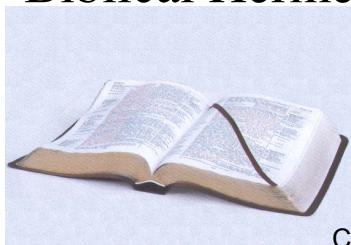


# Biblical Hermeneutics



Ancient  
Christian Models

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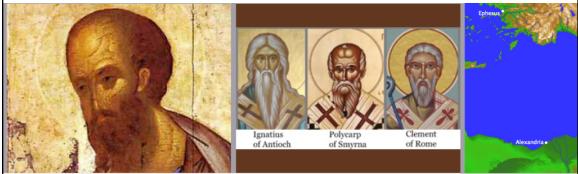
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## Christian Interpretation



### Apostolic

A.D. 30–100

### A. Fathers

A.D. 100–150

### Sch

A.D. 150–300

Hermeneutics—Christian: Apostolic



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## Apostolic Typology

### A. Typology explained

- connection: correspondence of “types”
- rationale: OT foreshadowing of NT reality
- revelation: same God of OT at work in Christ
- character: new covenant superior to old covenant

### B. Typology examples

- Adam (Rom. 5:14)
- Flood (1 Pet. 3:21)
- Tabernacle (Heb. 8:5)

A.D. 30–100

Hermeneutics—Christian: Typology



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## Apostolic Typology

### C. Typology distinguished

- typology *not* the same as allegory
- only one level of correspondence (not many)
- historically grounded in actual events, people, etc.

### D. Typology unresolved

- later used by Apostolic Fathers
- principles of application not discussed
- issues of definition and application unresolved

A.D. 30–100

Hermeneutics—Christian: Typology



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## Apostolic Interpretation

- A. Emphasis: Scriptural fulfillment
  - experience of Christian faith
  - Jesus' life and ministry
- B. Key: Christology
  - interpretation by application
  - Weaknesses: some issues not clearly resolved (role of Torah, position of Gentiles, nature of prophetic fulfillment, use of typology)
- C. Methods: literal, typology, principle
  - Typology strength: bridging OT to Jesus
  - Typology weakness: authorized usage undefined

A.D. 30–100

Hermeneutics—Christian: Apostolic



## Apostolic Interpretation

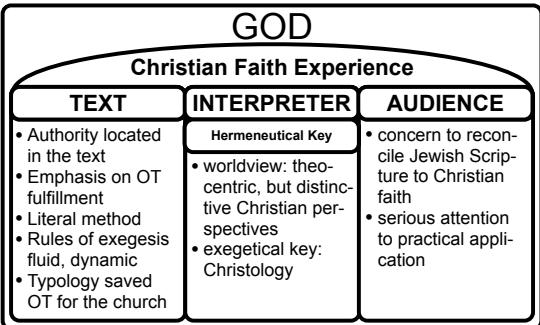
- D. Contributions
  - OT affirmed important for Christian faith (authoritative but incomplete)
  - OT types as prefiguring Christ and the church (but typological use restricted to apostles)
  - Christological key to messianic prophecy
  - Literal approach as dominant methodology

A.D. 30–100

Hermeneutics—Christian: Apostolic



## Apostolic Model



Hermeneutics—Christian: Apostolic Model



## Christian Interpretation



Apostolic

A. Fathers

Schools

A.D. 30–100

A.D. 100–150

A.D. 150–400

Hermeneutics—Christian: Apos. Fathers



## Apos. Fathers Interpretation

### A. Emphasis: apologetics

- experience of opposition (Jewish and heretical)
- Church's struggle for identity, survival

### B. Key: mixed

- interpretation by argumentation
- Weaknesses: question of methodology not addressed, most arguments *ad hoc*, no educational structures or centers to train leaders

A.D. 100–150

Hermeneutics—Christian: Apos. Fathers



## Apos. Fathers Interpretation

### C. Methods: mixed, eclectic

- Persecution hinders theological reflection and impoverishes exegetic resources
- Heresy generates confusion
  - Gnostics: Basiliides, Valentinus (theology)
  - Marcion of Rome (authoritative text)
  - Montanus of Asia Minor (Spirit excesses)
- Weaknesses: lack of strong canon concept, more reactive interpretation than proactive exegesis

A.D. 100–150

Hermeneutics—Christian: Apos. Fathers



## Christian Interpretation



### A. Fathers

A.D. 100–150

### Schools

A.D. 150–400

### Councils

A.D. 400–590

Hermeneutics—Christian: Two Schools



## Two Schools Interpretation

### A. Emphasis: methodology

- experience of hermeneutical debates
- School of Alexandria versus School of Antioch

### B. Key: philosophy versus history/grammar

- Alexandria: dominance of neo-platonic philosophy (Clement, Origin)
- Antioch: Christian scholars study under Jewish rabbis and absorb literal emphasis (Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret)

A.D. 150–400

Hermeneutics—Christian: Two Schools



## Two Schools Interpretation

- C. Methods: allegory versus literal
- Alexandria: allegory reigns supreme
  - Antioch: literal reigns supreme
  - Alexandria's allegory will dominate Christian thought
- D. Contributions (School of Antioch)
- raised importance of question of methodology
  - raised importance of grammar, original languages
  - preserved literal method of apostles for future church

A.D. 150–400

Hermeneutics—Christian: Two Schools



## Christian Interpretation



Schools

Councils

Mid. Ages

A.D. 150–400

A.D. 400–590

A.D. 590–1500

Hermeneutics—Christian: Councils



## Councils Interpretation

- A. Emphasis: doctrine
- experience of official religion of Roman empire
  - empire stability requires doctrinal decisions
- B. Key: apostolic succession
- two schools methodology debates led to stalemate
  - “apostolic succession” concept broke stalemate
    - church authority clearly defined
    - church canon definitively decided
    - church doctrine fully established

A.D. 400–590

Hermeneutics—Christian: Councils



## Councils Interpretation

- C. Methods: allegory + tradition
- allegory firmly entrenched; literalists condemned
  - traditions developed, transmitted (*catenas*)
  - two monumental church fathers
    - *Jerome*: Latin Vulgate becomes official “Bible” of the church, use of original languages lost
    - *Augustine*: interpretive principles developed with two cardinal concepts to standardize doctrine:
      - (1) “rule of faith”: clear passages as known and taught in the church catholic (everywhere, always)
      - (2) “authority of church”: a body of teaching equated with patristic tradition

A.D. 400–590

Hermeneutics—Christian: Councils



## Councils Interpretation

### D. Contributions

- resolved methodology debates
- finalized authoritative, canonical text
- clearly defined locus of church authority
- clarified, standardized Christian doctrine
- emphasized importance of tradition

A.D. 400–590

Hermeneutics—Christian: Councils



## Christian Interpretation



Early  
Church

A.D. 50–400

Councils

A.D. 400–590

Mid. Ages

A.D. 590–1500

Hermeneutics—Christian: Middle Ages



## Middle Ages Interpretation

### A. Emphasis: authority

- experience of church dominance
- Roman Catholicism consolidates power

### B. Key: church tradition

- extensive illiteracy: ignorance of clergy and laity
- church tradition: eventually supplants authority of text

A.D. 590–1500

Hermeneutics—Christian: Middle Ages



## Middle Ages Interpretation

### C. Methods: allegory + tradition

- allegory reigns supreme, tradition fills in the blanks
- four-fold allegorical meaning
  - *literal*: surface, historical meaning (Jerusalem)
  - *allegorical*: typological, figurative meaning (church)
  - *tropological*: moral meaning (covenant)
  - *anagogical*: eschatological meaning (heaven)
- tradition transmitted through *catenas* and *glosses* (collections of patristic marginal comments)
- dogmatic exegesis in service of church traditions

A.D. 590–1500

Hermeneutics—Christian: Middle Ages



## Middle Ages Interpretation

### D. Literal Method

- barely survives on life support
- Victorines (School of St. Victor) in France
- Andrew of St. Victor (c. 1110–1175)
- Some Scholastics (e.g., Anselm, Peter Abelard, Thomas Aquinas), though in varying degrees

A.D. 590–1500

Hermeneutics—Christian: Middle Ages



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## Middle Ages Model

GOD

European Dark Ages

TEXT	INTERPRETER	AUDIENCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Authority located in church tradition</li><li>• Emphasis on church authority</li><li>• Allegorical method</li><li>• Catenas, glosses transmit tradition</li><li>• Latin Vulgate over original texts</li></ul>	<p>Hermeneutical Key</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• worldview: theocentric, neo-Platonic</li><li>• exegetical key: church tradition</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• exegesis a slave to church dogma</li><li>• practical needs not emphasized</li><li>• basic illiteracy and ignorance</li></ul>

Hermeneutics—Christian: M. Ages Model



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## Ancient Christian Period

### A. General Contributions

- rejected heretical interpretations
- affirmed authority, validity of OT
- solidified canon concept
- defined Christian doctrine

### B. Specific Contribution (preserved literal method)

- opposed Alexandrian allegory
- opposed traditional and dogmatic exegesis
- defined the literal method (historical, grammatical)
- clarified the nature of typology (historical, one-level correspondence)

A.D. 400–590

Hermeneutics—Christian: Councils



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## Christian Models—Summary

Apostolic	A. Fathers	Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emphasis: fulfillment</li><li>• Key: Christology</li><li>• Methods: literal, typology, principle</li><li>• Contributions: OT affirmed, christological key to messianic prophecy, OT types, literal approach</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emphasis: apologetics</li><li>• Key: mixed, eclec.</li><li>• Methods: mixed</li><li>• Contributions: too preoccupied with survival to reflect on hermeneutical issues</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emphasis: methodology</li><li>• Key: philosophy versus literal</li><li>• Methods: allegory, literal</li><li>• Contributions: importance of methodology, grammar, history; preserved literal method</li></ul>

Hermeneutics—Christian Models: Sum.



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## Christian Models—Summary

Councils	Mid. Ages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emphasis: doctrine</li><li>• Key: apostolic succession</li><li>• Methods: allegory, tradition</li><li>• Contributions: resolved disputes: methodology, doctrine, canon, authority, tradition</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emphasis: authority</li><li>• Key: church tradition</li><li>• Methods: allegory, tradition</li><li>• Contributions: none significant, as illiteracy, ignorance rampant, but literal method survived</li></ul>

Hermeneutics—Christian Models: Sum.



## Methodology—Summary

Method	Description	Examples
1. Literal	history, grammar	Rabbis, Apostles, Antioch
2. Midrashic	textual commentary	Rabbis, A. Fathers
3. Allegorical	hidden meanings	Hellenists, A. Fathers, Alexandria, Middle Ages
4. Pesher	prophetic cipher	Qumran
5. Typological	correspondence	Apostles, A. Fathers
6. Traditional	patristic comments	Rabbis, Councils, Middle Ages
7. Dogmatic	defending doctrine	Councils, Middle Ages

Hermeneutics—Christian: Methodology S.

