

HERMENEUTICS: EXEGESIS OF NEW TESTAMENT (BOOK OF REVELATION) IN HOLY BIBLE

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Hermeneutics is the theory and methodology of interpretation, especially of scriptural texts; a branch of theology that deals with the principles underlying biblical exegesis Hermeneutics. Exegesis - careful investigation of the original meaning of texts in their historical and literary contexts; the English word comes from a Greek verb meaning "to lead out of" (Greek "ex" = "out"; "agein" = "to lead/go/draw"); the process basically involves asking analytical questions about various aspects of the texts and their contexts.

Biblical Criticism / Critical Methods are the -various ways of doing biblical exegesis, each having a specific goal and a specific set of questions; some methods are more historical, others more literary, others more sociological, theological, etc. biblical "criticism" does not mean "criticizing" the text (i.e. what you don't like or don't agree with); rather, it means asking "critical" questions, based on "criteria" that are as clear, careful, and objective as possible. To elucidate it more simply Hermeneutics is the theory and methods for studying text (objective) whereas exegesis is the interpretation of the text (subjective)

Bible being one oldest and finest piece of literature contains maximum number of manuscripts which exists to date, it also has the credit of numerous translation and also the most widely sold book.

The Bible comes from two main sources - Old and New Testaments - written in different languages. The Old Testament was written primarily in Hebrew, with some books written in Aramaic (45- 95 A.D). The New Testament was written in Greek. The Pauline Epistles, the Gospel of Mark, the Gospel of Luke, and the book of Acts are all dated from 45-63 A.D. The Gospel of John and the Revelation may have been written as late as 95 A.D. There are over 5,600 early Greek Manuscripts of the New Testament that are still in existence. The oldest manuscripts were written on papyrus and the later manuscripts were written on leather called parchment. During 300 A.D. The Old Syriac was a translation of the New Testament from the Greek into Syriac. And also during this period The Coptic Versions came into existence: Coptic was spoken in four dialects in Egypt. The Bible was translated into each of these four dialects. In 380 A.D. The Latin Vulgate was translated by St. Jerome. He translated into Latin the Old Testament from the Hebrew and the New Testament from Greek. The Latin Vulgate became the Bible of the

Western Church until the Protestant Reformation in the 1500's. It continues to be the authoritative translation of the Roman Catholic Church to this day.

The Protestant Reformation saw an increase in translations of the Bible into the common languages of the people, during this period the first English translation of the Bible was made by John Wycliffe. He translated the Bible into English from the Latin Vulgate. This was a translation from the original Hebrew and Greek. Wycliffe was forced to translate from the Latin Vulgate because he did not know Hebrew or Greek. Printing greatly aided the transmission of the biblical texts, in 1456 A.D. Gutenberg produced the first printed Bible in Latin. Printing revolutionized the way books were made. During 1514 A.D, the Greek New Testament was printed for the first time by Erasmus. He based his Greek New Testament from only five Greek manuscripts, the oldest of which dated only as far back as the twelfth century. With minor revisions, Erasmus' Greek New Testament came to be known as the Textus Receptus or the "received texts." "The Old Testament was in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin and the New Testament was in Latin and Greek.

The King James Version is the version of English from the original Hebrew and Greek. The King James translators of the New Testament used the Textus Receptus as the basis for their translations. King James I commissioned a group of Biblical scholars in 1604 to establish an authoritative translation of the Bible from the ancient languages and other translations at the time, and the work was completed in 1611. A literary masterpiece of the English language, the original King James Bible is still in use today!

The exegesis of New Testament: The New Testament is a collection of twenty-seven books centered on the figure of Jesus of Nazareth. Each of these books has its own author, context, theme, and persuasive purpose. Combined, they comprise one of history's most abundant, diverse, complex, and fascinating texts. The books of the New Testament are traditionally divided into three categories: the Gospels, the Epistles, and the Book of Revelation.

This paper intends to analyze the exegesis of the book of revelation, it is a book of prophecy on the end times and comprises the final book of the New Testament and of the Bible. The Greek word for Revelation is Apocalypse. Revelation always implies the unveiling of something previously hidden, in this case, future events. The first 4 verses are key to setting the stage for this intriguing text. John opens the Book naming this the "Revelation of Jesus Christ." As the final book of the Bible, it brings to fruition symbolism found in Genesis 3:15 in the first book of the Bible. The book, also known as the Apocalypse of John, was written by the Apostle St. John, the Beloved Disciple, on the island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea, while he was in exile. Written in symbolism, the book has always been surrounded by mystery, and has fascinated mankind throughout the ages as to its meaning. This Book is also at once frightening, as it speaks of the rise of the antichrist and the end of the age, dramatic as it describes the final battle of good and evil, and, above all, optimistic, as it points to the triumph of Jesus Christ over evil and the dawn of a new creation.

The Book of Revelation at times reflects imagery found in Hebrew Scripture, Old Testament of the Bible, such as the Books of the Prophets Daniel and Ezekiel. For example, the Son of Man in Daniel 7:13 is referenced in Revelation 14:14. Jesus calls himself the Son of Man in all Four Gospels, fulfilling the destiny of the Messianic figure in the Book of Daniel. The number seven resounds throughout Revelation and often serves as a key to important events. There are the seven Churches, and the seven seals, trumpets, and bowls. There are the seven angels who stand before the Lord (8:2). One also speaks of the seven Blessings or Beatitudes of Revelation, as found in 1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, and 22:14. Following the

proclamation of the Kingdom of God (11:15), seven spiritual figures are revealed: the Woman clothed with the sun (12:1); the dragon (12:3); the male child (12:5); Michael (12:7); the sea beast (13:1); the land beast (13:11); and the Lamb (14:1). Revelation describes The Book of Life and gives a warning about the Day of Judgement. The only ones to enter the New Jerusalem will be those written in The Book of Life of the Lamb (21:27). Angels play an instrumental role in this prophetic text. Scenes of heavenly worship are interspersed throughout and provide continuity to the Book of Revelation. The heavenly worship recalls the Mass or Divine Liturgy, the renewal of the New Covenant in Christ.

The New Covenant binds together the following four levels of interpretation: There is the Preterist view, which emphasizes a first-century fulfillment of Revelation's prophecies; a Futurist view, which sees Revelation as a timetable for future events on earth, a view which lately has been prominent in the media; an Idealist view, which considers Revelation an allegory of spiritual warfare that every believer must fight; and the Historical view, which takes the vantage point of the Apocalypse laying out God's master plan for history, from beginning to end; one sees the consistent pattern of covenant, fall, judgement and redemption.

Hermeneutics therefore is an ongoing process, because understanding, interpretation and application are always from the interpreter's horizon and in his/her times there are possibilities that texts are interpreted differently by readers anchored in different ages and cultures. Gadamer argues that a reader or critic has to accept the Hermeneutical fact that "Future generations will understand differently what he has read in the text" which implies that there is no finality to interpretation in a authoritarian sense. From a literary perspective the conscious re-readings and subversions of canonical works (which includes the book of Revelation in the New Testament) bear witness to this assertion.

References:

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