

INTRODUCTION (13-20)

1. The What and Why of Hermeneutics (13)

Exegesis: Actual interpretation of the Scriptures. (13)

Hermeneutics: Study of the principles of interpretation. The theory behind exegesis. (13)

Principles of Interpretation (14-15)

- Grammatical System:
- Theory of Language: Words contain different meanings.
- Literary Theory: history, fiction, docu-drama. Use other texts for interpretation?
- Text's Historical Setting: relationship to the setting
- View of Revelation: Human wisdom or Divine
- Understanding of the work of Jesus Christ
- Own relationship to text – history or applicable to our lives today
- View of the world at large, the possibility of its understanding. Do interpreters create objects of interpretations or are the objects definite things with properties to be observed and interpreted?

Modernism: Superiority of reason, objective assessment, data, comprehensive explanation, inevitability of progress (15)

Post-Modernism: Distrust of reason; lack of belief in objectivity; all explanation is partial; understanding is perspectival.

2. The Basic Concern and Task of this Book

- a. **Texts and the Process of Communication and Interpretation**: Author → Text → Reader (16-18)
- b. **The Process of Interpretation**: all 3 factors must be considered. Who was the author and circumstances of composition? What meanings do the words convey? Who was to receive the text and under what circumstances?
- Triptych**: 3 section altar piece depicting Christ's crucifixion in the center and scenes from Christ's life on the sides. (18)

• **PART 1 Textual Criticism (21-82)**

Chapter 1(23-34)

A. General Introduction

1. The Need for and Nature of Textual Criticism (23-24)

Autograph: The original documents. **ms** = manuscript. **mss** = manuscripts. (24) **Scriptoria** = Copying halls (30).

2. Types (Examples) of Differences in the Copies of the OT and NT Texts (24-28)

Variant readings: different options at various places in the text. Examples:

- a. individual letters (25)
- b. individual words (25-26)
- c. groups of words (26-27) Luke 11:2, the Lord's Prayer (EG 14 p 27)
- d. **periscopes** (27) entire stories or sections (e.g., Mark 16:9-20)

3 Classification of Textual Differences: Accidental and Deliberate (28)

4. Explaining the Textual Differences (28-33)

- a. Accidental Variations
 - i. attention of a scribe wandered (28-29)
 - ii. scribes fell into old habits – used familiar instead of actual wording (29-30)
 - iii. different perceptions due to scribes being confused (30)
- b. Deliberate Variations
 - i. Conflation of competing readings (31)
 - ii Attempts to be faithful to doctrine (31-32)
 - iii. Correcting grammatical errors to be faithful to the author's integrity (32)
 - iv. Eliminated contradicting passages to be faithful to the book (32)
 - v. Added clarification and additional information when felt necessary. (32-33)

5. Task of Textual Criticism: Reconstruction of the original text. (33)

Chapter 2 (35-60)

B. New Testament

1. Evidence for the Text of the New Testament (35-60)

- a. Greek Manuscripts – earliest AD 120 through 6th Century.
 - i. Material (37)
 - (A) Papyrus – up through 5th century and designated by script ρ .
 - (B) Parchment – animal skins.
 - ii. Writing Style (37-38):
 - (A) **Majuscule** – capital letters only and minimal punctuation; **Uncials** – block capitals without spaces; or **Cursive**. Majuscule mss are designated/classified by roman capitals and numerals.
 - (B) **Miniscule** – 8th century on; lower case; spaces between words and punctuation.
- b. Versions (38)
 - Old Latin** – North Africa and Europe. Vulgate
 - Old Syriac** – Area north of Palestine. Peshitta
 - Sahidic and Bohairic** – Southern & Northern Egypt (Alexandria). In the Coptic language.
 - Armenian** – north of Turkey
- c. Church Fathers (38-39)

2. Nature of the Greek Evidence for the NT Text (39-43)

a. AD 600 through the Middle Ages (39-40)

- “Smooth”: few difficulties of grammar or thought.
- Overt references to the divinity of Christ.
- Unified, little differences from each other.

b. Mid-3rd Century to 6th Century AD (40-43)

- i. Basic Analysis: families of readings; geographical – Alexandria, Rome, Jerusalem.
- ii. Details
 - (A) **Alexandrian Text Type** (40-41) – difficult, shorter readings, little parallelism between Gospel accounts, and number of readings omit reference to the divinity of Christ.
 - (B) **Western Text Type** (41) – addition of many details or alternative versions. Longer and more explanatory. Contain the longer version of the Lord’s prayer (EG 3) and the ending to Mark’s Gospel (EG 16). Cyprian.
 - (C) **Caesarean Text Type** (42). Harmonization of Alexandrian and Western. Armenian and Georgian versions. Eusebius of Caesarea and Origen after 240 AD.
 - (D) **Majority Text Type** (42-43). Dominant after the 6th century. Conflation of Alexandrian, Western and Caesarean types. Also called **Koine** or **Byzantium**.

c. AD 100 to Early 3rd Century. Mixed types: some Alexandrian, some Western, some unique.

3. Analysis of the Evidence (43 – 46) Textual evidence explained in one of two ways.

a. Local Recension Theory. **Recensional = editorial (44)**

Readings multiplied everywhere with copying of the autographs.
Specific patterns developed in centers of Christianity reaching definition by AD 200.

b. Type of Text Theory. (45)

Several types of texts were always more or less transmitted since the time of the Autographs.
Free texts, Normal Texts and Strict Texts.
Free /Strict combination deals seriously with the 2nd & 3rd Century papyri.

4. Establishing the Correct Text (46-52)

a. General Considerations (46-47)

- i. No extant copies of Autographs exist; the text must be established on **Internal** not **External** evidence.
- ii. Focus on Copyist and errors prior to Author’s style (47)

b. Specific Procedures (47-50)

- i. Overall Approach is **eclecticism**: consider each variant individually without regard for ms (rigorous eclecticism) or consider the quality of the ms (reasoned eclecticism). (47-48)
- ii. Options **“The One Great Rule”** (48) The more difficult reading is to be preferred (less likelihood of editing). Local Recession or Type of Text Theory can be used.
- iii. Examples (49-50)

c. **Conclusion: Internal Evidence** following “One Great Rule” procedure. (50)

ADDENDUM 2-A Alternative Understandings of the Evidence for and Development of NT Text – External Evidence

1. The earliest Texts are to be preferred. (54-56)
2. The most numerous Texts are to be preferred. (56-59)

C. Chapter 3: The Old Testament (61-82)

1. Introduction (61-66)

- a. Similarities between OT and NT Textual Criticism (62-63)
 - i. **Textus Receptus** since 1524 has been: 2nd Rabbinic bible of Jacob ben Chayyim.
 - ii. Underlying textual tradition of texts of Ben Asher family (**Masoretic Text = MT**), 8th-10th century.
 - iii. Variants known for many years: Samaritan Pentateuch *see* SP; Septuagint LXX Egypt 3rd cent BC.
 - iv. Recent discoveries at Qumran challenge the predominance of the MT. (63)
- b. Differences between OT and NT Textual Criticism (64-66)
 - i. The OT texts span many more centuries – silver scrolls of Num 6:24-26, 600 BC.
 - ii. Schools arose in the 1st-3rd cent and 8th-10th cent. in Palestine (ben Ashur) and Babylonia.
 - iii. Masoretes were extremely meticulous in copying – middle letter & words of the Pentateuch
 - iv. Masoretes distinguished consonants (1st C), vowels (5th C), verses and paragraphs.
 - v. Masoretes included a commentary **Masora** – Aramaic in all margins
 - vi. Targums – paraphrased versions of OT in Aramaic since Ezra. Explanatory, expansive.

2. Towards a Solution (66-72)

- a. Preliminary Observations (66-67)
 - b. Three Models of Understanding (67-72)
 - Type of Text Theory: MT are more difficult, shorter than SP or LXX. Strict before M schools?
 - Three Local Recession Theory – each tradition developed in a distinct Mideast location
 - MT- end of exile period in Mesopotamia.
 - SP- Palestine after return of exiles
 - LXX- offshoot of SP in Egypt 3rd-4th C BC. Greek.
 - Closing of the canon at Jamnia 100 AD? Songs & Eccl “render hands unclean” (69)
 - Different Approaches / Different Editions Composite Theory (70-72)
 - Emmanuel Tov: Great diversity in texts existed prior to 70 AD. (70)
 - Two approaches to copying texts
 - a. Less precise “Vulgar” SP (70)
 - b. Non “Vulgar”. Copied with care and caution MT and LXX (70)
 - Original Text **“Urtext”** existed for each book, but different editions existed. (70)
 - Older additions survived and were in use.
 - Adoption of MT: Rejection by Jews of LXX (adopted by Christians) and SP (Samaritan)
- ### 3. Doing OT Textual Criticism (72-74)
- a. Critical Edition: Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia 1968 from Leningrad Codex 1008.
 - b. Procedures

i. Options

ii. Examples (73-74) eclectic approach: Strict approach – MT.

D. Conclusion to Part I: Apply one great rule: “Which reading would most likely give rise to the others?” (74)

Addendum 3A (75-78): Targum and Masoretic Text Readings Gen 4:6-9

Addendum 3B (79-80) “What is the Original Text?” John 20:31-32 and John 21:25 both provide endings. The last 4 verses of Luke 24 are missing in some mss.

Addendum 3C (81-82) The value of Textual Criticism – Variants are the first commentary on the text. **The text one establishes will determine what is taught in Bible class or preached in a sermon.** This can hardly be a matter of indifference. (82).

- **PART 2 Linguistics** (83-344): The Study of Language including meaning

Chapter 4: Introduction (85-118)

A. Semantics: The Study of Meaning (87)

1. Introduction (86-87) **Pragmatics**: Effect of Meaning on the Interpreter. **Linguistics**: The study of Language.

2. Basic Principles (87-118)

a. Nature of words and meaning (87-91)

i. Definitions: **Words are Signifiers which evoke conceptual signifieds (=meanings) in the mental world of a hearer/reader from their memory world. (88-89)**

ii. Elaboration:

(A) Words/Signifiers: Does “word” mean the marks on a page or conceptual signifieds (meanings)

(B) Meanings/Conceptual Signifieds **Semantics: the study of meaning**

(1) Composition of Meaning: All meanings are composed of **Semantic Components. Conceptual Signifieds are complexes of characteristics evoked in the mental world of the hearer / reader, the receptor (89). Denotation**: necessary characteristics; **Connotation**: usual characteristics (90)

(2). Breadth (few) and Narrowness (many characteristics) of Meaning. (90)

b. Relationship between Words and Meaning: word is used to mean a signifier or a conceptual signified. (91)

i. Product of convention not intrinsic. Words represent meaning. They do not possess meaning.

ii. Words as signifiers do not have “real” or “original” meanings which continue and are detectable (92)

Etymology: the original meaning of a word. (92)

Since there is no intrinsic relationship between words and meanings, the meaning of a word cannot be derived from historical investigations of earliest usage. (93)

c. Discourse (93-99)

i. Expression of ideas through words; conversation. Communication Model (95) Referent (subject of thought) – conceptual signifieds – signifiers – receptor. Examples: Eph 2:8 (what is “this?”); **Is 7:14** (virgin/maiden refers to?) (97)

ii. When referents are labeled by signifiers, they are seen in relation to other referents. (98)

d. The meaning of the larger whole of discourse (99-104)

i. individual meanings evoked by words are part of the meaning of the larger whole.

ii. The relationship between meanings – **Syntax** – is critical to the meaning of the larger whole. (99)

Example: 1Tim 2:12 (100) to teach, have authority, over man

Example: Genesis 1:27-28, “male and female He made them” (100-101)

Discourse Analysis: exegesis can never be reduced to word studies.

iii. The meaning of the larger whole is the meaning of a matrix of signifiers with interrelated meanings.

No word/ signifier has individual meaning apart from context.

iv. **Hermeneutical Cycle (Spiral)** –to understand the whole text, one must understand the parts. Yet to understand the parts, they must be seen in context of and against the background of the whole. (103)

Addendum 4-A (105 -114) Traditional Linguistic Analysis and Contemporary Linguistic Response

1. Introduction (105)

2. The Greek / Platonic Foundation (106-109)

- The meaning of an utterance is the meaning of the sum of its essential units.
- The meaning of the utterance is obtained by the meaning of those units.
- The essential units are the smallest units – letters
- The essential units, letters, have meanings.
- Natural relationship between form and meaning – language imitates reality. (108)
- No unit or level of word. Analysis from subject and predicates directly to syllables.

- Omission of grammar. Aristotle was the first concerned with syntax, conjunctions, prepositions, and articles.

3. Later Ancient and Popular Western Analysis (109-110)

The essential unit is a word which has a basic meaning. Etymology (109)

4. Contemporary Linguistic Response (110-114)

- a. Etymology is no key to the meaning of words as used at a given context/point in time. (109)

Euphemism – mild, indirect expression or word substituted in place of a harsher word. (111)

- No essential meanings of words exist but only different, historically related meanings. (112)
- The meaning of a word depends on the context. (113)
- If context is essential, the meaning of any communication are the units as necessary for the thought.
- Smaller units in a communication have meaning only within context of the larger whole. (113) **Wholistic** not **Reductionistic**
- The meaning of the whole is the meaning of the parts as a whole.
- The understanding of linguistic usage must be **synchronic** (at a given point in history), not **diachronic**, developmental; contextual and total; not independent and atomistic.

Addendum 4-B Language and Thought: The Source of Conceptual Signifieds and the Role of Language (115-118)

(1) intuition/ direct innate knowledge; (2) experience. Innate knowledge of justice, goodness, God (116)

Language facilitates perceptions and experiences. Cognition and concepts are not limited to language. (117)

Abstract – concepts. Generalize – metaphoric process – an innate/ God given human trait. (118)

Chapter 5 (119-154)

3. Elaborations on the Basic Principles of Semantics

a. Meanings are related to one another. (120-123)

- i. The components of meaning of a word put it within a given **Semantic Field** – meanings with like components. **Synonyms** – words with many like components of meaning. **Lexicon** – translation dictionary. (121)

- ii. Meanings may be in a **taxonomic** relationship – subdivisions. Example: Get – Receive – Take (121-122)

iii. Importance

A. The meanings of different words are not all different. Example: Crisis and Opportunity (122)

B. Synonyms are found in words higher up on the taxonomic hierarchy. **Translation words in the receptor language must be chosen carefully or wrong components of meaning are presented to the reader. (123)**

b. The relationship between meanings and words are not one-to-one. (123-127)

- i. Same word may convey several meanings with different components of meaning. **Polysemy or Multivalency.** Examples: bless – curse, and act of believing – faithfulness – proof – ground of faith (123-124) not one giant super-meaning. **Illegitimate Totality Transfer - amalgamation of meaning is linguistically inappropriate.** (124)
- ii. Same words may convey meanings differing only in number of components of meaning. Examples (125)
Man – Man/Woman; Matt 28:19
- iii. Different words may convey the same meanings on different language levels – **registers:** intimate; informal; formal; ritual. (125-126)
- iv. Different words in different languages may convey many same components of meaning but are not identical. No two meanings in different languages overlap 100%. Examples: bank and gift (127)
- c. The relationship among conceptual signifieds (meanings) constitutes a **MATRIX** for mutual interpretation. (128-137)
 - i. Conceptual signifieds are to be interpreted together as a matrix by:
 - (A) Arrangement of signifiers (128)
 - (1) Paragraphing
 - (2) Patterns repeated
 - (B) Forms of signifiers (128)
 - (1) Genitive absolute in Greek – thought is separate from thought of the main clause.
 - (2) Change in pattern. 1 Cor 42-44 – three prepositional phrases & one noun-adjective phrase
 - (C) Signaling Signifiers (129)
 - (1) Punctuation – Athnach / Sillug – Hebrew disjunctive accent marks break or pause.
 - (2) Subordinating Conjunctions
 - (D) Arrangement of the meanings of signifiers – Patterning of thought functions: Gen 1:27 (129-130)
 - ii. Actual relationships among conceptual signifieds in a matrix are signified by the following: (130-131)
 - (A) Arrangement of signifiers. Example: Jim killed John
 - (B) Forms of signifiers: Greek object-verb-subject **Inflected Language**
 - (C) Signaling signifiers – in Hebrew alef chet
 - (D) Arrangement of the meanings of signifiers – syntax is a subcategory of semantics.
 - iii. Despite extensive signifying, several problems still arise (131-137)
 - (A) Which matrix of conceptual signifieds are to mutually interpret one another. Example Matt 27:53 “after His resurrection”. Eph 4:11-12 five classes of people. (131-132)
 - (B) How do parts relate to other parts and wholes to other wholes?
 - (1) Smaller Units
 - (a) Unclear relationship due to unclear meaning of the subordinating Conjunction 1 John 1:9. NIV rendering seems unacceptable (133)
 - (b) Participles – Greek participles convey action related to the actions of other signifiers. Rom 3:23-24 – Temporal, causal, concessive, or coordinate connection (134)
 - (2) Larger Units Example: 1 Tim 2:9-12 “let a woman learn in quietness” (134-135)
 - (C) Both (A) and (B) above can occur simultaneously. Example: John 17:20-21 (135)
- d. The meaning of the larger whole. (135-137) All interpretation of all signifiers takes place in a matrix of signifiers and conceptual signifieds, involving mutual interpretation. Example: Eph 4:11-12 (136-137)

Addendum 5-A: Hebrew Poetic Structure (139-149)

1. Formal Considerations

a. Patterns of signifiers (139-140)

- i. Initial Letters – **Acrostic:** the initial letter of each verse is a succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet. (140)
Examples: Psalms 119 and 34.

ii. Words

- (A) Inclusio (envelope) – final line may repeat the words of the first line. Example: Ps 150:1, 6b.
- (B) Change-Conclusion – a new word breaks as established pattern. Example: Ps 29:1-2. “Worship”

b. Patterns of meaning (140-142)

i. Basics: like components of meaning are found in patterns

(A) Linear Parallelism – ABC//ABC Example: Ps 117:1 (141)

(B) **Chiasm** – elements of meaning form a Chi. ABC//CBA Example Ps 19:2

ii. Variations (142) **Ballast** – something omitted from 1st line in 2nd, but addition is made. Ps 54:4, 51:3 ABC//BC

2. Semantic Considerations (142-144)

a. Introduction: Presence of a pattern signals a thought unit; Cola – thought units usually have 2 parts or subunits (143)

b. Meaning Relationships: **Parallelism** – Thought of each member relates to that of other members (143)

i. **Synonymous Parallelism** – thought of 2nd colon repeats that of the 1st. Ps 149:1 (143)

ii. **Antithetical Parallelism** – thought of the 2nd colon gives an opposing thought. Ps 1:6 (143)

iii. **Synthetic Parallelism** – thought of 2nd colon gives additional thought to that of the 1st. Ps 42:9 (144)

3. Problems with Parallelism (144-145)

4. General Theory (145-148)

a. What seems basic: when 2 lines are paired suggests there is a connection between meanings. (145)

b. What is difficult

i. Relationship between meanings not obvious Ps 54:4 or ii. Simple Ps 72:1 (145-146)

c. Scope: Thought units of two cola are paired with other units until an entire psalm/chapter takes form. (146-147)

d. Wider Application: Poetic structuring found in OT/NT narratives: Dan 3:13-30; Rom 10 Chiastic Ordering (147-148)

5. Conclusion: A complete matrix of words and thoughts must be interpreted in all respects as a total unit. (148-149)

Addendum 5-B: The Canon in Hermeneutical Perspective (150-154)

Canon: Selection of books and contents in final form, which the church confesses is the source and norm for belief, teaching, and life. Words and meanings held together as a matrix and to mutually interpret one another.

Role of Holy Spirit – inspiration. (151)

Touchstones or Anchors for Interpretation are heading divisions or subdivisions. (152)

Homologoumena: Books universally attested without contradiction

Antilegomena: Books disputed (Heb; James; 2 Pet; 2,3 John; Jude; Apocalypse) FN7

Luther excluded Hebrews, Revelation, and James. FN9 (152-153)

Christian canon – Asserts continuing integrity of OT witness, while NT makes its own witness. (153-154)

Chapter 6 (155-167)

4. Extension: Semantic Dimensions of a Text: Meaning Derives from Several Levels of Signifiers

Structures basic to explanation lie below the surface and several levels of signifiers exist simultaneously. FN 1 (156)

a. Level 1: what the text, marks on a page, are saying. The **Sense** of the text.

b. Level 2 (156-164)

i. Basics: Images evoked by things, situations, actions, attitudes convey meaning – **Semiotically** significant (156-

157) Luke 9:1; Matt 14:26; Luke 10:30-32 (Good Samaritan). The larger whole is the focus of interpretation. (158)

ii. Issues to Be Considered – How does one interpret on Level 2?

(A) What is to Be Interpreted? (158-161) Interpret deeds in same manner as words.

(1) Items in Context - connected

(2) Items with Similar Features – Example: all stories involving healing

(3) Items Depicted by Identical Vocables – Example “offspring of vipers” Matt 12 & 23 (159-160)

(4) Items which seem to have a relatively independent importance but are in proximity, alike or contrasting features, same vocables and important meanings on their own.

(B) What is the meaning of that which is to be interpreted? (161-162)

- The significance found will either be cultural or theological

- Theological significance is understood in respect to God, both His nature and relationship to us.

(C) How does one arrive at significance? (162-165)

- (1) No clues: Author assumes a worldview; Be aware of history and culture of the ancient world.
- (2) Clues at times are given Level 1 words, actions, or other versions e.g. genealogies (162-163)
- (3) No obvious significance; Example: John 2:1-11 Miracle at Cana (163)

Intertextuality: matrixing contrasting passages (164)

c. Level 3: (165-167)

- How something was written, evoked or depicted by the author considering their background and influences.
- **Isagogics:** Introduction or literary and external history of the bible. Preliminary to exegesis.
- Form Criticism: identify units of tradition to reconstruct the features of everyday life.
- Redaction Criticism: isolates the theological perspective of each author by analyzing source materials. (FN 167)

Chapter 7 (168-182)

5. Complexities on Level I

a. Language Usage May Be Literal or Nonliteral (Figurative)

i. Literal: All characteristics of the conceptual signified correspond to those of the referent. (168-169)

ii. Nonliteral

(A) **metaphor:** the referent is labeled using a signifier which evokes a complex of characteristics only some of which correspond to the characteristics of the referent. (169-170). Essential means by which we can make statements about God. Problem – which characteristics are to correspond to a referent?

Example: “salt of the earth” Matt 5:13, salt corresponds to season, preserve, value? (170)

(B) **metonymy:** the referent is labeled by a signifier which evokes a complex of characteristics none of which correspond to characteristics of the referent, but which closely correspond to the characteristics of a closely related referent. Examples: “kingdom of heaven” Matt 4:17 and “authority” 1 Cor 11:10 (171)

(C) **synecdoche:** All of the characteristics of the conceptual signified corresponds to those of only a part of the referent or to characteristics to multiple referents. Examples: “souls” 1 Peter 3:20; “circumcision” Rom 3:30; “authority” 1 Tim 2:12. (171-172) “paint” in basketball or “weather” for a storm

iii. Problems with literal and nonliteral usage. (173-175)

(A) Is a given usage literal or non-literal? Example: “little child” Matt 18:5 (173)

(B) If nonliteral, which type is it? Example: “Abraham’s seed” Gal 3:29 (173-174)

(C) Is language being used loosely (non-literally) Luke 14:12-13 (174-175)

Addendum 7-A: Language About God / “God Talk” (176-182)

The crux of the argument regarding the masculine language about God: “God is Father” not “God is Mother”. This language is metaphorical. Thomas Aquinas (FN 178) “the creature is the effect of the creator” – virtual literal analogies. (179) Controlling metaphors: husband – Hosea; shepherd – Ezekiel & Psalms; father – Gospels and Paul; judge – prophets, Paul, revelation. (180). It is God who gives (male) i.e. creates, redeems and sanctifies; and it is His people who receive (female) i.e. created, redeemed, and made holy. (180-181).

Chapter 8 (183-196)

5. Complexities on Level I (Continued)

b. Meaning Derives from Hidden Sources: all language usage tends to be “shorthand” for reasons of space, time, impact.

i. An Author Assumes Signifiers at “Blanks” in the Text(184-187)

(A) Incomplete sentences (184) Example Gen 4:8.

(B) Complete Sentences. Apparently complete but assume other signifiers to complete the thought fully.

(1) Additional Signifiers (185) Examples 1 Cor 11:6 and 1 Tim 2:15 (Women).

(2) Alternative Signifiers (185-186) Eph 2:8 “By grace...saved position”

Paradigmatic: relationship of a meaning to alternative meanings (186)

Syntagmatic: relationship to its meanings in its context. (186)

(3) Repeated Signifiers (186-187) Two meanings of a word = a complete thought.

ii. An Author Assumes Signifiers under Signifiers Appearing in a Text

(A) Minimal Constructions

(1) Introduction – Example “ministry” Acts 6:1; 6:2; 1:17 (187)

(2) Analysis (187-190)

(a) Event Words and Their Meanings (187-188)

Some nouns and adjectives are verbally based. Turning them back into verbs defining them according to the meaning of their related verbs gives the meaning of the noun or adjective. Forgiveness – act of forgiving (188)

(b) External Entailment (188-190)

The event verbs are part of a sentence with a subject, object and modifiers.

Event words as signifiers are shorthand for a complete sentence centered around a verb with a subject, object, and modifiers.

Example: commission of being an apostle in Rom 1:1 and 1:5 defined by Acts 26:16-18 “God sent Paul to the people of the Jews and Gentiles...” (190)

(3) Usage (190-192) How can Minimal Construction Analysis be Used?

Example (190-191) “Ministry” Acts 6:1 and Acts 1:7: from Christians with respect to physical needs; from Jesus or Apostles with respect to spiritual and physical needs. Example (191) Eph 4:12 “ministry” : KJV parallel – God’s gifts to the Church (pastors, teachers, prophets, etc.); NIV dependent – saints are outfitted to do the work of the ministry.

(B) Fuller Constructions (192-196)

(1) Basics (192-194) A signifier associated with a verbal root actually appears in the text.

Examples (FN 193) Rom 1:5 obedience of faith; 1 John 2:5 love of God; 1 Thes 1:3 labor of love; Mark 1:4 baptism of repentance; Is 53:5 chastisement of our peace.

(2) Issues and Problems

(a) How wide can the Linguistic Net be Cast? (194-195)

Evidence from different works of the same author may be used in this way.

Evidence from different authors may be used; Example: “obedience of faith” (194)

(b) The Problem of Several Parallels

Example (195) 1 John 2:5 “the love of God”: Parallels 1 John 4:11 “God loved us”

Or 1 John 5:2 “we love God” Can be intending both (double entendre)

(c) The Problem of Lack of Evidence – frequently no basic sentence can be found expressing visible signifiers, the hidden signifiers of a shorthand phrase. Context must decide. Example “labor of love” 1 Thes 1:3. (196)

Chapter 9 (197-206)

6. Complexities on Level 2

a. “Filling in the Blanks” (198-199) Readers must fill in the blanks in a story to recreate the full world story. Matt 4:12

b. Extensions of Significance (200) Luke 7 – in Christ, God was visiting His people; Mark – Christ was fully human.

c. Relationships between Level 1 and Level 2 Signifiers and Meanings (200-201)

- The meaning of the deeds on Level 2 is often perceived by matrixing them with signifiers/meanings on Level 1

- NT Gospels, Acts, Revelation are Level 2 deeds; Epistles are Level 1 articulated by words

- OT Pentateuch, Histories are Level 2 deeds; Prophets are Level 1 articulated by words

d. Thoughts/Ideas/Truths as Level 2 Signifiers (201-202) Level 1 signifiers can be read on Level 2. Gal 5:1 and Gal 5:17

e. The Historicity of Narrative and Allegorical Interpretation (202-206)

- Judgements must be made between the Biblical narrative and the historical world outside the narrative.
- If a Biblical narrative is intended as a description of persons and actions in the historical past, the deeds depicted or evoked in the mind of the hearer/reader will have significance for three things:
 - Our understanding of human nature and life
 - Our understanding of historical developments
 - Our understanding of specific historical acts and the nature of God and relationship to us.
- If one judges that the writing of history is not intended within a Biblical narrative, the story is an **allegory**.
- Allegories can be specific or humanity in general – existential.
- If a story is deemed to be non-historical, it does not become “untrue” (205)
- Human existential significances must be understood in relation to God who has acted in history (206).

Chapter 10 (207-216)

7. Further Critical Issues

a. The Role of the Reader in the Interpretation of a Text: Meaning is Interpersonal (208-211)

- Level 1: meanings; Level 2: deeds / situations and filling blanks; Level 3: Reconstruct the author’s world view.
- **Second Texts** are readers beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, ideas, experiences. Factors in interpretation. (208-209)
- Because of the presence / activity of the interpreter’s person/self, there is no possibility of objective interpretation. (210) Communication Model (112)

b. Intentionality (212-216): The quality of a text that conforms to what the real author wished to communicate.

i. Introduction (212) Intention of the Author and the validity of the Interpreter.

ii. Basic Considerations (213-214)

- (A) Texts have intended meaning
- (B) “Levels of Signifiers” and “Second Text” help clarify the matter of Intentional Meaning (214)
 - (1) Meaning of Level 1 is normally intended and clear.
 - (2) Meaning of Level 2 (deeds/ideas) is normally intended but matrixing is more obscure.
 - (3) Meaning of Level 3 is often not intended, and meaning is more elusive and obscure.
- (C) Genre is key and focus on different levels: timetable (level 1); poetry, science fiction (level 2)
- (D) Time of Composition is a key – older texts are less open-ended. (214)

iii. Position Summary and Final Considerations (215-216)

- (A) A text has a meaning which reflects the intention of the author.
- (B) The intentional meaning does not exhaust the meaning of the text.
- (C) To a certain extent but is more elusive as one moves
 - (1) from Level 1 to Level 2 and to Level 3.
 - (2) from genres which intend to convey information to poetry, love, etc.
 - (3) from older literature to more recent literature.

Chapter 11 (217-229)

7. Further Critical Issues Continued

c. Valid Interpreters / Interpretations

i. General NT Considerations and Principles (218-226)

(A) The Implied Reader and Competency in Interpretation

- Actual Author has an Implied Reader; Actual Reader has an Implied Author (218-219).
- A reader can become an Implied Reader by conforming to that role by a Community (220)
- A community which has produced, received, and produced a given set of documents is likely to teach its members to read those documents congenial to them. (220)
- The Community’s members possess the competencies for interpretation called for.
- As the NT documents were produced, received and preserved by Christians, they are likely to Teach its members to read these documents in a way congenial to them. Role of implied reader.

- To be in the Christian Community is to adhere to and confess its creeds and rule of faith (221-2)
- Early Church Fathers contended heretics could not use the Scriptures against the Church.
- The creeds provide the interpretive key for the meaning of the complex of signifiers considered.

(B) The Role of Faith and the Work of the **Holy Spirit** (223-226)

- A believer, one who embraces the faith, can correctly read the texts of who produced them.
- What role does the Holy Spirit play? Two positions:

Position A – traditional and post-modern (223-224)

- (i) The Holy Spirit inspired the writers, desires the message to be heard / understood /believed.
- (ii) The Holy Spirit gives readers/hearers openness and acceptance of the text – Faith.
- (iii) Through Faith, one is enabled to become the fully implied reader of sacred scriptures.
- (iv) The true implied reader must be a Christian
- (v) A Christian however, is not automatically a full implied reader without knowledge & skills.

Position B – less post-modern (225)

- (i) The Holy Spirit inspired the writers, desires the message to be heard / understood /believed.
- (ii) One can have congeniality with the text without believing and true faith.
- (iii) The Holy Spirit by providing provisional faith in interpreters as real or permanent.
- (iv) Faith is the bridge between the narrative world and the real world.

ii. The Problem of the Old Testament and Its Interpretation (226-229)

- 2 Cor 3:15-16 Jews do not believe; therefore, the Jews cannot be the implied reader of the sacred text.
- Luke 24:45 “Then He opened their mind to understand the Scriptures”
- Christian context because the central position occupied by our Lord in NT and OT. **Christocentric** (228)
- Christ is the subject and focus of the OT. Matt 2:4-6; 1 Cor 15:3-4; John 5:39.
- Church’s ancient viewpoint confirmed: Valid interpretation of the scriptures can only be done by a Believing Christian within a Christian community in accordance with Creedal understanding of those Scriptures by the historic Christian Church.