

2015 Shreveport Bible Conference

Jesus *Is* the Messiah!

A Synopsis of Messianic Prophecies

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Jesus Is the Messiah!

PART 1: Prophecies

1. The Issue of Hermeneutics:

In 2002, I taught a seventy-four-hour series on the subject of hermeneutics, the science of biblical interpretation. The two major schools that pioneered evaluation of the Hebrew and Greek texts are (1) the school at Alexandria, Egypt, that taught the allegorical method, and (2) the school at Antioch, Syria, which instructed the literal method.

Grace Doctrine Church utilizes the latter which may be more accurately defined as the literal-historical-grammatical method, and it strongly opposes the allegorical approach.

The allegorical method of biblical evaluation may be defined as:

Prose in which the objects, events, or people in the text are presented symbolically, so that the passage conveys a meaning that is allegedly “deeper” than the actual incident described. This method has a strong tendency to read into the passage what the interpreter believes is a moral lesson that lies underneath the literal. In effect, the Scripture does not speak to the theologian, but rather the theologian speaks to the Scripture.

Famous examples of allegory in secular literature include John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queen*, and John Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*.

Biblical interpretation by this method stretches back to the second century, championed by Philo of Alexandria and later adopted by the Catholic Church. The literal method of interpretation was ultimately suppressed by the ruling of the Council of Ephesus in A.D. 431.

Subsequently, the allegorical method reigned supreme through medieval times and the literal approach was not revived until the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century.

The Protestants favored the literal method under the principle that the Scripture is divinely inspired and that God speaks to us plainly and directly, not in code.

Favoritism toward the allegorical system emerged when the men at the School of Alexandria and later in the Roman Catholic Church confronted passages they assumed were “morally perplexing.”

To resolve this they concluded that the literal reading was secondary and that they were to assign to the text a hidden, symbolic, or mystical meaning.

Many Protestant denominations have made the error of adjusting Scripture to agree with traditions or the claims of their doctrinal statements.

The assumption that the Bible is not adaptable to every generation leads some to use allegory to make the text more comprehensible, acceptable, and relevant to the present day.

What allegory does is allow the theologian the latitude to subjectively speculate about what *he* decides a passage means while ignoring the need to make an exegetical evaluation of the literal text.

This results in an approach that diminishes the legitimate meaning of what the Holy Spirit communicated to the human authors.

Thus, the influence of the allegorical method has resulted in a wide range of “interpretations” in many denominations, none of which is willing to make adjustments in doctrinal statements that were formulated hundreds of years ago.

Today, Protestant Christianity is so diverse in its understanding of Scripture that its proponents who boast household names, but with flawed theology, are legitimately criticized as being provincial.

When accurate doctrine is presented it is easily cast aside as being “just your interpretation.”

Allegorical hermeneutics in the hands of Protestant pastors result in their interpretation being what they think it says which is influenced by their personal opinions, the doctrinal statement of their denominations, or their social and educational backgrounds.

What is convenient to these men is that allegory cannot be challenged: its interpretation is “underneath” the literal, its real message is “hidden, symbolic, and mystical.”

The literal method may be defined as follows:

The literal method signifies accuracy and thoroughness in presenting the exact meaning of the original. It seeks to arrive at the primary meaning of a text as intended by the author. This is accomplished by assuming all Scripture is meant to be taken literally, interpreted in the time in which was written, and translated by thorough exegesis of the original languages.

The literal method gives to each word the same exact basic meaning it would have in normal, ordinary, and customary use.

If a passage is allegorical it is obvious from the text, otherwise it should not be imposed by the whim of the theologian.

The literal approach to Scripture assumes its plenary inspiration, meaning that the Bible is the complete Word of God to man, without error or defect in its original autographs.

Conveyance of this message was accomplished by the Holy Spirit Who transferred divine thought in the vocabulary of the day, whether Hebrew or Greek, and in the grammar of these languages.

Since God spoke to us in words and since His intent is to be understood, then it is the theologian's responsibility to examine His words in their context through exegetical analysis.

In as much as God gave His Word as a revelation to men, it would be expected that His message would be given in such exact and specific terms that His thoughts would be accurately conveyed and understood when interpreted from the laws of grammar and speech.

We are able to justify these conclusions by observing this principle from Scripture: All prophecies which have been fulfilled were each fulfilled literally.

This brings us to our subject, *Jesus Is the Messiah!* Prophecy makes reference to future events that were unfulfilled at the time they were proclaimed.

The interpretation of these prophecies is handled differently by the literal and allegorical pastor and is reflected by their individual views of the Second Advent.

The literal pastor is usually a premillennialist:

The premillennial theologian contends that Christ will return to earth in a Second Advent that occurs at the close of the Tribulation. He will descend from heaven in resurrection body accompanied by the church and will set up His earthly kingdom, with its headquarters in Jerusalem, for one thousand years, a dispensation referred to as the Millennium. During this time Christ will literally fulfill the unconditional covenants given to Israel.

The allegorical pastor is usually an amillennialist:

Adherents to this system believe that Christ will return but do not believe in a one-thousand year earthly kingdom. Instead, the amillennialist believes that the church is the kingdom of God on earth and that Christ's "second coming" will result in the transfer of all believers into the eternal state. Amillennial theologians are not adverse to literal interpretation of Scripture but opt for allegory when the literal meaning of a passage reveals a premillennial interpretation.

2. The Gospels and the Epistles:

Beyond allegorical hermeneutics, one of the major reasons that mainline Protestant denominations are reluctant to teach doctrine is the tendency of their pastors to dwell on the Gospels instead of the Epistles.

The Gospels provide us a greater exposition of the earthly ministry of Christ than any other source, and the number of extant manuscripts of these four books far exceeds that of any secular writers before or after the first century.

There is much to be gained from studying the Gospels, but it must be kept in mind that what we observe from its teachings is the public ministry of Christ in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies concerning the First Advent.

His initial and single duty was to present Himself as the Son of God, the Messiah, *Yahweh Elohim*. He performed miracles; He healed the sick, the lame, the blind, and the deaf. He did so while adhering strictly to the mandates of the Mosaic Law.

The message of the Gospels is that mankind is incapable of keeping the Law, with the lone exception of the humanity of Christ. He accomplished this task and, without sin, was qualified to become the Savior of the world.

There is very little in the Gospels that address the doctrines of the Church Age. They are primarily historical accounts of the Lord presenting His case as Messiah and the response that effort received from, first, the Jewish community and, secondly, the Gentile.

Consequently, it is not God's desire that we imitate the deeds of Christ during the Incarnation. We cannot do what He did. We have a sinful nature, He did not; He is deity, we are not.

The issue for us is to transform our thinking to be in concert with His thinking and this can only be accomplished by Bible study – and not with major emphasis on the Gospels but rather on the Epistles.

PRINCIPLE: A Church Age believer cannot grow spiritually unless he gets out of the Gospels and into the Epistles.

The clear distinction between divine and human thought is expressed by the Lord in:

Isaiah 55:8 - “My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord.

Paul, in recognizing the importance of thought transformation in the human soul, issues this commandment in:

Romans 12:2 - Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

The Lord and Paul each address how imperative it is to know Scripture and that this knowledge is acquired through Bible study:

Matthew 22:29 - Jesus answered and said to them [the Sadducees], “You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God.”

Romans 10:17 - Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

Teaching that salvation is acquired by imitating the works of Christ during His earthly ministry while ignoring His work on the cross is a false Gospel and therefore evil.

Imitation of the works of Christ’s life for spirituality while ignoring His Word – especially that revealed in the Epistles – results in demon influence, hucksterism, and reversionism.

Following in Christ’s literal footsteps revealed in the Gospels without reference to His work on the cross, or to His Word revealed in the Epistles, is the result of satanic propaganda designed to distract from grace and doctrine.

2 Corinthians 11:13 - Such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:14 - No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

v. 15 - Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

The teachers described here are emissaries of Lucifer. Their false teachings are exposed by the light of Scripture and made evident through Bible study.

If such communicators are actually believers, but who have deeply flawed theology, they may well face the sin unto death and loss of escrow blessings for both time and eternity. They have rebound with which to recover.