

The Doctrine of Scripture

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House of David
MINISTRIES

Introduction

From the beginning, God has desired to make Himself known to His creation. God is Spirit and cannot be seen, and His transcendence is beyond our imagination.ⁱ However, His immanence brings Him so close that He purposefully dwells within His children.ⁱⁱ Thus, He has chosen to reveal Himself both in the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.ⁱⁱⁱ These two are one and co-equal with the Father, yet they each reveal different aspects of God.^{iv}

Jesus was born of a woman and resurrected into a physical body with flesh and bones.^v However, His ministry came through the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit.^{vi} One is natural, the other spiritual. Together, they are one complete incarnation of our Heavenly Father so that He is fully revealed and made known to humanity. This is the perfect will and purpose of God, to bring the transcendence and infinite nature of God into this finite creation and intimately dwell with and within His people. God already knows us, but now through His Son and His Holy Spirit, we can also know our Heavenly Father most intimately.

God is not silent. He is the Creator and Divine architect of His entire masterpiece of creation, and He spoke everything into existence.^{vii} By His word, inspired and spoken to chosen men, He has revealed and preserved His will and purpose through the Bible—the written narrative of God's Kingdom and His relationship with His creation.^{viii} This story unfolds through the Patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, renamed Israel—the heart of God's Kingdom.

In these last days, God has spoken through His Son, as we read, *"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:1-2, NKJV).*^{ix} Therefore, this story culminates with the church, the fulfillment of all the promises given to the nation of Israel. Now the Gentiles (nations/*Goyim*) that God has grafted into her—a company of nations called "the commonwealth of Israel."^x

The Bible reveals God's nature and character; chiefly, He is a God who loves and is love.^{xi} He is good and is the only one who is. His attributes of love reveal His goodness through grace, mercy, kindness, patience, faithfulness, gentleness, long-suffering, forgiveness, and so much more.^{xii} Those who receive His love and grace flow in these attributes but are also tempered with self-control, joy, and peace—the fruit of the Spirit.^{xiii}

God is loving, but He is also the God of justice and righteousness, and he does not tolerate or dwell in the presence of sinfulness and unholiness.^{xiv} These attributes of justice and righteousness are revealed as wrath and judgment.^{xv} It is only through the atoning works of Christ and His shed blood on the cross that our stain of sin and debt to God is paid in full.^{xvi} In Christ, we are pardoned from our judgment and condemnation of sin, leading to death and eternal separation from God.^{xvii} We are promised the resurrection and a new eternal life in Christ ushered into His everlasting Kingdom.^{xviii} This is "the good news" and the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Messianic implies "hope" or "belief" in the Messiah, whom we know is Jesus, the Christ. Hence, these terms are similar. However, Messianic also correlates the tenants of our Christian faith with its Biblical heritage and foundation of God's Kingdom established through God's covenant promises with Israel.^{xix} And it expands these covenant promises to include the Gentiles grafted in and joined to her.^{xx} For example, the Lord declared:

"Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you" (Zechariah 2:11).

"Yes, many peoples and strong nations Shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you'" (Zechariah 8:22-23).

"And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles" (Zechariah 14:16).

"Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isaiah 2:2-3).

This Biblical foundation of God's covenant promises to Israel, to a degree, has been distorted by false theologies, such as supersessionism (replacement theology whereby the church supplants Israel) and separation theology (whereby the church is entirely separate from Israel).^{xxi}

We need to see God's dealing with Israel, and thus humanity, as one gradual and continuing dispensation. And yet, we also recognize that each unfolding promise of the Lord initiates a new bookmark in God's revelation of Himself within human history, the culmination of which none will realize until Christ returns, not even the church.

All these topics and many more we will unfold in this foundational study of Messianic Christian theology. The objective is to ascertain an accurate portrayal of Biblical theology and eschatology that correctly recognizes God's dealing with Israel and, subsequently, His sovereign work of salvation amongst the Gentiles in the present "church age."

We will also clarify the present and eternal relationship between Israel and the church, seeking to understand the ultimate fulfillment of scripture and all prophecy at the return of Christ and His then-established Messianic Kingdom. Our teaching will begin with the Doctrine of Scripture—its formation, authority, inerrancy, and Divine inspiration.

Inerrancy

The inerrancy of scripture means that the Bible contains no errors in the original autographical languages. It is infallible and can therefore be trusted as God's absolute truth.^{xxii} The Bible claims to be the inspired and written, inspired word of God, given to Israel, but ultimately for all humanity.^{xxiii} The writers of the Old Testament claim over three-thousand eight hundred times that they were transmitting God's very words.^{xxiv} Therefore, the Old Testament testifies of itself.

The New Testament also bears witness that God spoke through the Old Testament. We read in the Gospels, *"So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet" (Matthew 1:22).*^{xxv} The Apostles also bore witness to the Old Testament's perfection, declaring the Law holy and perfect, living, and effectual.^{xxvi}

Throughout scripture, God warns against adding to or taking away from His written word.^{xxvii} It is written, *"For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18-19).*

Lastly, Jesus Himself bore witness to the scriptures, confirming the perfection of the entire Old Testament. He declared, *"For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled" (Matthew 5:18). "If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came [and the Scripture cannot be broken]" (John 10:35). "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me" (Luke 24:44).* These three verses cover the entirety of the Old Testament.

The Bible is a treasured revelation of God's truth. No single person, entity, or nation has ever produced a comparable volume of writing. The Bible contains the answers to all of life's questions: immortality, heaven, hell, sin, judgment, redemption, and eternity. How can we know and be assured of these without the scriptures? The answers to these questions are beyond the imagination of man. Only an infinite God can reveal Himself to a finite creation. The alternative is

far beyond our ability to conceive, and no human mind has fully comprehended its message or measure of its values.^{xxviii}

As Christians, we should *not* be embarrassed or ashamed that we cannot fully explain everything about God. We could never worship a God that can be fully understood. It is the mystery of God that continually draws us towards Him, constantly seeking to know the unknowable one. And yet, God's immanence gently reveals Himself to His children. Taken beyond the realm of our comprehension, it is because of the revelation of Himself that we bow our heads and lift our hands in worship. As we read, *"Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:5).*

There are many questions about Jesus. Who is He, and what is He like? Is His message crucial for humanity? Can He save my soul, and does my eternity depend on Him? In response to these questions, Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).* This one verse shouts to us with a resounding "yes," everything about Jesus is essential. He is the word of God made flesh, and hence, the entirety of scripture, the word of God, is inherent and required. As we read, *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).*

What does humanity know about Jesus, except for what is written in the Bible? Our complete source of information is found only in this one book—both the Old and New Testaments. Everything points to Him, as Jesus declared, *"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39).* Again, Jesus was affirming the inherency of the Old Testament, as the New Testament would not be written for another one hundred years.

The Bible is an unchanging revelation of God. Often, the scientific community challenges the inerrancy of scripture, questioning the supernatural and miraculous. The word "science" means "knowledge." However, unlike the Bible, which never changes, scientific theories and hypotheses constantly evolve. In contrast, the Bible has not been altered in the slightest degree in the more than three thousand years since it has existed. As confirmation, entire volumes, such as the book of Isaiah, were found as part of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Scrutiny of the Hebrew text revealed no more than ten typographical errors, and all were considered minor, meaning the underlying intent of the narrative was not altered.

A theory is a supposition or system of ideas intended to explain something. A hypothesis is an assumption or proposed explanation based on limited evidence as a starting point for further investigation.^{xxix} The Bible is not a scientific textbook, nor has it been proven wrong on any scientific fact. And it is correct in every moral and spiritual aspect of our lives.^{xxx}

Again, Jesus said, *"I am the way, and the truth."* What we, as Christians, believe about Him does not require any assumptions nor impose any theories or hypotheses. We "fundamentally" accept

the Bible as absolute truth about who God is. As it is written, *“For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe” (1 Thessalonians 2:13).*

Biblical Criticism

Criticism of the Bible falls into higher and lower categories. Higher criticism or historical criticism examines the various books of the Bible from their historical standpoint, for example, its age, authorship, geniuses, and canonical authority. Lower criticism ascertains the exact words of the original texts of the Bible, comparing ancient manuscripts, versions, and quotations of scripture.

There are three primary sources of evidence for determining the validity of scripture. The first is the church fathers, also called teachers. They were great leaders, theologians, and scholars of the first two centuries A.D. They wrote sermons, commentaries, and harmonies and contended for the faith against paganism. Prominent names include the Clement of Rome, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp (A.D. 96-150), Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Tatian (A.D. 150-325), and Eusebius, Athanasius, Jerome, and Augustine (A.D. 325).

Another incredible source is the Dead Sea Scrolls, about three hundred and fifty, first discovered in March of 1947 by a young Bedouin goatherd in a series of caves in Qumran. The caves are situated along the western slopes of the Judean Desert, where it descends into the lowest place on earth—the Dead Sea. Written by the Essenes between the 1st century B.C. and 1st century A.D., they are among the most significant archaeological finds of the 20th century. The scrolls include portions of every book of the Old Testament, including a complete copy of Isaiah. The scrolls unequivocally affirm the accuracy of the Masoretic Text of the Old Testament.

A third source is the papyri dating from the 3rd century A.D. or earlier, discovered in A.D. 1931, in Egyptian graves and considered one of the most important discoveries for the New Testament since the Sinaitic codes. While these manuscripts are not a complete copy of the Bible, scholars such as Westcott and Hort, Ezra Abbot, Philip Schaff, and A.T. Robertson have carefully evaluated the evidence of these documents and established that the New Testament text is over ninety-nine percent pure.^{xxx}

The Bible is the inerrant, infallible word of God. Its words, phrases, and sentences in the languages initially written are perfect and contain no errors. What is most remarkable is that it was scribed by fallen, weak, and sinful men, all with the potential to misunderstand, misinterpret, and worse, maliciously falsify its narrative. Given that more than forty men wrote the Bible over fifteen hundred years, it is nothing short of a miracle of Divine inspiration that the Bible continues to exist in its uncorrupted form.

All scripture is “God-breathed,” meaning the “creative breath of God produced the written word.”^{xxxii} Similarly, we read, *“And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in*

understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship" (Exodus 31:3). Stated, the scriptures are a Divine product, without indication of how God operated from within these men.

But scripture is more than simply knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. It is living. Just as God breathed life into Adam, so He breathed into scripture the breath of His life. As we read, *"For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).* And Jesus said, *"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38).*

How God worked through these men remains a mystery, same as His mysterious works within each of us. What is clear is that the writers of the Bible were not puppets or merely orators. God created and instilled within them a complexity of gifts, creativity, emotions, and intellectual capacity, when joined in perfect union with the Holy Spirit, produced the entirety of scripture. Each writer impregnated their unique signature on the inspired word coming from their mind and mouth and penned with instruments held in their hands. And yet, God's sovereign control in all aspects of their work, despite their fallen and sinful nature, has produced a written narrative that is both infallible and perfect in every way.

The Bible also contains, to a degree, a historical narrative of the world, particularly the nation of Israel. The writers of the Bible, at times, simply recorded factual details. And yet, the Bible is not a historical book, nor is its purpose to provide a historical account of events. Some Biblical stories overlap or are parenthetical, and the canon does not follow a chronological timeline. Some books contain wisdom, while others communicate a poetic language of God's love for His people. And the prophecies, filled with mystery and visual symbolism, still speak to a season that is yet to be fulfilled.

It is essential to recognize the subtle difference between revelation, inspiration, and illumination. A revelation is an act of God where He directly communicates a truth that was not previously known to the human mind and could not have been secured by any human reason or intellect. We read, *"Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25).* Therefore, revelation is discovering new truth—mysteries that God concealed but are now revealed by Him.

In comparison, inspiration superintends the communication of that truth.^{xxxiii} In other words, revelation exposes God's truth while illumination communicates it. As we read, *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16).* Here, we are reminded that all scripture, inspired by God, has an instructional purpose for the believer. We also see inspiration in the prophecies where men spoke for God, encouraging Israel to return to the Lord. As we read, *"So the craftsman encouraged the goldsmith; He who smooths with the hammer inspired him who strikes the anvil, Saying, 'It is ready for the soldering'; Then he fastened it with pegs, That it might not totter" (Isaiah 41:7).*

Lastly, illumination is the influence of the Holy Spirit that helps Christians grasp and understand the things of God.^{xxxiv} We read, *“But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings” (Hebrews 10:32). “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14).*

Peter said the prophets were given the inspiration of God’s truth but were not given the revelation or illumination to understand the exact meaning of what they prophesied, saying, *“Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you... To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to [a]us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you...” (1 Peter 1:10-12).* For example, Daniel was instructed to seal up the vision he saw, for the Lord told him in referred to many days in the future.^{xxxv}

The aforementioned theological constructs of the Bible are classified as “the verbal, plenary inspirational view” of how God created His written word. These include its inerrancy and infallibility and the revelation, illumination, and inspiration of scripture. This plenary inspiration view holds that all the words written in scripture are “God-breathed.” Verbal refers to the “words,” and plenary means “full” or “complete,” as opposed to partial. Therefore, the words themselves, all of them, are inspired. God gave full expressions to His thoughts in the Bible, and he guided the choice of every word with the personality and culture-complexion of the writer. Mysteriously, the Bible is the Word of God, while at the same time, it is also the words of men.

The Holy Spirit moved men to produce Spirit-breathed writings.^{xxxvi} How the infallible inspiration of an infinite God was brought into the fallible minds of finite men remains a mystery of the providence of God. We cannot deny both a Divine side and a human aspect to these works. In simple terms, “God used men.” In many respects, it is like the dual nature of Jesus—being both fully human and Divine—the natural and spiritual realms. And yet, they are inseparably “one.” The result of this incomprehensible process is a verbal (through words), plenary (extending to all parts equally), inerrant (errorless), and authoritative record of God’s message to humanity.

The Holy Spirit

The inspiration of the Holy Spirit to breathe all scripture is the cause and source for its miracle of infallibility. All Spirit-filled believers should recognize the miracle of divine inspiration. But the writers of the Bible were uniquely inspired to pen and scribe the trusted word of God by which every believer today can receive of its life-giving power.

This ministry of the Holy Spirit is finished, as the Bible declares that no person may add or delete to its canon. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is complete, *“And is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).*

But the Holy Spirit has other works that are not complete. There is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, prophecy, speaking with other tongues and with interpretation, healing, signs and wonders, and inspirational revelation. As a precaution, the Bible warns us to test every spirit. We read, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). There must be an acceptable norm and court of appeal to judge all manifestations of the gifts of the spirit. Paul recognized prophecy as one of the greatest gifts, yet he said, “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge” (1 Corinthians 4:20).^{xxxvii}

The written word and the Holy Spirit must always be in perfect agreement, and the Bible is our court of appeal, which the Holy Spirit inspired.^{xxxviii} And yet, the written word without the Holy Spirit cannot produce the fruit of the spirit, as we read, “The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue” (2 Samuel 23:2). There is much more to learn about the ministry of the Holy Spirit, including conviction, baptism, instruction, transformation, discernment, judgment, and power to minister through the believer.

Hermeneutics

The term “hermeneutics” can likely be traced back to the ancient Greek figure of Hermes.^{xxxix} Biblical Hermeneutics is the theory, methodologies, and practice of Biblical interpretation (exegesis). Jewish hermeneutics use four methods of biblical exegesis in the critical analysis, explanation, and interpretation of the Hebrew Bible—*Peshat*, *Remez*, *Drash*, and *Sod*. There is considerable overlap of these methods, and they are often used in correlation with each other. They can be remembered by their acrostic PRDS (*Pardes*, pronounced *pa-ra-dise* and derived from the same Persian root).^{xl} They are described as follows:

1. *Peshat* is the simple, literal, and intended (explicit) meaning of the biblical narrative, and most biblical commentary, Jewish or Christian, is based on this study method. All other approaches must align with and never contradict the base meaning of the *Peshat*.
2. *Remez* approaches the Bible from an allegorical or illusional perspective, and it reads between the lines to discover the alluded meaning of the text. We see this in types, shadows, symbolism, numerology, and equivalent language that implies an equivalent meaning of the text. The extended meaning can never contradict the base meaning of the *Peshat*.
3. *Derash* is the *Midrashic* or metaphorical homiletic interpretive analysis of scripture in a “storytelling” (parable-style) format. This can include proof-texting and supposition of narrative expansion of the biblical text the rabbis have narrated in Biblical commentaries of the Talmud. Jesus often used this method to teach about the Kingdom of God, on occasion, sharing parables that closely resembled those in the Talmud. The extended meaning can never contradict the base meaning of the *Peshat*.

4. *Sod* is the esoteric and mystical approach to understanding the Bible. This fourth and deepest supernatural level of study aims to understand the text on the first three levels and then search out the nuances and subtle connections hidden within the text. Jewish mystics often used meditative and prayer techniques to encounter the spiritual realm in dreams and visions. The Bible provides caution about this, as we read, *"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world"* (1 John 4:1). The extended meaning can never contradict the base meaning of the *Peshat*.

The term "*Pardes*" first appears in the writings of Rabbi Moses de León (A.D. 1240 – 1305), known in Hebrew as *Moshe ben Shem-Tov*, in the late 13th century A.D. This hermeneutic method explores the exoteric and esoteric meaning of scripture. Exoteric refers to the reading of scripture in the context of the physical world, including human orientation and notion. Esoteric means that the surface (exoteric) interpretation of scripture covers or conceals a deeper hidden (esoteric) mysterious and supernatural meaning of truth. Jesus said, *"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me"* (John 5:39). *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"* (John 3:16). *"To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God"* (Mark 4:11).

Peshat, *Remez*, and *Drash* belong to the exoteric category of scriptural interpretation, while *Sod* belongs to the esoteric one. Most Jewish literature, including the Talmud, Midrash, and rabbinic commentaries on the Bible, fall into the exoteric category of rational religious Judaism. In contrast, Jewish mysticism (*Kabbalah*) and Jewish philosophy-metaphysics fall into the esoteric.

Peshat is the only one of the four methods that interpret the text at face value, focusing on the chronological progression of the narrative. It is the most straightforward and commonly applied method for reading and understanding the Bible. *Remez* and *Drash*, while exoteric, hint at the hidden meanings within the text to discover moral, ritual, and spiritual purposes. *Sod* is the most abstract and purely esoteric and looks at the deep mystical, religious undertones construed from the text.

While Jewish hermeneutics and exegesis of scripture should all point to Christ, we find that rabbinic literature and Jewish mysticism do not recognize Jesus as the Messiah. Paul affirmed this by saying: *"Blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in"* (Romans 11:25).

Jewish hermeneutics are rooted in mainstream Rabbinic literature as the rabbis are focused on observance of the Mosaic Law. The mystical interpretation of scripture does not deny its exoteric meaning. Instead, it reinforces the need for exoteric Halacha (practical Jewish law) and observance of the 613 commandments of the Torah as God's plan in Creation.

Christian hermeneutics look at the meaning of the original text both in terms of what it says or does not say. With so many translations in circulation, the most ardent scholars study the Bible in its original languages, mainly Hebrew and Greek. But their exegeses, critical explanation, or

interpretation of the text is vastly different from Jewish thought. Christ is the fulfillment of all scripture, exoteric and mystical. Paul said, *“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God” (Romans 10:3).*

Until the 17th century A.D., Biblical hermeneutics were held in a “special” category analogous to legal hermeneutics. Legal hermeneutics are rooted in philosophical hermeneutics and explore the subject's legal intent.^{xli} Philosophical hermeneutics originate from 19th-century German philologist George Ast (A.D. 1778-1841). The problem with philosophical hermeneutics is in the ability to ascertain an objective interpretation, understanding, or meaning of the text, given that all these are determined through the interpreter’s subjective personal filter.^{xlii}

With the rise of liberalism in the 19th century A.D., German philologist Friedrich Schleiermacher (A.D. 1768–1834) argued that no distinction should be made between “general” and “special” hermeneutics. He called for a general theory of hermeneutics applied to all literary texts, including the Bible.^{xliii} Subsequent higher criticism of the Biblical text sought to understand it solely as a human-inspired, historical document. This approach creates several obstacles that inhibit the correct interpretation of scripture:

1. We speak a different language than the Bible was written in.
2. We live approximately two millennia later, and many cultural changes have occurred.
3. With these cultural changes, we now bring different expectations to the text.
4. And we read the Bible with significantly different literary expectations than other forms of literature.

Christian hermeneutics have employed a liberal interpretation of scripture for more than a century, utilizing a legal-philosophical form of human reason. From the 1970s, German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (A.D. 1900-2002) has dramatically influenced the Biblical philosophical hermeneutics of many contemporary theologians. Therefore, it is not surprising that Protestant theologians are conflicted over their biblical interpretation. Even Catholic scholars accept some diversity in scripture if it stays within the theological traditions of the Roman Catholic Church.

Orthodox Christian hermeneutics and exegesis of scripture point to Jesus as the Messiah. However, the limitations in exoteric interpretations, especially liberal interpretations, continue to bring confusion about Christ and His Kingdom, and centuries of misguided theologies have not only caused division but continue to cloud our understanding of God’s prophetic purposes for Israel and the church. As Paul said, *“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in” (Romans 11:25).*

Symbolism

The Bible is filled with allegories and prophetic symbolism. Paul referred to these as mysteries or shadows. And Jesus Himself spoke in parables, saying, “*These things I have spoken to you in figurative language*” (John 16:25). But “*To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables*” (Luke 8:10).

Prophetic symbolism is how the divine will and God’s presence are known to His people. It helps us discern the relationships between the seen and unseen—the physical and the immaterial. As the supreme language of the soul, these allegories are the instrument the Creator uses to draw His people to come closer to Him.

Jewish scholars regard Hebrew as God’s holy language used in creation. Therefore, they believe that all created things are directly affected by their Hebrew names and their component letters.^{xliv} Jewish mysticism holds that all creation was issued from divine speech and that the Bible contains the wisdom of creation.^{xlv} Therefore, Hebrew is unlike any other language whose meaning of words results from human construct or consensus. The sages tell us that all languages are translations of reality, except for the Holy Tongue, which they refer to as the language of reality itself.

Hebrew is a logical and analytical language whose letters also contain a numerical value. One field of numerology is called Gematria, which is the careful examination and analysis of word and letter placement and their numerical values to reveal relationships between words and letters. This finds higher meanings and mystical secrets hidden within the text. Samuel Avital calls Gematria “spiritual archeology,” suggesting that studying the Bible is akin to excavating an ancient city that has been hidden for millennia. We will delve into some simple numerology shortly.

Even at the most superficial level of Bible study (*Peshat*), by understanding the Hebrew language, we can unlock deeper spiritual relationships between root words. For example, the Hebrew word for “desert” is *midbar*, and “speak” is *davar*. We gain incredible faith-building knowledge by understanding that God speaks to His people in the drylands. Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness—fasting, praying, and communing with His heavenly Father. In summary, these methods of Biblical study are complex, analytical, numerical, metaphorical, spatial, visual, relational, poetic, homiletic, etc. Prophetic vision, therefore, transforms the wilderness into ranks of order and fruitfulness.

ⁱ John 4:24.

ⁱⁱ 1 Corinthians 3:16.

ⁱⁱⁱ Hebrews 1:1-2.

^{iv} John 10:30.

^v John 1:1, 14. Romans 1:3.

^{vi} Matthew 3:16.

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- vii Genesis 1:3. Psalm 33:6. Roman 1:20.
- viii 2 Peter 1:21.
- ix All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Bible (NKJV) unless otherwise noted, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982.
- x Genesis 35:11. Romans 8:3-5. Ephesians 2:12.
- xi 1 John 4:8.
- xii Hebrews 4:16.
- xiii Galatians 5:22-23.
- xiv Psalm 97:2.
- xv Romans 1:18.
- xvi Romans 3:24-25.
- xvii 2 Thessalonians 1:9.
- xviii 1 Peter 1:3. 2 Peter 1:11. 2 Corinthians 5:17. Revelation 20:6.
- xix Romans 9:3-5.
- xx John 4:22.
- xxi Romans 11:25.
- xxii Duffield, Guy P. and Van Cleave, Nathaniel M. *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*. Foursquare Media. 1910.
- xxiii 2 Timothy 3:16. 2 Peter 1:21.
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- xxv Luke 1:70. Mark 12:36.
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