


**Biblical Dispensationalism**

**Session 1**

**Introduction to Biblical Dispensationalism**

Sugar Land Bible Church  
10-03-2018



Jim McGowan, MTS, Th.D.

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**Session 1 Outline**

I. Important Assumptions and Prerequisites

A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture

1. Revelation
2. Inspiration
3. Inerrancy
4. Canon
5. Hermeneutics

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**Session 1 Outline**

I. Important Assumptions and Prerequisites

A. **The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

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A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture

1. **Revelation** - Revelation is *of necessity* an act of God by which God makes Himself known to His creatures.

- a) Theophanies (appearances of God)
- b) Dreams and visions
- c) Direct contacts
- d) Miracles and signs
- e) Prophets
- f) The revelation of God in Jesus Christ
- g) The Scriptures

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1. Revelation

a) **Theophanies** (appearances of God)

- 1) to Abraham – Gen 17:1; Gen 18:1
- 2) to Isaac – Gen 26:2
- 3) to Jacob – Gen 32:30
- 4) to Moses – Ex 3:2; Ex 33:11
- 5) to Gideon – Jdg 6:12

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1. Revelation

b) **Dreams and visions**

- 1) to Jacob – Gen 28:12
- 2) to Solomon – 1 Kings 3:5
- 3) to Daniel – Dan 2:19; 7:1; 10:7
- 4) to Joseph – Matt 1:20; 2:13
- 5) Cornelius – Acts 10:1-8
- 6) Peter – Acts 10:10, 17, 19; 11:5ff
- 7) Paul – Acts 9 (26:19); 16:10; 18:9; 2 Cor. 12
- 8) John – Rev. 1:10; 9:17

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**1. Revelation**

**c) Direct contact**

- 1) With Moses – Ex 33:11
- 2) With the 70 elders of Israel – Ex 24:9-11
- 3) With Balaam – Num 22:9; 23:4

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**1. Revelation**

**d) Miracles and signs**

- 1) Judgement of the flood – Gen 6-9
- 2) Destruction of Sodom – Gen 19
- 3) Burning bush, plagues of Egypt, deliverance of Israel – Ex 3-15
- 4) Miracles of the desert and entering promised land – Numbers and Joshua

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**1. Revelation**

**e) Prophets**

- 1) Spoke for God – Ex 4:11-12
- 2) Do not speak according to their own will – 2 Pet 1:21

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**1. Revelation**

**f) The revelation of God in Jesus Christ**

- 1) Jn 1:18
- 2) Matt 11:27
- 3) Jn 14:9

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**1. Revelation**

**g) The Scriptures**

- 1) The written text calls to mind the original message – Ex 17:14; Mal 3:16
- 2) A book groups together all the messages received – 1 Cor 10:11
- 3) The written message works independently of orator and writer – Jer 36:2-32

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**1. Revelation**

**g) The Scriptures**

- 4) Written message becomes universal, indestructible and almost omnipresent - Revelation to the prophet, orally to a few, but written word could be put in all population
- 5) Written revelation makes its readers forever afterward responsible – Luke 16:29

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**I. Important Assumptions and Prerequisites**

**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

2. **Inspiration** – The determining influence exercised by the Holy Spirit on the writers of the Old and New Testaments in order that they might accurately proclaim and set down **in an exact and authentic way** the message as received from God. This influence guided them **even to the extent of their use of words**, that they might be kept from all error and omission.

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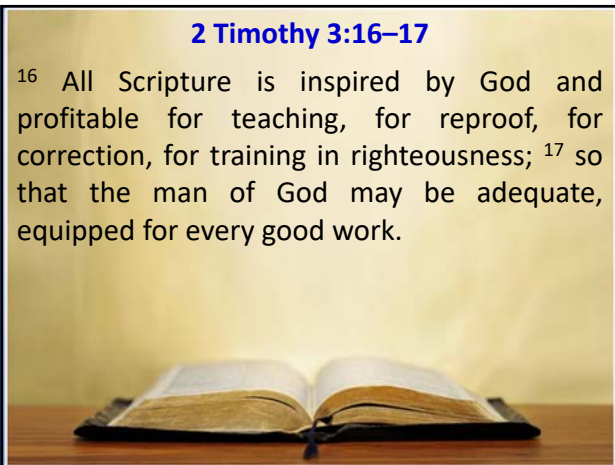
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**2 Timothy 3:16–17**

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.



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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**2. Inspiration (cont'd)**

- a) "All Scripture is inspired by God" – in the Greek *theopneustos*, literally: breathed out from God – produced by the life-giving breath of God, proceeding from Him, spoken by Him.
- b) Creation by the breath of His mouth (Ps 33:6)
- c) It is "every Scripture" or "all the Scripture" which is inspired.
- d) It is the Scripture, the text itself, which, according to Paul, is inspired.

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**2. Inspiration (cont'd)**

- e) Every scripture is "profitable." Rev 22:18-19
- f) Every scripture is "for reproof". John 16:8 – Same word as "convict"
- g) Every scripture is "for correction". Ps 119:9-11
- h) Every scripture is for "training in righteousness". Ps 119:98-99, 130; 2 Tim 3:15
- i) Every scripture is "so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." Eph 2:10; 2 Peter 1:3

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**2. Inspiration (cont'd)**

- j) **Four ways to regard the Bible:**
  - i. It is only a remarkable human book without divine inspiration.
  - ii. It is partially inspired by God.
  - iii. It is only divine, devoid of any human adjunction (*subordinate association*).
  - iv. It is at the same time divine and human, God having fully inspired the sacred authors who spoke in His name.

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**2. Inspiration (cont'd)**

**j) Four ways to regard the Bible:**

- i. It is only a remarkable human book without divine inspiration – *If true, and if they had no revelation from above, how were the biblical writers able to make so many detailed predictions, confirmed by history? If the Scriptures were only the product of the human brain, inherently fallible as it is, the Bible would have failed completely in its purpose, which is to give us a sure knowledge of truth.*

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**2. Inspiration (cont'd)**

**j) Four ways to regard the Bible:**

- ii. It is partially inspired by God – *Those who make such a distinction seem to admit that God spoke to the prophets, but they consider themselves entirely free to reject or to make changes in the written message.*

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**2. Inspiration (cont'd)**

**j) Four ways to regard the Bible:**

- iii. It is only divine, devoid of any human contribution (*mechanical dictation theory*) – *God “dictated” His Word to the writers of Scripture, who were fully under God’s control, in a state of relative passivity. Human personality and error could not interfere because the human writers did not personally contribute anything to the content of Scripture.*

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**2. Inspiration (cont'd)**

**j) Four ways to regard the Bible:**

iv. It is at the same time divine and human, God having fully inspired the sacred authors who spoke in His name – *We believe that in the composition of the original manuscripts, the Holy Spirit guided the authors even in their choice of expressions and this throughout all the pages of the Scriptures still without eroding the personalities of the different men.*

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**2. Inspiration (cont'd)**

We hold to **verbal inspiration** (*the very words, not just thoughts and ideas*) and **plenary inspiration** (*equally in every part of the Scriptures*).

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**Matthew 5:17–18 (KJV)**

<sup>17</sup> Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. <sup>18</sup> For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one lot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.



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A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture

2. Inspiration (cont'd)

בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:

**Jot**  
Yod  
The word jot (Greek word: iota) is derived from Yod, the name of the 10th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

**Title**  
Beth Kaf  
Observe the Hebrew letters Beth and Kaf. The main difference is a small protrusion at the bottom right corner of the letter Beth. It is like the tail that distinguishes English letter Q from O. Such a small mark is called a tittle.

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2 Peter 1:20–21

<sup>20</sup> But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter* of one's own interpretation, <sup>21</sup> for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but **men moved by the Holy Spirit** spoke from God.



men... 'ones being borne along' by the Holy Spirit... φερόμενοι - Present Passive Participle - Nomative Masculine Plural of φέρω phéro

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

3. **Inerrancy** – 3,808 times, the Old Testament authors claim to be transmitting the very words of God. Our Lord confirmed the Old Testament when He declared *“One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished”* (Matt 5:18). He says to the Jews, *“The Scripture cannot be broken”* (John 10:35) At the end of His earthly ministry He said *“Sanctify them in truth; thy word is truth”* (John 17:17)

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

3. **Inerrancy** – The Extent

a) Inerrancy does not mean uniformity in all the details given in analogous accounts written by different authors – *The books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles all belong in large part to the same historical period but their point of view and their expression vary sometimes. The four Gospel recount the life of Christ yet with different details.*

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

3. **Inerrancy** – The Extent

b) Biblical inerrancy does not exclude the use of pictures and symbols – *The plain meaning of many passages is clear from an historical, practical, legal and moral point of view. But there are also many pages where the language is obviously symbolical.*

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**3. Inerrancy – The Extent**

c) Biblical inerrancy does not imply the use of an exact technical vocabulary, conformed to present scientific terminology – *The Biblical authors employed the language of their times, not claiming to foresee modern science. But when they did set down facts in the realm of science, they expressed themselves without error in regard to fundamental principles.*

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**3. Inerrancy – The Extent**

d) Apropos of (*with reference to; concerning*) inerrancy, the biblical message has to be put back into its own historical setting – *Certain declarations of Scripture were true when they were made, although the circumstances are different now. (cf. Joshua 4:9 “are there unto this day”).*

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**3. Inerrancy – The Extent**

e) Inerrancy has to do with the whole of the biblical message – *Everything in Scripture is true, not just the “faith and practice”. The historical facts are so intimately tied in with spiritual realities that we would find it very hard to separate the two.*

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**3. Inerrancy – The Extent**

f) Inerrancy does not imply omniscience on the part of the biblical authors – *The Scriptures were written by men who were kept from error, but who were not endowed with the perceptive faculties which belong to God alone.*

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

4. **Canon** – means a rule which serves as a measure; and then, by extension, that which is measured. A book is canonical if the Jewish synagogue or the Christian church recognized it as the bearer of the revelation communicated by the Spirit of God.

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

4. **Canon** – Are men capable of discerning inspiration to the point of knowing with certainty whether or not a specific book belongs in the canon? **In themselves, of course, they are not.** The principle is the same essentially as for the revelation itself.

*So how did God assemble the Canon?*

God grants **inspiration** to the sacred writers; **illumination** to the open-hearted individual reader, that he may understand the inspired text; and **discernment** to the body of believers, for the recognition of the books of divine origin and for the inclusion of these books in the canon.

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**1 Corinthians 2:9–10, 14**

<sup>9</sup> but just as it is written, “THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND *which* HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.” <sup>10</sup> For to us God **revealed them through the Spirit**; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God...<sup>14</sup> But **a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.**



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**I. Important Assumptions and Prerequisites**

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

5. **“Proper” Hermeneutics** – a consistently literal, or normal, interpretive grid which attaches to every word the same meaning that it would have in normal usage, whether in speaking, writing, or thinking. Often referred to as the “Literal, Historical, Grammatical,” method of interpretation.

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

5. **10 essentials of “Proper” Hermeneutics**
- a) Scripture interprets Scripture.
  - b) The meaning of words is to be established by their usage.
  - c) Context must be taken into account.
  - d) A grammatico-historical interpretation must be used.
  - e) The interpreter must begin assuming literal or normal interpretation in a passage unless otherwise indicated by common linguistic sense.
  - f) Figurative language such as poetry, figures of speech, metaphors, similes and illustrations attempt to convey very actual, even literal concepts.

Couch, M. (2000). *An Introduction to Classical Evangelical Hermeneutics, A Guide to the History and Practice of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications.

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

5. **10 essentials of “Proper” Hermeneutics**
- g) The “human drama” must be allowed to come forth.
  - h) As part of the context, factors such as culture, historical background, social setting, and geography all play a part in interpretation.
  - i) The Bible must be studied dispensationally in order to see how God dealt with people and nations differently at different time periods.
  - j) Progressive revelation is also important in dispensational hermeneutics.

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**5. 10 essentials of "Proper" Hermeneutics**

- a) Scripture interprets Scripture – *The Bible is a closed volume of literature, having a cohesive historical context that is obviously differentiated from all other writings.*

Couch, M. (2000). *An Introduction to Classical Evangelical Hermeneutics, A Guide to the History and Practice of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications.

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**5. 10 essentials of "Proper" Hermeneutics**

- b) The meaning of words is to be established by their usage – *The Holy Spirit chose human language to convey the Word of God. Thus, an ordinary use of language conveys to us what God wants us to know.*

Couch, M. (2000). *An Introduction to Classical Evangelical Hermeneutics, A Guide to the History and Practice of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications.

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**5. 10 essentials of "Proper" Hermeneutics**

- c) Context must be taken into account – *Words and thoughts must be understood within the setting, the time frame, the mood of the moment, the culture, etc.*

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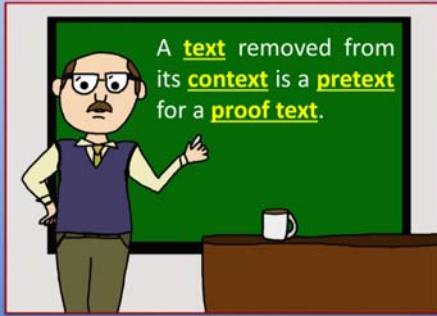
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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**5. 10 essentials of "Proper" Hermeneutics**

d) A grammatico-historical interpretation must be used – *A mastery of the historical setting and of the grammar used is imperative to comprehending the sense of a given sentence or paragraph.*

Couch, M. (2000). *An Introduction to Classical Evangelical Hermeneutics, A Guide to the History and Practice of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications.

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**5. 10 essentials of "Proper" Hermeneutics**

e) The interpreter must begin assuming literal or normal interpretation in a passage unless otherwise indicated by common linguistic sense – *Behind the poetry are literal concepts that in turn give meaning to the poetic language, i.e., "the hills skipped like lambs"*

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**5. 10 essentials of "Proper" Hermeneutics**

- f) Figurative language such as poetry, figures of speech, metaphors, similes and illustrations attempt to convey very actual, even literal concepts – *The Biblical interpreter must use common sense in interpreting figurative language.*

Couch, M. (2000). *An Introduction to Classical Evangelical Hermeneutics, A Guide to the History and Practice of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications.

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**5. 10 essentials of "Proper" Hermeneutics**



When the **plain sense** of Scripture **makes common sense**, seek **no other sense**; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, and literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, clearly indicate otherwise. – David L. Cooper

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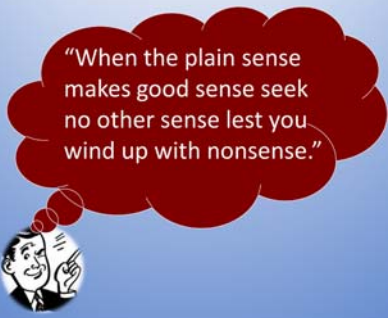
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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**5. 10 essentials of "Proper" Hermeneutics**



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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**5. 10 essentials of "Proper" Hermeneutics**

g) The "human drama" must be allowed to come forth – *The interpreter should avoid "wooden-headed literalism" that follows so stiff and rigid an interpretation that all normal human expression is destroyed.*

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**5. 10 essentials of "Proper" Hermeneutics**

h) As part of the context, factors such as culture, historical background, social setting, and geography all play a part in interpretation – *The interpreter must familiarize himself with the customs, historical data, unique cultural norms (i.e., Jewish vs. Gentile), and significant geological references (i.e., locations and topography) related to the passage under consideration (i.e., Matt. 20:29–34; Mark 10:46–52).*

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**5. 10 essentials of "Proper" Hermeneutics**

i) The Bible must be studied dispensationally in order to see how God dealt with people and nations differently at different time periods – *The student of Scripture must observe carefully the context of a specific period in Bible history to ascertain how God worked in different ways.*

Couch, M. (2000). *An Introduction to Classical Evangelical Hermeneutics, A Guide to the History and Practice of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications.

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A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture

5. 10 essentials of "Proper" Hermeneutics

j) Progressive revelation is also important in dispensational hermeneutics – *Not everything is revealed at the beginning of the Bible. Not only does each successive book presuppose the books that went before, but many passages in the earlier books clearly point to Scripture that was yet to come. God progressively, generation to generation, revealed new truth. Some things, such as the church, were mysteries and not previously revealed in the Old Testament.*

Couch, M. (2000). An Introduction to Classical Evangelical Hermeneutics, A Guide to the History and Practice of Biblical Interpretation. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications.

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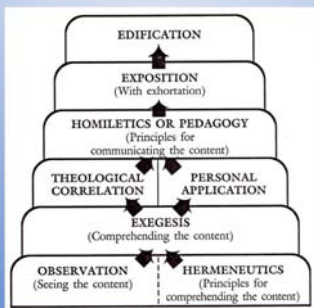
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A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture

5. "Proper" Hermeneutics



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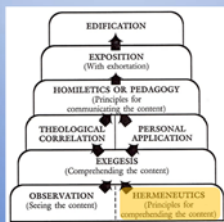
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A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture

5. "Proper" Hermeneutics

**Hermeneutics** is the science (principles) and art (task) by which the meaning of the biblical text is determined.



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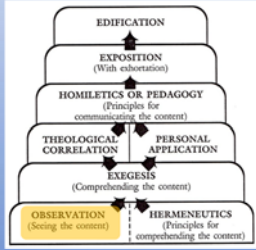
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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**5. "Proper" Hermeneutics**

**Observation** asks the question "what does it say".



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**5. "Proper" Hermeneutics – Observation**



**OBSERVATION**

<b>WHO</b>	are the participants, the author, and the intended first readers? If there is a command, who must obey it?
<b>WHAT</b>	happened or will happen? If there is a command, what should be done? What does the text say about God, Jesus, people, Satan, angels, demons, etc.? What ideas are discussed, and what is said about them?
<b>WHEN</b>	did (will) it happen? (Time lines may be found in the back of some Bibles.) If there is a command, when must it be done? If the text is a prophecy, has it been fulfilled?
<b>WHERE</b>	did (will) it happen? (The maps in your Bible may be helpful.) If there is a command, where must it be performed?
<b>WHY</b>	was (is) this done? Why did (will) this happen? Why should it be done?

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**5. "Proper" Hermeneutics – Observation**



**OBSERVATION  
AS A DETECTIVE**

\*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. John 3:16

<b>WHO</b>	God loves World, gave Son, that Whosoever
<b>WHAT</b>	
<b>WHEN</b>	God Gave, ... Whosoever believes
<b>WHERE</b>	...with the coming of His Son
<b>WHY</b>	...on earth, at Jerusalem [Christ would die]
<b>HOW</b>	God gave Because He Loved He loved BY GIVING

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**5. "Proper" Hermeneutics – Observation**

**OBSERVE THE WHOLE PICTURE**  
JOHN 3: 16

- What is the entire message of John?
- What are the key themes?
- What is the outline of the book?
- How do the chapters and verses relate?
- What is the type of literature?

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**5. "Proper" Hermeneutics – Observation**

**OBSERVE OBJECTIVELY**  
LET THE BIBLE SPEAK FOR ITSELF

What My Denomination Says

My Preconceived Opinions

What a Friend Says

**BIBLE**

Take it at Face Value From Strong Textual and Contextual Study

"STUDY OBJECTIVELY NOT SUBJECTIVELY"

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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**5. "Proper" Hermeneutics**

**Exegesis** is the determination of the meaning of the biblical text in its historical and literary contexts.

Zuck, R. B. (1991). Basic Bible Interpretation: A Practical Guide to Discovering Biblical Truth. (C. Bubeck Sr., Ed.). Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook.

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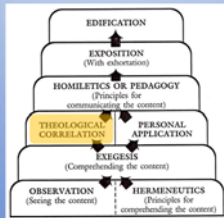
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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**5. "Proper" Hermeneutics**

**Theological Correlation** refers to how the passage fits within the overall theological structure of the Bible.



Zuck, R. B. (1991). Basic Bible Interpretation: A Practical Guide to Discovering Biblical Truth. (C. Bubeck Sr., Ed.). Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook.

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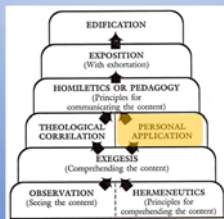
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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**5. "Proper" Hermeneutics**

**Personal Application** refers to how I am to assimilate and incorporate the passage into my daily Christian experience.



Zuck, R. B. (1991). Basic Bible Interpretation: A Practical Guide to Discovering Biblical Truth. (C. Bubeck Sr., Ed.). Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook.

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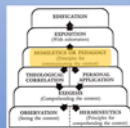
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**A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture**

**5. "Proper" Hermeneutics**

**Homiletics** is the science (principles) and art (task) by which the meaning and relevance of the biblical text are communicated *in a preaching situation*. Pedagogy is the science (principles) and art (task) by which the meaning and relevance of the biblical text are communicated *in a teaching situation*.



Zuck, R. B. (1991). Basic Bible Interpretation: A Practical Guide to Discovering Biblical Truth. (C. Bubeck Sr., Ed.). Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook.

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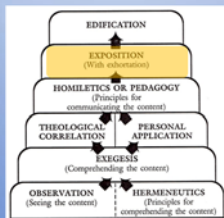
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## A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture

### 5. “Proper” Hermeneutics

**Exposition** is the communication of the meaning of the text along with its relevance to present-day hearers.



Zuck, R. B. (1991). Basic Bible Interpretation: A Practical Guide to Discovering Biblical Truth. (C. Bubeck Sr., Ed.). Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook.

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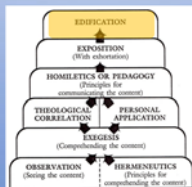
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## A. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture

### 5. “Proper” Hermeneutics

Concerning **Edification**: *“All the historical, doctrinal, and practical truth of the Bible is for one purpose: to promote the spiritual prosperity of man. The Bible is not an end; it is a means.”* Bernard Ramm



Zuck, R. B. (1991). Basic Bible Interpretation: A Practical Guide to Discovering Biblical Truth. (C. Bubeck Sr., Ed.). Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook.

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### Resources

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- Charles C. Ryrie, Dispensationalism, Moody, 2007, 080242189X
- Christopher Cone, gen. ed., Dispensationalism Tomorrow & Beyond, Tyndale Seminary Press, 2008 9780981479101
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- Roy B. Zuck, Basic Bible Interpretation, SP Publications, 1991
- Steven Waterhouse, Not By Bread Alone: An Outlined Guide to Bible Doctrine, Westcliff Press, ISBN-0977405125
- Charting the End Times CD-Rom: A Visual Guide to Understanding Bible Prophecy, ISBN-10: 0736917624

Materials from:

- Dr. Andy Woods, Sugar Land Bible Church, [www.slbcc.org](http://www.slbcc.org)
- Dr. Vern Peterman, Holly Hills Bible Church, [www.hollyhillsbiblechurch.org](http://www.hollyhillsbiblechurch.org)
- George Zeller, Middletown Bible Church, [www.middletownbiblechurch.org](http://www.middletownbiblechurch.org)
- Ed Allsteadt, Sugar Land Bible Church, [www.slbcc.org](http://www.slbcc.org)

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