# Introduction

* ACCURATELY HANDLING THE WORD OF TRUTH

# History of Biblical Interpretation

# The Allegorical School of Interpretation

# The Confessional School of Interpretation

# The Devotional School of Interpretation

# The Liberal School of Interpretation

# The Neo-orthodox School of Interpretation

# The Grammatical-Historical School of Interpretation



GRAMMAR - HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION.

1. The Concept.
2. General Principle – “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.[[1]](#footnote-1)”
3. General Practice
4. Literal
   1. This approach to interpreting the Scriptures is not a wooden literalism or “letterism,” but rather understanding the plain and ordinary meaning of words first in the context of their normal, usual semantic range.
5. Grammatical
   1. Words make up sentences, which are the basic units of thought. Words are related to other words in a sentence, and sentences exist within a context.
6. Rules for Hermeneutics
   1. Single Meaning: The meaning of the Text is Singular, Not Plural.
      * When interpreting the Bible, the interpreter can safely assume that the Bible has a singular meaning. In other words, it does not mean one thing to one person and a completely different thing to another.
   2. Authorial Intent: The Author’s Intent Is the Meaning of the Text
      1. Is the meaning of a text defined solely by the words of that text as they were used by the Scriptural author, or should the meaning of a text be partly understood in terms of “what is *now* means to me?”
         * “If individual speakers or writers are not sovereign over the use of their own words, and if meaning is not a return to how they intended their own words to be regarded, then we are in a most difficult situation – everyone communication, but no one in particular ever receiving (or knowing if he has adequately received) the message.”[[2]](#footnote-2) ~ Walter Kaiser
      2. The one who speaks or writes is the one who determines meaning.
      3. Therefore, it is the job of the interpreter to understand what the author originally meant as God spoke through them. The principles of hermeneutics serve to uncover this meaning.
   3. Scripture Interprets Scripture

* The entire Scriptures serve to clarify a particular passage of Scripture.
  1. There are no contradictions in Scripture
     1. This principle formally called “***the analogy of faith***” is defined as follows:

“… there is one system of truth or theology contained in Scripture, and therefore all doctrines must cohere or agree with each other. That means that the interpretations of specific passages must not contradict the total teaching of Scripture on a point.”[[3]](#footnote-3) ~ Ramm

* 1. Interpretation precedes Application
* This rule is governed by the presupposition that there is one meaning/interpretation of a text but many applications. Therefore, the only way to apply a text is by first understanding exactly what the author intended.
  1. 3 Rules of Interpretation… Context, Context, Context!
     1. Context refers to the words, sentences, and paragraphs that come before and after a particular verse or text. This rule emphasizes that the true meaning of a text is discovered only by understanding the words around it.
     2. The context of a verse is the logical unit of thought (pericope) that surrounds it.
     3. This logical unit is connected to a series of logical units, both before and after it.
     4. All the logical units are tied together beneath an overarching purpose for each book of the Bible.

1. The History of the Grammar-Historical Interpretation of the Bible.
   1. Jewish Literalism.
   2. Ezra, the Scribe (Nehemiah 8:5-8)
   3. Rabbinic Rules since the Day of Jesus[[4]](#footnote-4).
   4. Fathers of the Early Church.
      1. Functional Hermeneutics
      2. Allegorism and Authoritative Hermeneutics
         1. Irenaeus (ca. A.D. 130-202)
         2. Tertullian of Carthage (ca. 160-220).
   5. Syrian School of Antioch.
   6. The Middle Ages.
      1. Rashi (1040-1105)
      2. The Victorines or the School of Saint Victor (France)
      3. Nicholas of Lyra (1279-1340)
      4. John Wycliffe (ca. 1328-1384).
   7. Interpretation of the Reformation
      1. Erasmus (1466-1536)
      2. Martin Luther (1483-1546)
      3. John Calvin (1509-1564)
      4. Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531).
      5. William Tyndale (ca. 1494-1536).
   8. Post-Reformation
      1. Francis Turretin (1623-1687)
      2. Jean-Alphonse Turretin (1648-1737)
      3. Johann Ernesti (1707-1781)

# Assessment of the Grammatical Historical Hermeneutical Method.

• This is the customary practice of interpreting literature.

• God revealed himself in the common language of man to be understood.

• Exercise controls over the imagination

1. Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1970), 45 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Walter Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology,* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ramm, 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ramm, 47 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)