

Bible Study Methods

Lesson #010, Part 1

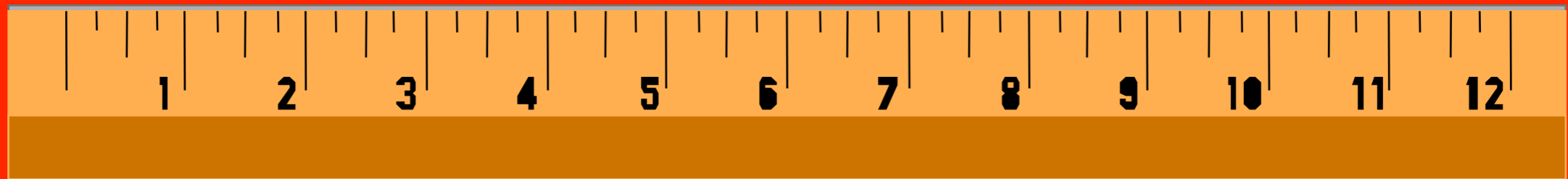
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Dean Bible Ministries

www.deanbible.org

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Golden Rule of Interpretation



When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context indicate clearly otherwise.

Luke 24:44, “Now He said to them, ‘These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’ ”

“The allegorical method was not born out of the study of the Scripture, but rather out of a desire to unite Greek philosophy and the Word of God. It did not come out of a desire to present the truths of the Word, but to pervert them. It was not the child of orthodoxy, but of heterodoxy.”

~J. D. Pentecost

“The Syrian school fought Origen in particular as the inventor of the allegorical method, and maintained the primacy of the literal and historical interpretation.”

~Bernard Ramm, *PBI*, 49

“The fundamental criticism of Origen, beginning during his own lifetime, was that he used allegorical interpretation to provide a specious justification for reinterpreting Christian doctrine in terms of Platonic philosophy.”

~Joseph Trigg, *Origen*

“He motivated this view by appealing to the principle of divine inspiration and by affirming that often statements made by the biblical writers are not literally true and that many events, presented as historical, are inherently impossible. Thus only simple believers will limit themselves to the literal meaning of the text.”

~Diprose, *Israel*, pp. 87–88.

“made allegory the dominant method of biblical interpretation down to the end of the Middle Ages ... It took no genius to recognize that such allegory was a desperate effort to avoid the plain meaning of the text, and that, indeed, is how Origen viewed it.”

~Trigg, *Origen*, 121

“The trials and tribulations the world must endure before the second coming symbolize the difficulties the soul must overcome before it is worthy of union with the Logos. The imminence of the second coming refers to the imminent possibility, for each individual, of death. Perhaps more radically, the two men laboring in a field, one of whom is taken and the other left when the Messiah comes represent good and bad influences on a person’s will, which fare differently when the Logos is revealed to that person.”

~Trigg, *Origen*

“An attitude of contempt towards Israel had become the rule by Origen’s time. The new element in his own view of Israel is his perception of them as ‘manifesting no elevation [of thought]’. It follows that the interpreter must always posit a deeper or higher meaning for prophecies relating to Judea, Jerusalem, Israel, Judah and Jacob which, he affirms, are ‘not being understood by us in a “carnal” sense.’ ”

~Diprose, *Israel*

“In Origen’s understanding, the only positive function of *physical* Israel was that of being a type of *spiritual* Israel. The promises were not made to physical Israel because she was unworthy of them and incapable of understanding them. Thus Origen effectively disinherits physical Israel.”

~Diprose, *Israel*, p. 89. (emphasis original)

**“...they subordinated scholarship
meanwhile to mysticism and to
propaganda.”**

**“Again the crisis was reflected in biblical
studies. The speculation of Joachim [of
Fiore] signified a new wave of mysticism.”**

“Revolution and uncertainty have discouraged biblical scholarship in the past and stimulated more subjective modes of interpretation ...”

“... Conditions today are giving rise to a certain sympathy with the allegorists. We have a spate of studies on medieval ‘spirituality’.”

~Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, 1964



**Rabbi Shlomo
Yitzchaki
February 22, 1040 –
July 13, 1105**

**Developed system
which interpreted
Messianic prophecies
as historical
fulfillments, usually by
the nation of Israel,
rather than an individual
Messiah.**

**Influences many
evangelical protestants**



“The literal sense of Scripture alone is the whole essence of faith and of Christian theology.”

~Martin Luther



**Martin Luther
(1483–1546)**

“When I was a monk, I was an expert in allegories. I allegorized everything. But after lecturing on the Epistles of the Romans I came to have knowledge of Christ. For therein I saw that Christ is no allegory and I learned to know what Christ is.”

“Allegories are empty speculations and as it were, the scum of Holy Scripture.”



**Martin Luther
(1483–1546)**

“Origen’s allegories are not worth so much dirt.”

“To allegorize is to juggle the Scripture.”

“Allegorizing may degenerate into a mere monkey game.”

“Allegories are awkward, absurd, inventive, obsolete, loose rags.”



**Martin Luther
(1483–1546)**

“The Bible treated allegorically becomes putty in the hand of the exegete.”

“Scripture is its own interpreter, this is the true method of interpretation which puts Scripture alongside of Scripture in a right and proper way.”

Luther’s Works, 3:334

Gal. 4:22, “For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman.

Gal. 4:23, “But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise,

Gal. 4:24, “which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar—

Gal. 4:25, “for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children—

Gal. 4:26, “but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.”

Biblical Allegory vs. Modern Allegory

Allegory

- 1. The historical meaning is insignificant (if even true).**
- 2. The “deeper” meaning is the true meaning.**
- 3. The “deeper” meaning is the “exposition” of the record.**
- 4. Everything in the Old Testament may be allegorized.**

Paul’s Allegory

- 1. The historical meaning is significant and true.**
- 2. Parallels and similarities are drawn to make a point.**
- 3. Paul did not say the allegory was the exposition of Genesis 16.**
- 4. When drawing an analogy, Paul states it.**