargon or overly technical terms and maintaining a logical and coherent structure in the development of the sermon.

2. Voice and intonation. The preacher's voice is a powerful tool in oral communication. Variation in intonation, rhythm and volume can help maintain audience interest and emphasize important points in the sermon. An expressive and engaging voice can make the message more impactful and memorable.

3. Eye contact. Eye contact with your audience is crucial to establishing an emotional connection and keeping their attention. The preacher should make an effort to look at the listeners directly, making eye contact with different members of the congregation to involve everyone in the message.

4. Gestures and facial expressions. Gestures and facial expressions can complement and reinforce the preacher's verbal message. Proper use of expressive gestures and facial expressions can help convey emotions, emphasize key points and make the sermon more dynamic and engaging.

5. Posture and body language. The preacher's posture and body language are also important aspects of oral communication. An upright, confident posture conveys confidence and authority, while open, receptive body language invites the audience to participate in the message.

6. Interaction with the audience. Oral communication in preaching is not one-way; it is a dynamic interaction between the preacher and the audience. The preacher can encourage the mental participation of the audience through rhetorical questions, invitations to reflection, and moments of response or dialogue.

7. Adaptation to context. It is important for the preacher to adapt his communication style to the specific context of the congregation and the occasion. This may involve adjusting tone, vocabulary level and presentation style to meet the needs and expectations of the audience.

Oral communication is a key skill in homiletics that helps the preacher convey the Gospel message effectively and persuasively. By focusing on clarity, expressiveness, connection with the audience and adaptation to context, the preacher can make a significant impact on the lives of listeners and contribute to the spiritual growth of the faith community.

The practical application.

Practical application is an essential component of homiletics, as it seeks to connect biblical truths with the daily lives of listeners and motivate them to live according to the principles taught in the sermon. Here are some important considerations regarding practical application in homiletics.

1. Relevance. The practical application must be relevant and meaningful to the lives and circumstances of the audience. The preacher must identify the needs, challenges and concerns of the listeners and relate them to biblical teachings in a clear and direct way.

2. Connection with the biblical text. The practical application must be based on the biblical text and emerge organically from its interpretation and exposition. The principles and truths extracted from the text must be applied consistently and faithfully to their original context and message.

3. Examples and analogies. The use of examples, analogies and case studies can help illustrate and clarify the application of biblical teachings in everyday life. Preachers can use stories, personal testimonies, common situations or examples from contemporary culture to make spiritual truths more accessible and understandable to audiences.

4. Specific application. The practical application should be specific and concrete, offering suggestions and practical steps that listeners can follow to apply the teachings of the sermon in their lives. This may include advice on how to cultivate spiritual habits, manage interpersonal relationships, confront ethical challenges or live in accordance with the values of the Kingdom of God.

5. Motivation to action. Practical application involves not only informing, but also inspiring and motivating the audience to take concrete action in response to the message of the sermon. Preachers may make calls to action, invitations to commitment, challenges to spiritual growth or exhortations to obedience and personal change.

6. Follow-up and discipleship. After the sermon, it is important for preachers to offer follow-up and discipleship opportunities to help listeners implement and develop practical applications in their lives. This may include Bible study groups, counseling sessions, mentoring programs or additional resources for spiritual growth.

Practical application in homiletics is vital to making biblical teachings relevant and transformative to the lives of the audience. By connecting spiritual truths to everyday reality, inspiring action and offering ongoing support and guidance, preachers can help listeners experience the power and relevance of the Gospel in their lives.

What happens if I intend to prepare and present a sermon without a homiletical exercise?

Attempting to craft and expound a sermon without an adequate homiletical exercise can result in less effective and less scripturally focused preaching. Here are some possible consequences of attempting to preach without homiletical preparation.

1. Lack of clarity and coherence. Without a structured preparation process, the sermon may lack clear and coherent organization. This can make it difficult for the audience to follow the message and understand its relevance.

2. Weak connection to Scripture. Homiletics involves careful biblical interpretation and practical application of Scripture to the context of the audience. Without this process, the sermon could lack a solid foundation in Scripture and lose its authority and spiritual relevance.

3. Lack of focus and purpose. Homiletics helps to clearly define the topic and purpose of the sermon, allowing the preacher to focus on conveying a specific and relevant message to the audience. Without a homiletical exercise, the sermon may lack direction and clear purpose.

4. Loss of impact and effectiveness. Homiletic preparation helps the preacher identify and develop key points, relevant examples and practical applications that resonate with the audience and promote spiritual transformation. Without this preparation, the sermon may lack impact and effectiveness in the lives of the listeners.

5. Greater risk of theological or interpretive errors. Homiletics helps the preacher avoid theological or interpretive errors by ensuring an accurate and faithful interpretation of Scripture. Without this process, the sermon could contain erroneous teachings or misinterpretations of Scripture, which could confuse or mislead the audience.

So, attempting to craft and deliver a sermon without an adequate homiletic exercise can result in less effective and less scripturally focused preaching. Homiletics provides a framework and process for careful preparation and effective delivery of the Gospel message, helping the preacher to clearly, relevantly and transformingly communicate God's Word to the audience.

ON HEBRAISMS



What are Hebraisms?

Hebraisms are expressions or linguistic constructions that reflect the use of Hebrew in the Greek language of the New Testament or in translations of Hebrew texts into Greek. These elements reflect unique characteristics of Hebrew, its syntax, semantics or idiomaticity, not commonly found in Greek.

Some examples of Hebraisms include:

1. Genitive of origin. In Hebrew, possession is often indicated by a genitive construction that expresses the origin or relationship between two nouns. This construction is also found in the Greek of the New Testament, although it is less common than in Hebrew. Here are some notable examples:

A. Kingdom of God. This expression appears frequently in the gospels and Paul's letters. In Greek, it is expressed as “*basileia tou theou*” (βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ), where “*basileia*” is “kingdom” and “*tou theou*” is the genitive of “God.” In Hebrew, the corresponding expression would be “*malkut haElohim.*”

B. Son of God. This is another common expression in the New Testament to refer to Jesus Christ to indicate his divine nature. In Greek, it is expressed as “*huios tou theou*” (υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ), where “*huios*” is “son” and “*tou theou*” is the genitive of “God.” In Hebrew, it could be expressed as “*ben Elohim.*”

C. God's word. This expression is used to refer to the Word of God, as a reference to the Scriptures. In Greek, it is expressed as “logos tou theou” (λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ), where “logos” is “word” and “tou theou” is the genitive of “God.” In Hebrew, it could be expressed as “davar Elohim”.

D. Kingdom of heaven. In the Gospel of Matthew, especially, the expression “Kingdom of heaven” is used as a reference to the Kingdom of God. In Greek, it is expressed as “basileia ton ouranon” (βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν), where “basileia” is “kingdom” and “ton ouranon” is the genitive plural of “heaven.” In Hebrew, it could be expressed as “malkut shamayim”.

These are just a few notable examples, but there are other examples of genitive origin in the New Testament that reflect Hebrew structures and demonstrate the influence of Hebrew on New Testament Greek.

2. Use of the definite article. Hebrew often omits the definite article when the context is clear, while Greek tends to include it. Therefore, some Hebrew expressions that do not use the definite article may appear in Greek with the article, indicating their Hebrew origin.

A. John the Baptist. In Greek, it is expressed as “Ioannes ho baptistes” (Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτιστής), where “ho” is the definite article “the.” However, in Hebrew, this expression could simply be “Yohanan haMikveh” (יוֹחָנָן הַמִּכְבֵּה), where the definite article is not included.

B. Kingdom of heaven. Although I mentioned this expression previously, it is important to highlight it here again. In the Gospel of Matthew, instead of using the definite article “the” as in “Kingdom of God”, “Kingdom of heaven” is used to avoid directly pronouncing the name of God, as was customary in Judaism. In Greek, it is expressed as “basileia ton ouranon” (βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν), where “ton” is the plural definite article “the”, but in Hebrew it could be “malkut shamayim” (מַלְכוּת שָׁמַיִם), without the definite article.

C. Son of man. This expression, used by Jesus to refer to himself in the synoptic gospels, is translated from the Hebrew “ben Adam” (בֶּן־אָדָם). Although the definite article “the” is included in Greek, it would not be needed in Hebrew. In Greek, it is expressed as “ho huios tou anthropou” (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου), but in Hebrew it would simply be “ben adam” (בֶּן־אָדָם).

These are just a few notable examples in which the influence of Hebrew can be seen in the New Testament, especially in the omission of the definite article that is more common in Greek.

3. Double negative. In Hebrew, it is common to use a double negative to emphasize a negation. This characteristic can be found in some Greek passages that reflect Hebrew influences. Here are some examples where this influence can be observed:

A. Matthew 5:18 (NIV): In this passage, Jesus says, “for truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the law until everything is accomplished.” The double negation is reflected in the phrase “not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen will by any means disappear”, where the Greek phrase “ou me” (οὐ μή) to negate both “will disappear” and “not a letter, not a stroke.”

B. Matthew 18:18 (NIV): Here Jesus says, “Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Again, the double negation is seen in the phrase “do not untie”, where the Greek uses “ou me” (οὐ μή) to deny both “loose” and “whatever you loose on the earth.”

C. John 6:35 (NIV): In this passage, Jesus declares: “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never hunger, and he who believes in me will never thirst again.” The double negation is reflected in the phrase “he will never thirst again,” where the Greek uses “ou me” (οὐ μή) to negate both “will return” and “thirst.”

These are just a few examples where the influence of the Hebrew double negation can be observed in Greek translations of the New Testament. This linguistic structure adds emphasis and force to the negation in speech, and is important for understanding the original meaning and intent of the passages.

4. Idiomatic expressions. Hebrew has many idiomatic expressions that do not have a literal translation in other languages. These expressions may appear in New Testament Greek and may be difficult to understand without an understanding of the Hebrew language and culture.

A. “An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth”: This expression appears in Matthew 5:38 and reflects an Old Testament teaching (cf. Exodus 21:24, Leviticus 24:20, Deuteronomy 19:21). In Hebrew, it is expressed as “ayin strike out ayin , shen strike out shen” (עַיִן תִּכְרֹת עַיִן, שֵׁן תִּכְרֹת שֵׁן). In the New Testament, Jesus uses this expression to teach about the principle of justice and the importance of forgiveness.

B. “Son of David”: This expression is used to refer to Jesus as a *descendant* of David, which is an affirmation of his messianic identity. In Hebrew, it is

expressed as “ben David” (בֶּן דָּוִד). It appears several times in the New Testament, such as in Matthew 1:1, 9:27 and 15:22, among others.

C. “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabactani?”: These words are spoken by Jesus on the cross and are a transliteration from Aramaic to Greek, but the phrase “lama sabactani” has a Hebrew root. The expression reflects a verse from Psalm 22:1 in Hebrew: “Eli, Eli, lamah azavtani” (אֵלֵי אֵלֵי, לָמָּה עָזַבְתָּנִי), which means “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”

D. “Bar-Jonas!”: Jesus calls Simon Peter “Simon, son of Jonah” in Matthew 16:17, which in Hebrew would be “Shimon ben Yonah” (שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן יוֹנָה). This type of expression reflects a common Hebrew way of referring to someone by their father's name.

E. “Nazarene”: The expression “Jesus of Nazareth” (in Greek, “Iesous ho Nazoraios”) is a transliteration of the Hebrew “Yeshua haNotzri” (יֵשׁוּעַ הַנּוֹצְרִי), where “Notzri” means “from Nazareth.”

These are just a few examples of Hebrew idiomatic expressions found in the New Testament, highlighting the influence of Hebrew on the language and culture of the time.

Hebraisms are important to biblical interpretation because they can influence the meaning or understanding of certain passages. Recognizing and understanding these linguistic elements can help scholars correctly interpret the biblical text and better grasp the author's original intent.

AD CONCLUSIONEM

In conclusion, biblical study is a broad and multidisciplinary field that encompasses various areas of research and analysis. From exegesis and hermeneutics to archaeology, textual criticism and theology, the disciplines related to the study of the Bible offer a wealth of knowledge and understanding about sacred texts and their relevance to history, culture and spirituality.

Exegesis and hermeneutics provide crucial tools for interpreting and understanding biblical texts in their original context, taking into account factors such as language, culture and historical context. Biblical archeology sheds light on the ancient world in which biblical events took place, providing material evidence that can corroborate and enrich our understanding of the biblical narrative.

Textual criticism plays a fundamental role in accurately identifying and reconstructing the original texts of the Bible, while biblical and systematic theology helps us understand the teachings and doctrines present in the Scriptures and their relevance to religious faith and practice.

Together, these disciplines offer a holistic, multidimensional view of the Bible, allowing us to explore its meaning and applications from a variety of perspectives. By integrating diverse methods and approaches, biblical study continues to be a dynamic and constantly evolving field that enriches our understanding of the sacred text and its importance for human life.

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February, 2024.