

APPENDIX 5: HERMENEUTICS

THE SCIENCE AND ART OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

"After Jesus rose from the dead, one of His first recorded acts was to interpret Scripture: "And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures" (Luke 24:27). The Greek word translated "explained" in this verse is a form of the verb *diemeno* from which our English word "hermeneutics" is derived. Conversely, the failure to interpret Scripture properly is condemned in the New Testament: "[A]nd regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction" (2Peter 3:15,16).

Notice that Peter addresses two problems: being untaught and unstable. It is ironic that in our day many consider ignorance to be bliss when it comes to studies such as hermeneutics. They mock Biblical scholarship as if study were contrary to faith. These are the ones about whom Peter warns ... Errors in Biblical interpretation have existed for centuries. Since they are common, we can identify them, learn from them and thus avoid them in the future. Some of these errors have spawned huge movements. For example, the allegorical method, promoted by Origen (who taught many other errors), became the basis for the Roman Catholic church's use of Scripture. At the other extreme, hyper-literalism is commonly used by Mormonism to make claims such as that God has a literal body that looks just like a male person" - Common Errors in Biblical Interpretation Exposed, Ways the Scriptures are Often Misinterpreted, by Bob DeWaay.

Definitions:

- **Hermeneutics:** The Science and Art of interpreting, explaining, unfolding the significance of, expounding the Bible.
- **Exegesis** (noun): [Greek in origin]. To explain, to lead, expound. Exposition; explanation; interpretation. A discussion intended to explain or illustrate a subject.

While many people may believe that we can all have our own interpretation of the Bible, we must realise that even before we can interpret the Bible for ourselves, we must use certain guidelines that can help us to develop correct interpretations. We cannot agree with certain post-modernists who believe that no-one can really say that their interpretation is correct. We may all find that a scripture applies in different ways to us, but this does not mean that the bible has different meanings – so many so that it is impossible to find meanings that we can all agree on.

I. OVERVIEW: METHODS OF INTERPRETATION

Over the centuries there have been many different methods that people have used to interpret the Bible. The two main methods of interpreting the Bible are the following:

1. The Allegorical Method

This is one of the oldest ways of interpreting the Bible. It originated in Greek philosophy around 600 B.C. This method believed that there was a 'hidden', 'more spiritual' or metaphorical meaning behind the plain or literal meaning of Scripture. This was an attempt to discover the 'deeper' or hidden meaning of Scripture.

This method is similar to the "**Mystical**" method used by Christian mystics from around 1100 AD through to the middle ages. They generally looked past the clear meaning of Scripture and looked for a deeper, spiritual truth "as the Holy Spirit led them". This was an

attempt to understand the more personal, devotional aspect of verses. Quakers in England and America used this method too.

"Allegorizing is searching for a hidden or secret meaning underlying but remote from and unrelated in reality to the more obvious meaning of a text. In other words the literal reading is a sort of code, which needs to be deciphered to determine the more significant and hidden meaning. In this approach the literal is superficial, the allegorical is the true meaning" - Roy B. Zuck, Basic Bible Interpretation.

Allegory is a form of Bible interpretation where a person reads a text and says, "This is a picture of _____" and then they begin filling in the blanks. The first time a person sits under a preacher who preaches with this type of hermeneutic, it may seem like good solid preaching and the preacher may get many AMENS from the congregation. However, when the Bible student goes further into the text and studies out exactly what the text is saying, it will become abundantly clear that the allegorical pictures from the preacher's sermon cannot be defended with the Bible!

Examples of allegorical interpretation:

- Alan Redpath wrote a book titled, The Making of a Man of God which has some good points for men to consider in their Christian walk. However, if one reads the book, it will not take long before allegory is popping off of the pages left and right. Mr. Redpath's book is about the life of David. In chapter two, the stage is set for the battle between David and Goliath. Mr. Redpath suggests that Israel is the present day church, Goliath is Satan, and David is a picture of Christ who comes to defeat the great enemy of God and the Church – Goliath [Satan]. If a preacher were to stand and proclaim this in a sermon, he would undoubtedly receive AMENS and quite possibly great compliments from the congregation at the back door. Some may even say, "Wow, isn't it amazing how brother so and so brings out the deep truths of Scripture for us untrained people to see." However, if those untrained individuals decide to study that picture of allegory out in detail, they will not find any biblical support in the Old Testament or in the New Testament.
- The two pennies given by the Good Samaritan to the innkeeper has the "hidden meanings" of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- Pope Gregory the Great's interpretation of the Book of Job was: 'Job's three friends denote the heretics; his seven sons are the twelve apostles; his seven thousand sheep are God's faithful people; and his three thousand hump-backed camels are the depraved Gentiles!
- Further examples of this is when people also look for some deeper significance to names of places in the Bible. Often preachers mention a particular name of a place or person and assume that the meaning of the name has some symbolic meaning. For example, have you ever heard a sermon on "Lo Debar?": 2 Sa 9:3 The king asked, "Is there no one still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness?" Ziba answered the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet." 2Sa 9:4 "Where is he?" the king asked. Ziba answered, "He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in **Lo Debar**." The word or name Lodebar means "pastureless". Here is one pastor's sermon on this word: "Many people live in a state of loneliness. People who are by themselves, out of the mainstream of society with no social activity or friendships outside themselves. There are a great many others who live right in the middle of life's hustle & bustle that find them alone, dislocated & misunderstood. Both physically & psychologically people are and will be alone! From the orphan to the mega-star surrounded by thousands; from the homeless to the struggling single mother, people are alone and forgotten! Lo Debar was such a place. The very meaning is "not having" or "no pasture." It was a town of forgotten people including Mephibosheth,

son of David's best friend Jonathan who was the son of King Saul. In Lo Debar we would find the lost, unskilled, uneducated outcasts from society. Those whom people would scorn, those that we would pass by and pay no attention, those who would be just another statistic on a government report. We live in Lo Debar, we know somebody in Lo Debar. We walk around, drive around, & ignore Lo Debar! Many people live in a state of loneliness. People who are by themselves, out of the mainstream of society with no social activity or friendships outside themselves. There are a great many others who live right in the middle of life's hustle & bustle that find them alone, dislocated & misunderstood. Both physically & psychologically people are and will be alone! From the orphan to the mega-star surrounded by thousands; from the homeless to the struggling single mother, people are alone and forgotten! Lo Debar was such a place. The very meaning is "not having" or "no pasture." It was a town of forgotten people including Mephibosheth, son of David's best friend Jonathan who was the son of King Saul. In Lo Debar we would find the lost, unskilled, uneducated outcasts from society. Those whom people would scorn, those that we would pass by and pay no attention, those who would be just another statistic on a government report. We live in Lo Debar, we know somebody in Lo Debar. We walk around, drive around, & ignore Lo Debar!

The reason many have been accepted the allegorical method is the false assumption that since the Bible is a spiritual book, inspired by the Holy Spirit, that it therefore contains hidden or secret meanings. The idea is that the truly spiritual person can discern meanings to passages of the Bible that are hidden from the unenlightened. The allegorical method must be used very carefully, since one can easily read into verses whatever one wants to see.

1.1. Hyper-literalism

The "flip-side" of allegorizing Scripture is hyper-literalism. This means taking **figures of speech** and making them literal when they were not meant so by the author. The possible errors are numerous. "If your hand offends you cut it off." Imagine the misery if we thought that was a literal command for self-mutilation. By the way, if we did, we would not solve any sin problems, sin arises from the heart (Matthew 15:8).

I have talked to people who claim that God is a male person who looks just like us. This is a Mormon heresy. They read passages such as Isaiah 53:1 and assume God has an arm. They ignore clear passages such as John 4:24 and assume that God has a literal body with all the attendant limitations. Yet, if they were to be consistent they would have to claim God has wings and feathers: Psalm 91:4 – "He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge".

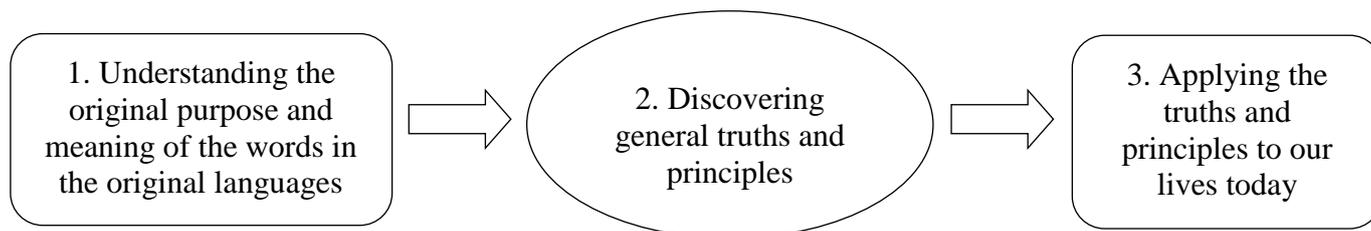
"The net result of allegorical interpretation is to place a veil of darkness over God's divine Word. It takes that which God has graciously revealed to the saints and subjects it to the dark vagaries of human imagination and speculation" – The Rise of Allegorical Interpretation ~ www.biblestudytools.com.

2. Grammatical-Historical Method

As this name suggests, this is the method of interpreting the Bible based on studying the language (grammatical) and original historical setting of Scripture. This is also known as the "**Literal**" **method** of interpreting the Bible [this is not the same as the 'hyper-literal' method which is an extreme form of interpretation]. Interpreters first understand what the Scriptures meant in the original languages and to the original hearers. Then certain general truths and principles are noted. Lastly interpreters then try to understand what this means for us today. "Milton S. Terry explains: The interpreter should, therefore, endeavour

to take himself from the present, and to transport himself into the historical position of his author, look through his eyes, note his surroundings, feel with his heart, and catch his emotion. Herein we note the import of the term grammatico-historical interpretation”.

This can be seen as follows:



As can be seen from the above diagram, interpretation involves three steps:

1. Understanding the meaning of the words and grammar of original languages; what the message meant to the original hearers, and understanding the culture and customs of the people in the Bible.
2. Discovering the meaning of the text and its principles that apply to all people, of all ages and of all cultures
3. Finding a way to explain the message in ways that contemporary people can understand

One reason for this is that words change their meaning over time:

- **Gay:** for example, consider how the word “gay” has changed over time, as in the following sentence: “He was in a gay mood and welcomed all his friends with open arms and hearty laughter.”
- **Naughty:** Long ago, if you were naughty, you had naught or nothing. Then it came to mean evil or immoral, and now you are just badly behaved.
- **Cloud:** “a visible mass of particles of condensed vapour (as water or ice) suspended in the atmosphere of a planet (as the earth) or moon .” Now it also relates to the internet and also means, “any of several parts of the internet that allow online processing and storage of documents and data as well as electronic access to software and other resources.”

a. Studying the Original Language and Grammar (“Grammatical”)

The OT was originally written in Ancient Hebrew and Aramaic. The New Testament was originally written in Ancient Greek and Aramaic. These languages are not used today, and we must therefore try to understand what the meanings of the original words were before we can discover their meaning for us today. This has already been done for us in our English (and other) versions of the Bible, but it is still good to do some research of our own.

For example, we only really use one main use for “love” today (and a few synonyms), but the Greeks used several:

- **“Agape” (N)/“Agapao” (V)** – a word seldom used by the Greeks, love with a sacrificial/giving dimension that was seen by expressing itself through certain actions, a selfless serving;
- **“Phileo”** – a general word, never used of us loving God; the love of brothers (sisters) and good friends for each other (e.g. Philadelphia – love for a brother – “adelphos”);

- **“Philanthropia” (N)** – Literally means phileo (love) for anthropos (man, humankind), hence love for man/humankind, kindness;
- **“Eros”** – love of a man for a woman, sexual love. It is therefore helpful to use books that give us the meaning of the original meaning of the words and language being used.

Not everyone has the means to study the original languages of the Bible. Therefore preachers should find Bibles that are good translations from the original text. They can also read commentaries and other similar study aids.

b. Studying the Original Historical Context

Preachers should also study the historical situation that existed when the books were written. Some examples are:

Studying what the message meant to the Original Hearers

Study significant Historical Events

- ❑ Jdg 2:7 The people served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the LORD had done for Israel. ... Jdg 2:10 After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel. Jdg 2:11 Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and served the Baals.

Study Customs

- ❑ I Cor. 11:4-6 - Shorn hair was typical of Aphrodite priestess-prostitutes; shaven heads were typical of convicted adulteresses (vs. 5).
- ❑ Act 9:5 And he said, Sir, who are You? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom you persecute; it is hard for you to kick against the goads. LITV
- ❑ Act 9:5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. KJV
- ❑ Act 9:5 "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied.
 - "it is a proverbial expression, taken from beasts that are goaded, who kick against the goads or pricks, and hurt themselves the more thereby" John Gill.

Study Geography

- ❑ Joh 11:1 Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ... Joh 11:6 Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days. Joh 11:7 Then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

Religion

- ❑ Mat 21:12 Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. Mat 21:13 "It is written," he said to them, "My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'"

The Purpose for Which It was Written

Health Practices

- ❑ 1Ti 5:23 Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.

Compare this to:

- ❑ Pro 31:6 Give beer to those who are perishing, wine to those who are in anguish; Pro 31:7 let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more. NIV
- ❑ Hab 2:15 "Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors, pouring it from the wineskin till they are drunk, so that he can gaze on their naked bodies. NIV

Also: Economics, Commerce, Education system, etc.

II. PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

Based on what has been said above, there are many principles that we can use to guide us when we interpret the Bible:

1. Proper Interpretation and Application is the Work of the Holy Spirit

This means that the meaning of Scripture is not just "discovered", it is "uncovered" by the Holy Spirit. This is the meaning behind our saying that we have received a "revelation". It means that as we read a certain passage of Scripture, God gave us special insights to understand it, even though we have read the same passage many times. We have an "Aha!" moment.

- Luk 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.... Luk 24:32 They said to each other, "Wasn't it like a fire burning in us when he talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?" GNB
- Joh 14:26 The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and make you remember all that I have told you.

When preparing a message, always ask the Holy Spirit to give you special insight into the word of God. Also – very importantly, ask him to highlight the part of the text that he wants you to focus on for that speaking occasion.

This means that we need to spend time in prayerful study of the word of God. We must not just rely on commentaries and other books. The most important step in sermon preparation is to spend time with the word of God, allowing God to give you revelation of his word. This part of preparation must be mixed with faith. Ask God to give you faith to believe whatever he has revealed in his word. This 'incubation' of faith is an extremely important part of preparing messages that will have an anointing. **NEVER** skip this step!

- We received the same promises as those people in the wilderness, but the promises didn't do them a bit of good because they didn't receive the promises with faith. – Hebrews 4:2 The Message

2. The Principle of Individual Subjectivity – Know Yourself!

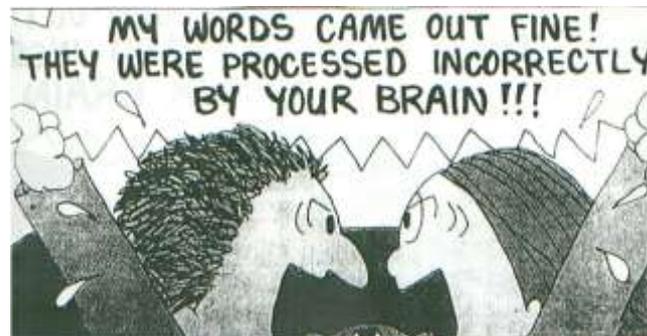
This means that before believers interpret the Bible, we must be aware that many times we already have opinions about certain matters. Sometimes this causes us to see what we want to see. We already decide beforehand what the Bible says about certain issues, and then look for verses that “prove” that our interpretation is correct. We may not like it when our sins are preached about, but we may want the sins of others to be treated very seriously. We may have certain doctrinal beliefs and have certain Scriptures that “back us up”. Also we may have had certain experiences (good or bad) in life that has shaped our thinking about certain issues.

For example in some conservative cultures, there is a clear separation of men and women; OR the young are not considered to have anything worthwhile to say; these are known as “Presuppositions” or “Pre-understandings”. They influence what we expect the text will say before we read it, and they are also filters through which we ‘reject’ things that we do not believe or are unwilling to do something about or about which we are no longer willing to change our pinions. When we study the Bible, we must be careful of the ‘filters’ that we use.

- ❑ 2Pe 3:16 He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

We should also understand that when we preach, people also filter the message through their own person opinions, understanding and viewpoints.

- ❑ 2Ti 4:3 A time will come when people will not listen to accurate teachings. Instead, they will follow their own desires and surround themselves with teachers who tell them what they want to hear.



At all times we should be open to allow the Bible to change our thinking about all things, and always have a teachable spirit. We tend to shy away from Scriptures that require courage to apply to life.

3. The Perspicuity (“Clearness”) of Scripture

This means that we believe that the Bible is clear enough for any believer to understand. This means that, generally speaking, there is no special hidden meaning that only a few Spirit-filled believers can understand. Through just a plain, literal reading of the Bible we can understand what God wants us to do. Through this type of study we can discover the meaning of the Bible to help us live godly lifestyles, how to live a life of faith, how to serve God and others, and have a personal, devotional walk with God. All believers can read the Bible for themselves or teach each other, because God has made his word simple enough. There is no need for a priest or pastor or theologian to interpret the Bible for us.

This principle also counter the allegorical method of interpretation that suggests that there is always a veiled, hidden meaning in a verse or passage.

4. The Principle of Context

This means that the best way to understand a word or a verse is to look at its immediate context. It also means that one Scripture is the best interpreter of other parts of Scripture. When interpreting a particular word or verse or topic, we should first try to understand what other parts of the Bible have to say about it. This means that:

- a. The verse determines how to interpret the different words that it contains
- b. The passage determines how the verse is to be interpreted
- c. The chapter determines how the passage is interpreted.
- d. The book determines how the chapter is interpreted
- e. The Testament determines how the book is to be interpreted
- f. The Bible determines how the content of the Testament is to be interpreted

5. The Unity of the Bible

This means that even though the Bible has been written 40 independent authors, representing 20 occupations, living in 10 countries during a 1500 year life span, written in 3 languages with a 'cast' of 2930 characters in 1551 places and while most of the authors didn't know each other, yet there is still a unity in the messages that they wrote! One passage must be interpreted by also considering how it relates to the rest of the Bible. No interpretation must be made in such a way that a word or verse or passage contradicts other parts of the Bible. This is especially true when dealing with passages that are difficult to understand. In such situations, we should use passages that are more clear and that deal with the same topic to interpret the other passages.

6. The Rule of Precedent or Non-contradiction

This follows from above. This means that we must not go against the known usage of a word and invent a new meaning for which there is no other examples. This also means that we should not interpret the Bible in such a way as to develop new doctrines that actually contradict other Scriptural principles.

7. The Principle of What is Described and What is Prescribed

This means that when we look at verses and passages, we must decide if what we are reading is simply describing something, or if it is prescribing something. Many times some things are described and we are being told what happened to others. We may be able to find general truths that apply to us and learn lessons from what happened in similar situations. However, what the people we read about experienced may not apply to us. If something is prescribed, it means that we are commanded to also obey or apply the truth to our lives. Many times people try to develop special strategies and methods of doing things based on what is described. But God uses many different ways to "get the job done", and we must be careful that we allow him to achieve the same result in our lives by doing it in a different way.

For example, when reading history, if the Bible says that so and so did this, it does not necessarily follow that it was good or bad. If the inspired account says that David arranged for Uriah to be killed, it follows that this surely happened. That the Bible tells about this action is not an endorsement of it. In this case the Bible makes it clear it was wrong. In many instances the historical narrative does not comment on the moral quality

of someone's act, but merely tells us about it. We may have to look elsewhere in the Bible, for example in didactic (teaching) sections, to find out whether such an act is good or evil.

For example Saul consulted the witch of Endor and Samuel was summoned (1Samuel 28:7-16). It does not follow that the Bible endorses necromancy or that those who practice such things normally do contact the dead. On the contrary, the Bible forbids this practice (Deuteronomy 18:10). The passage in 1Samuel gives us the historical record of Saul's sin. The teaching section of the Bible tells us that it is a sin. Often the historical sections do comment on the moral qualities of actions, but not always. The important issue is that we recognize the different types of literature (genre) and give this due consideration when interpreting a passage.

8. The Principle of "The New (Testament) is in the Old (Testament) concealed. The Old (Testament) is in the New (Testament) Revealed"

This reminds us that there is a close relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Both the Old and New Testaments are parts of one whole. In many ways the Old Testament lays the foundation for the New Testament, and the NT points us back to the OT. Therefore to properly understand the NT, we can find the reasons for some of its teachings by looking at the OT. For example we need to read the books of Leviticus and Hebrews together because they are closely related. Jesus also didn't come to do away with the whole OT, just the parts that find their fulfillment in the NT. How can we understand Hebrews 11 without reading the whole account of the lives of the heroes of faith as described in the NT? Most of the time the NT tells us what God intended when he gave the OT laws. It also tells us if there are any OT laws that have been fulfilled in the NT. For example dietary laws:

- Lev 20:25 So then, you must make a clear distinction between animals and birds that are ritually clean and those that are not. Do not eat unclean animals or birds. I have declared them unclean, and eating them would make you unclean. GNB
- Mar 7:18 "You are no more intelligent than the others," Jesus said to them. "Don't you understand? Nothing that goes into you from the outside can really make you unclean, Mar 7:19 because it does not go into your heart but into your stomach and then goes on out of the body." (In saying this, Jesus declared that all foods are fit to be eaten.) GNB
- Col 2:16 So let no one make rules about what you eat or drink or about holy days or the New Moon Festival or the Sabbath. Col 2:17 All such things are only a shadow of things in the future; the reality is Christ. GNB
- Mar 2:27 And Jesus concluded, "The Sabbath was made for the good of human beings; they were not made for the Sabbath. Mar 2:28 So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."
- Heb 4:4 For He spoke in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested the seventh day from all His works." ... Heb 4:8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. Heb 4:9 So then there remains a rest to the people of God...
- Heb 4:10 For he who has entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works, as God *did* from His. Heb 4:11 Therefore let us labor to enter into that rest, lest anyone fall after the same example of unbelief.

9. The Christological Principle

This means that the whole of God's word points to Jesus Christ, his saving work and his life. Many OT laws pointed to him and find their fulfilment in him:

- Heb 1:1 In the past God spoke to our ancestors many times and in many ways through the prophets, Heb 1:2 but in these last days he has spoken to us through his Son. He is the one through whom God created the universe, the one whom God has chosen to possess all things at the end. Rom 10:2 I can assure you that they are deeply devoted to God; but their devotion is not based on true knowledge. Rom 10:3 They have not known the way in which God puts people right with himself, and instead, they have tried to set up their own way; and so they did not submit themselves to God's way of putting people right.
- Rom 10:4 For Christ has brought the Law to an end, so that everyone who believes is put right with God.
- Joh 1:17 For the Law came through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.
- Col 2:16 So let no one make rules about what you eat or drink or about holy days or the New Moon Festival or the Sabbath. Col 2:17 All such things are only a shadow of things in the future; the reality is Christ. GNB

Many times Jesus gave new teachings about OT laws:

- Lev 24:19 "If any of you injure another person, whatever you have done shall be done to you. Lev 24:20 If you break a bone, one of your bones shall be broken; if you put out an eye, one of your eyes shall be put out; if you knock out a tooth, one of your teeth shall be knocked out. Whatever injury you cause another person shall be done to you in return.
- Mat 5:38 You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." Mat 5:39 But I say to you, Do not resist evil. But whoever shall strike you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

10. The Principle of Progressive Revelation

This means that God didn't reveal the whole of his will at one single time. Instead we see that God has revealed his ways over a period of time, in keeping with humanity's approach to social and moral development. For example, while the OT seems to allow for polygamy, it seems that the NT speaks about monogamy. While the OT seems to allow for slavery, we do find ongoing principles that speak against it. This does not mean that God was compromising, but that if God gave us all his principles to live by at once, we may've been overwhelmed. This principle does not mean that there will be other writings that will somehow be added as new books to the Bible. Rather, it means that based on God's word, we may come to a fuller understanding of what God had always intended. For example, the Church of God is only now starting to fully accept the ministry of every believer, but Scripture has always had this emphasis.

- Polygamy was permitted in the Old Testament, but taught against in the New Testament (I Tim. 3:2)
- Theocracy was commanded in Old Testament, but secular government is affirmed in the New Testament. (Rom. 13:1-7; Mt. 22:21; IIChron. 7:14)