

"Understanding the Bible"

Lesson 7

Interpretation: "What does it mean?" (continued)

"What does the text mean?" To answer this question, we must discover the author's intent, that is, "What did the author intend to communicate to his readers at the time he wrote the text?" Discovering the author's intent is the goal of the grammatical-historical method of biblical interpretation.

As we read the text we must consider the literary form of the text.

Poetry and Figurative Language.

Poetry is found in almost every book of the Bible. The entire Book of Psalms is written in poetic style.

Characteristics of Hebrew Poetry:

1. Hebrew Poetry is filled with _____

The content of one line is repeated, contrasted or advanced by the content of the next line.

a. _____ parallelism

"The Lord of Hosts is with us;

The God of Jacob is our refuge." Ps 46:11

b. _____ parallelism

"For the Lord knows the way of the righteous,

But the way of the ungodly shall perish." Ps 1:6

c. _____ parallelism

"The floods have lifted up, O Lord,

The floods have lifted up their voice." Ps 93:3

2. Hebrew Poetry is written to express _____ . (Psalms are musical poems.)

- sorrow
- grief
- pain
- joy
- celebration
- confidence
- worship
- adoration
- righteous anger

3. Hebrew Poetry is _____ in its vocabulary .

Various Kinds of Figures of Speech:

1. Simile – a comparison using “like” or “as” Jer. 23:29
2. Metaphor – a comparison without “like” or “as” Psalm 119:105
3. Metonymy – uses the name of one thing for another because of association Luke 16:29
4. Synecdoche – A part represents the whole. Micah 4:3
5. Personification – A thing, quality or idea is represented as a person or personality trait. Psalm 114:5-6
6. Anthropomorphism – A characteristic of man is attributed to God. Isa. 59:1
7. Euphemism – a word or phrase substituted to soften a harsh word or phrase. Acts 1:24-25
8. Hyperbole – a conscious exaggeration for effect John 21:25, Mark 10:25, Luke 14:26
9. Irony – words that denote the exact opposite of what the language declares I Cor. 4:8
10. Rhetorical Interrogation – questions intended to affirm a truth Rom. 8:31, 10:14, I Cor. 12:29-30