

**"Tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"-1King 22:16**

## Jesus and Hermeneutics

The word *hermeneutics* has been generally reserved for college classrooms, but in recent years has become popular with many brethren. It means “the art or science of the interpretation of literature” (Webster). The Greek word “hermeneuo” is defined as, “(cp. Hermes, the name of the pagan god Mercury, who was regarded as the messenger of the gods), denotes to explain, interpret (Eng., hermeneutics)” (W.E. Vine). A strengthened form of it is found in **Luke 24:27**. Jesus “expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” It simply refers to the principles by which we interpret, explain or expound the Scriptures.

Those who are calling for a *new hermeneutic* are saying they do not believe the methods of interpretation we have used are correct. The appeal to precept, example and necessary inference should be discarded and we should look for another way of understanding Biblical authority. Some say we should “study the life of Jesus and do what we feel He would do in the situation.” It seems strange that people who profess to follow Jesus would suggest a standard that He neither suggested nor exemplified. If we are to follow the example of Jesus, surely that would include following His example in how to establish God’s Biblical authority.

In every temptation of Jesus, He appealed to the word of God. When the devil said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread,” Jesus responded, “It is written Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (**Mt. 4:3,4**). When the tempter quoted Scripture (**Ps. 91:11, 12**), Jesus countered by saying, “It is written again, You shall not tempt the Lord your God” (**Mt. 4:7**). To the third temptation, Jesus said, “Away with you Satan! For it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve” (**Mt. 4:10**). If I understand the example of Jesus, He taught us to act only by the authority of God, to accept everything He said, not just a text out of context. That does not sound like some subjective

feeling of what God might want us to do in a certain situation.

Jesus used precepts (commands or statements of fact) when He was asked about the Father’s will. A lawyer wanted to know what to do to inherit eternal life, and Jesus said “What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?” (**Lk. 10:26**). The lawyer quoted God’s words as revealed through Moses, and Jesus said, “You have answered rightly, do this and you will live” (**Lk. 10:28**). When the Pharisees asked Him about divorce, he quoted **Genesis 2:24** and concluded, “Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate” (**Mt. 19:6**). The Pharisees objected to His application of that passage and tried to circumvent it by appealing to what Moses permitted, but Jesus insisted that the statement of **Genesis 2:24** revealed God’s intention for men.

Jesus also appealed to examples in the Old Testament and taught His disciples to follow them. Certain scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus to show them other signs, but He said, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and indeed a greater than Solomon is here” (**Mt. 12:39-42**). Jesus used three examples (Jonah, Nineveh, and the Queen of Sheba) to teach them that they needed to listen to His teaching!

After demonstrating humility, in the washing of His disciples’ feet, Jesus said, “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet” (**Jn. 13:14**). Not only did He give them an example, he commanded them to follow it! Those who say we do not learn from examples are not following the example of Jesus. In fact, even the commands in Scripture come to us through examples.

Jesus also established authority through necessary inference. The Sadducees thought they had Jesus in a dilemma because of the woman who had been married to seven brothers, but Jesus said, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (**Mt. 22:29-32**). The example of God speaking to Moses from the burning bush (**Ex. 3:6**), necessarily implied that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob continued to exist; therefore the Sadducees were wrong about their doctrine. Again, at the end of the chapter, Jesus drew a necessary inference from David's statement, "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool" (**Mt. 22:44; Ps. 110:1**). He concluded, "If David then calls Him Lord, how is He his Son?" (**Mt. 22:45**). They had no answer, because they could not deny the necessary implication in the Scripture.

Yes, we should follow the example of Jesus, but that should include His example of respect for precept, example and necessary inference. Jesus never told anyone to study the life of Moses and do what he felt Moses would do under your circumstance. He quoted precepts and examples from God's word and drew necessary conclusions. Those who say we should study the life of Jesus and do what we feel He would do, are not following Jesus. (This is the first article in a four part series on hermeneutics.) - Frank Jamerson

## What will happen to the earth?

**Answer:** We presently have tremendous focus on the earth, both environmentally and religiously. Many religionists teach that the earth is everlasting. They maintain the earth's surface will be purified by fire, and that the saved will dwell on the earth without end (many divergent views).

**The earth is age-lasting.** One Hebrew word translated "for ever" and "everlasting" is olam. The word, when used without specific qualification, simply means "age-

lasting" (see Young's Analytical Concordance, pg. 311). The scriptures teach that the earth abides for ever (olam, Eccl. 1: 4). The Levitical priesthood, with its animal sacrifices, was also age-lasting (olam, Ex. 40: 15). In other words, it lasted for the time or age God intended, but it was "changed" and replaced (Heb. 7: 12, 24-28).

**The earth shall be destroyed.** Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away..." (Matt. 24: 35). Peter taught that the earth and its environment will utterly perish. Hear him: "...the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3: 10). All "these things shall be dissolved," Peter continued (vs. 11). Notice the terms



used are descriptive of complete, final, and permanent destruction. "Great noise" describes the passing away, the elements (the basic components) shall melt, and the earth and that which appertains shall be burned up! There shall be a "new" (kainos, different nature) heavens and earth or habitation for the righteous (vs. 13).

Beloved, Jesus went (left the earth) to prepare a place (Jn. 14: 3). The saved will be "caught up...in the clouds..." and "shall ever be with the Lord" (I Thes. 4: 17). Heaven, the ultimate habitation for the saved, is not the earth (Matt. 25; Rev. 21). – Don Martin

*"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Revelation 3:13).*