

PathLights

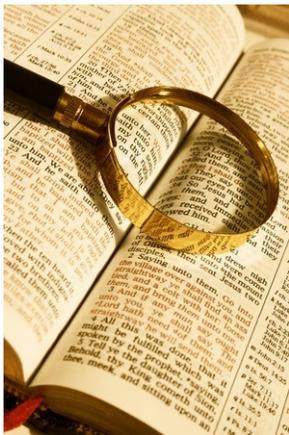
*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

February 14, 2016

Bible Hermeneutics

by Frank Himmel

Herman who?! Hermeneutics. It's a fancy word that means the science of interpretation. The term is derived from Hermes, who in mythology was the messenger and herald of the gods. (Perhaps you remember that at Lystra, when Paul healed a lame man the citizens mistook him for a god and called him Hermes because he was the chief speaker [Acts 14:8-12].)



In the next few weeks we will be looking at some rules by which we interpret the Bible. First, however, let's consider two basics truths.

The Bible Must Be Interpreted

Well-intentioned people at times say the Bible needs no interpretation: it just means

what it says. That sounds good, and in the overall sense it is certainly the case; nevertheless, that affirmation is a bit simplistic and overstated.

The Bible is a collection of different types of literature. It contains numerous figures of speech and other kinds of symbolic language. Its original languages, like all

languages, include terms that have multiple meanings. As is the case with all communication, context is vital. Knowing what the Bible says requires both collecting citations from its various parts and at the same time "rightly dividing" them. All this adds up to interpretation.

Some people think God gives us the interpretation directly. They believe the Holy Spirit guides us as we study the Bible to ensure the correctness of our conclusions. If so, how is it that honest, sincere men, who pray as they study, nevertheless arrive at vastly different, sometimes opposite, positions? Since truth is not contradictory, God is clearly not behind all the different conclusions men reach!

Bible Interpretation Requires No Special Rules

The purpose of the Bible is to communicate God's will to us. Its transmission was entrusted to ordinary men, not to intellectuals who would overanalyze and distort it (see Matthew 11:25). It is written in a straightforward, understandable way, not in esoteric terms that only a select few can comprehend (2 Corinthians 1:13). It is ordinary language for ordinary people. As such, it needs only ordinary rules of interpretation, the same principles we use in interpreting everyday conversation without even thinking about them.

Our purpose in reviewing these principles is to help us deal consistently and fairly with the text. "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

God's Mystery

by Frank Himmel

The Bible sometimes uses the term *mystery* to describe God's plan for us. That word simply refers to what is hidden. The good news is, it is hidden no more! The New Testament plainly brings God's plan to light. Get yours and read along with me.

Before God created the world He formulated a plan for our salvation. His plan was that Jesus would be the atonement for our sins (1 Peter 1:18-20). At that early point, God chose to save those who are in Christ (Ephesians 1:4).

For centuries, God kept His plan hidden, hence it is called a mystery. He revealed it only in bits and pieces: a prophecy here, a foreshadowing event there. The prophets "made careful search and inquiry" seeking more information (1 Peter 1:10-11); there was none.

Then, "in the fulness of time," when the time was right, God sent His Son into the world to execute His plan (Galatians 4:4-5). The rulers of the day did not know God's plan and so they crucified Jesus (1 Corinthians 2:7-8). Ironically, in so doing they carried out God's will.

Jesus rose from the dead and was taken up in glory, in keeping with God's plan (1 Timothy

2:16). Jesus had begun the work of making known the mystery; the Holy Spirit then completed it by revealing all things to the apostles and prophets (John 16:12-13; Ephesians 3:3-5). They went out "preaching the word of God, that is the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations; but now has been manifested..." (Colossians 1:25-26).

As noted earlier, in one sense the mystery is us in Christ; that is where God saves us. But it is also "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). You see, for us to be in Christ, He must live in us.

That means putting aside our old way of living and putting on a new life in keeping with His will (Colossians 3:9-10).

God's plan, the mystery, is the same for all, Gentile as well as Jew (Ephesians 3:3-10). Christ died for all, and all must be saved through Him (Acts 4:12). God has no other plan.

The revelation of the mystery includes a little information about the end of the world (1 Corinthians 15:50-58). Some will still be alive when Jesus returns. In a moment, they will be changed into a body suited to eternity. At the same time, the dead will be raised imperishable. Death will be forever ended. The faithful will go to live with the Lord forever.

"Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."



Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	Josh Baucom	Howard Moore	Carlos Garcia
SONG LEADER	Clifton Lefort	Chad Brock	Albert Harrison Sr
OPENING PRAYER	Steven Turner	Jason Chandler	
LORD'S SUPPER			
BREAD	J B Williams	J B Williams	
CUP	Howard Moore	Howard Moore	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Rawland Daniel		
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Frank Himmel	William Lefort
CLOSING PRAYER	Greg Winget	Chris Brooks	Justin Candella