

10. This is the kind of conundrum today's young Protestant believers face because of the theology created by Theodore Bèza, adopted as Calvinism, and enshrined in the Westminster Confession of Faith.
11. Thus we find in this controversy an illustration of a person who distorts what another says or writes to his own advantage and, by doing so, creates a system that becomes so entrenched that a clear presentation of truth is compromised.

V. In defense of Literal Hermeneutics:

1. In our study of hermeneutics we analyzed a paper presented in 2003 by Dr. Earl D. Radmacher, a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary, former chancellor of Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, and author and editor of several books.
2. The paper is entitled "The Nature and Result of Literal Interpretation." In our review we will summarize principles that Dr. Radmacher brings out in each of his subparagraphs.
3. The Basic Principle of Interpretation.
 1. It is very important to note that literal grammatical interpretation is the system of hermeneutics authorized by the Bible.
 2. The first example is an Old Testament reference whose context finds the Jews returning to the land from Babylonian captivity. In the process of the decades in captivity, the Jews ceased speaking Hebrew and spoke Aramaic; thus this created a language gap between themselves and the Scripture.
 3. So when the people stood in the open square before the Water Gate within the rebuilt city wall, they asked Ezra the Scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses to read to them.
 4. Also, the Levites circulated among the people to help them understand what Ezra was reading. This expanded translation is recorded in:

Nehemiah. 8:8 So they read distinctly [פָּרַשׁ (*parash*): to translate (from Hebrew to Aramaic)] from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense [שֵׂכֶל (*sechel*): to set forth the singular meaning], and helped them to understand [בִּינְיָ (*biyn*): to perceive and understand] the reading.

5. Bernard Ramm comments on this verse in his book, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*: “Jewish Literalism”:

The literal method of interpreting the Bible is to accept as basic the literal rendering of the sentences unless by virtue of the nature of the sentence or phrase or clause within the sentence this is not possible. For example, figures of speech or fables or allegories do not admit of literal interpretation. The spirit of literal interpretation is that we should be satisfied with the literal meaning of a text unless very substantial reasons can be given for advancing beyond the literal meaning, and when *canons of control*³ are supplied.

Ezra is considered the first of the Jewish interpreters and the ultimate founder of the Jewish, Palestinian, hyperliteralist school. The Jews in the Babylonian captivity ceased speaking Hebrew and spoke Aramaic. This created the language gap between themselves and their Scriptures. It was the task of Ezra to give the meaning of the Scriptures by paraphrasing the Hebrew into the Aramaic or in other ways expounding the sense of the Scriptures. This generally admitted to be the first instance of Biblical hermeneutics.⁴

6. There is also a New Testament passage that reveals the system of biblical interpretation that was utilized by our Lord. The incident is our Lord’s conversation with two disciples as they walked along the Emmaus Road in:

Luke 24:27 - And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, Jesus thoroughly interpreted [διερμηνεύω (*diermēneuō*)] to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

³ “There were three canons which dictated to the interpreter that a passage of Scripture was to be allegorically interpreted: (i) If a statement says anything unworthy of God; (ii) if a statement is contradictory with some other statement or in any other way presents us with a difficulty; and (iii) if the record itself is allegorical in nature” (Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Interpretation: A Textbook of Hermeneutics*, 3d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1970), 27.

⁴ Ibid., 45–46.

7. The verb *diermēneuō* is an intensified form of the verb, **ἑρμηνεύω (*hermēneúō*)**, the word from which we get the English noun, “hermeneutic,” and is best translated “to thoroughly interpret and explain.”
8. *Diermēneúō* is a compound of the preposition **δίᾳ (*día*)**, which means “to take through to the end,” or “through to completion,” and intensifies the suffixed verb, *hermēneúō*, “to interpret or explain.” Together the word means to “thoroughly interpret and explain.”
9. *Diermēneúō* is an aorist active indicative:
 - aorist: Ingressive: signifies a state or condition, and denotes entrance into that state or condition.

In verse 27, the Lord entered into the condition of thoroughly interpreting the Old Testament prophecies concerning Himself and continued His exposition all the way to Emmaus. It was a seven-mile trip, so the Lord summed it up in what amounted to a double session.
 - active: The Lord produced the action of thoroughly interpreting and explaining the Scriptures pertaining to Himself.
 - indicative: Declarative; this actually happened.
10. In Luke 24:27, the verb *diermēneúō* indicates that the Lord thoroughly interpreted and explained to the two disciples how He was revealed in the books of Moses, the prophets, and the writings, i.e., the Tanakh.
11. Gerhard Kittel points out that this passage gives direction to New Testament theologians about how to interpret Old Testament Messianic prophecies:

ἑρμηνεύω (*hermēneúō*) Luke 24:27 presents the risen Jesus to those who walked to Emmaus as the expounder of the Old Testament prophecies of His passion and exaltation. The Messianic understanding of the Old Testament is thus established by Jesus and developed by early Christianity. It rests on an exposition of Scripture which is new in content, though not in method.

In the light of their fulfillment, Old Testament sayings are claimed to be prophecies of Christ, and therefore a radically new meaning is seen in the Old Testament on the basis of the New Testament revelation.⁵

12. If the prophecies regarding the Messiah are literally fulfilled in Jesus, then it follows that the Old Testament prophecies regarding Israel, and her earthly kingdom under the rule of a returning Messiah, are also literally fulfilled.

VI. Summation and Application:

1. A client nation has great privilege and protection in the Devil's world but these assets are accompanied by great responsibilities.
2. The Roman Empire emerged in the fullness of time as the government best qualified to become the Church Age's first client nation. The reigns of the Antonine Caesars provided the environment for the rapid growth of incipient Christianity.
3. Rome's fall in the late fifth century was coincidental with the demise of the school of Antioch and its literal system of hermeneutics and the rise of the school of Alexandria and its allegorical system.
4. The subsequent dominance of the Roman Catholic Church led to a millennium of ignorance enforced by an illegitimate hierarchy in Rome and imposed by an illegitimate priesthood throughout Europe.
5. The United States emerged in due time to become the client nation that provided the environment in which these papal shackles could be broken while freedom of religion allowed Protestant theologians to recover the legitimate system of literal hermeneutics and rediscover dispensational theology.
6. But like Israel and like the Roman church, Protestant America is in a historical downtrend and Isaiah's prophetic warning of an external invasion accompanied by the incoherent babblings of a strange language remind us of a similar insertion into our client nation.

⁵ Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 2:665–66.

7. Client nation responsibilities include teaching doctrine to the saved, evangelism of the lost, stewardship of the Word, sending out missionaries to other nations, and providing a haven of refuge for the Jewish Diaspora.
8. Too few teach doctrine to the saved, evangelism has lost its impact due to fuzzy gospels, stewardship of the Word is challenged by assaults promoted by a degenerate secular population, most missionaries are ineffective due to lack of doctrine, and we detect an undercurrent of anti-Semitism in the land.
9. All of these downtrends can be focused back on the pulpit and its failures over the past forty years. And the greatest failure is abandoning the stewardship of the Word of God.
10. When Moses approached the end of the writing of the Pentateuch, including the blessings and curses determined by obedience or lack of it, he wrote:

Deuteronomy 29:29 “The secret things [סֵתֵר (*satar*) **concealed information**] belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed [גָּלָה (*galah*): **to uncover; to reveal**] belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”

11. In essence, God says, "It's yours. I'm trusting you with it. Now manage it well." This statement of Moses with respect to the stewardship of the Law is parallel to Paul's announcement in:

Ephesians 3:2 ... you have heard of the dispensation [οἰκονομία (*oikonomía*): **the management of a household**] of the grace of God [**Church Age**] which was given to me for you;

v. 3 how that by revelation [ἀποκάλυψις (*apokálypsis*): **the uncovering of knowledge, in context, the mystery doctrines of the New Testament church**] He made known to me the mystery [**doctrine previously unrevealed**] ...

v. 5 ... which (mystery) in other ages [**dispensations**] was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets ...