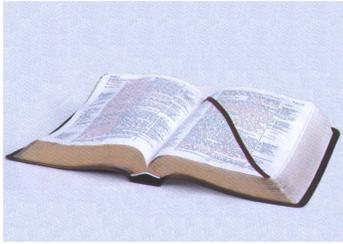


Biblical Hermeneutics



Modern and
Post-Modern
Models

New Developments



1 New Methodology

2 New Philosophies

3 New Discoveries

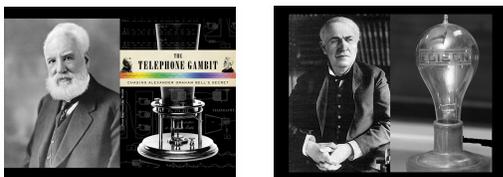
4 New Realities

Hermeneutics—Introduction: Purpose

Modern Models — 19th Cent.

A. New methodology

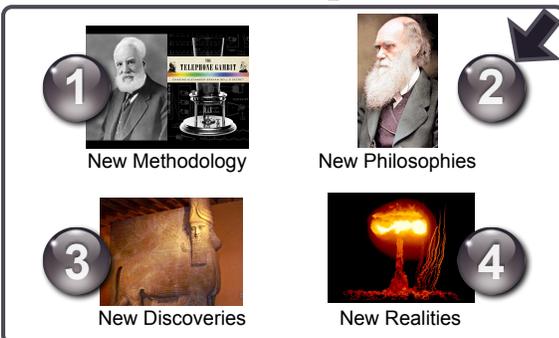
rationalistic (reason alone, no revelation)
naturalistic (nature alone, no supernatural)
later identified as the “scientific method”



19th century

Hermeneutics—Modern: 19th Century

New Developments



1 New Methodology

2 New Philosophies

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Hermeneutics—Introduction: Purpose

Modern Models — 19th Cent.

B. New philosophies

developmentalism: inevitable progress

Charles Darwin—biology

Karl Marx—social theory



positivism: knowledge only through positive fact

positivist historicism (three principles)

methodological doubt: start with skepticism, capitulate only to proof, history at best = probabilities

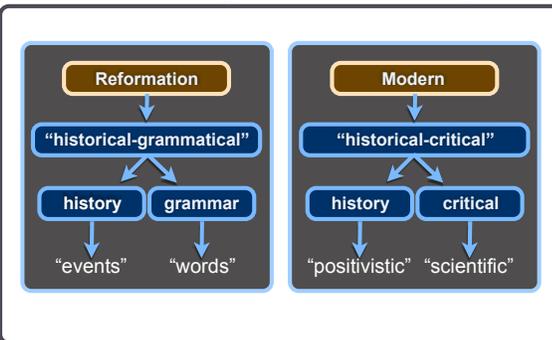
analogy: only what is possible in present human experience was possible in previous experience

correlation: closed system, no outside cause in cause/effect chain ("God" not a sufficient answer)

19th century

Hermeneutics—Modern: 19th Century

Tinkering with "History"



Hermeneutics—Modern: 19th Century

Modern Models — 19th Cent.

C. Impact on interpretation

Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena* (1898)

four sources behind Pentateuch (850–550 B.C.)

conclusions: (1) Moses not author, (2) law *after* historical books, (3) real history not as presented

F. C. Baur (1826–1860, numerous publications)

Jewish/Gentile divisions of early church rubbed out by later church to foster "unity" picture

conclusions: (1) any "unity" impression proves 2nd cent. origin, (2) Gospels and Acts = 2nd century

Adolf von Harnack, *What Is Christianity?* (1901), culmination of rationalist 19th cent. Protestant theology

19th century

Hermeneutics—Modern: 19th Century

Modern Models — 19th Cent.

C. (Impact on interpretation)

Quest for the historical Jesus (First Quest)

Reimarus, Strauss, Baur, Wrede, etc. seeking to remove "dogmatic layers" from the Gospels

Source Criticism was the methodological tool

identifying sources an author used in composition

presupposition: sources represent material historically closer to Jesus, so more valuable for "life of Jesus"

"Synoptic Problem" in gospel research (Mark, Q, M, L)

Portraits of Jesus varied significantly

19th century

Hermeneutics—Modern: 19th Century

Modern Models — 19th Cent.

C. (Impact on interpretation)

Albert Schweitzer

The Quest of the Historical Jesus, 1906

devastating critique of "Life of Jesus" research
ended First Quest



19th century

Hermeneutics—Modern: 19th Century

Modern Models — 19th Cent.

D. Responses to skeptical rationalism

Germany: German Confessional scholars

England: J. B. Lightfoot, translation of Apostolic
Fathers discredited Baur's assumptions, theory

America: Warfield, Green, Beecher, Anabaptists
(restoration movements), Pentecostal movements

19th century

Hermeneutics—Modern: 19th Century

Modern Models — 19th Cent.

E. Textual Criticism

Erasmus (1516)

published Greek New Testament

6 manuscripts, not one a complete NT, numerous
mistakes ("precipitated more than published")

on-going attempts to define methodology, refine
edited text to be printed

Westcott and Hort (1881)

published an edited Greek text

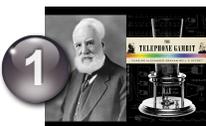
culmination of defining methodology

basic principles foundation of modern edited text

19th century

Hermeneutics—Modern: 19th Century

New Developments



1

New Methodology



2

New Philosophies



3

New Discoveries



4

New Realities

Hermeneutics—Introduction: Purpose

Modern Models — 20th Cent.

A. History of Religions

new archeological discoveries (Egypt, Syro-Palestine, Babylon, Assyria)
insight into religions contemporary with Bible
inevitable comparisons leading to developmental theories of dependence
contributions
showed biblical ideas earlier than Wellhausen said
showed importance of comparative principle for studying biblical cultures

20th cent.

Hermeneutics—Modern: 20th Century



Modern Models — 20th Cent.

B. Form Criticism

Gunkel (later Bultmann, Dibelius)
addressed deficiency of source criticism
identified oral setting behind biblical material
oral setting reveals original "situation in life"
presupposition: oral forms closer historically
results
demonstrated oral period of transmission
emphasized "setting-in-life"
caused fragmentation of material
negative judgements on gospel historicity

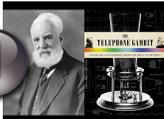
20th cent.

Hermeneutics—Modern: 20th Century



New Developments

1



New Methodology

2



New Philosophies

3



New Discoveries

4



New Realities



Hermeneutics—Introduction: Purpose



Modern Models — 20th Cent.

New realities:

two world wars destroyed philosophical optimism, idea of "inevitable progress"
Jewish Holocaust underscored basic human depravity
philosophical inquiry reinvigorated as science lost unchallenged dominance
existentialism emerges with new reflections on human condition

20th cent.

Hermeneutics—Modern: 20th Century



Modern Models — 20th Cent.

A. New realities—Post-World War I

Neo-orthodox movement

Karl Barth (1889–1968): return to divine revelation as authoritative knowledge, God known only in personal encounter (notice new epistemology)

Emil Brunner (1889–1966): systematized ideas into “dialectical theology,” truth ultimately is paradoxical

20th cent.

Hermeneutics—Modern: 20th Century



Modern Models — 20th Cent.

A. (New Realities—Post-World War I)

Demythologizing

Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976)

ancient authors buried New Testament truths in their mythological (non-scientific) worldview

mythological language must be reinterpreted for the modern (scientific) mind

popularized idea contrasting “Jesus of history” from “Christ of faith”

Reactionary response: C. H. Dodd, T. W. Manson, Vincent Taylor on historical reliability of NT

20th cent.

Hermeneutics—Modern: 20th Century



Modern Models — 20th Cent.

B. New realities—Post-World War II

Biblical Theology movement

emphasis on theology, message of biblical authors argued whether actual “movement”

Redaction Criticism

response to text fragmentation of source, form crit.

views literature as whole for themes, theology

analyzes editing processes of author for clues

New Quest for the historical Jesus (Second Quest)

rejecting Bultmann’s historical agnosticism

Bultmann’s students using redaction criticism

20th cent.

Hermeneutics—Modern: 20th Century



Modern Models — 20th Cent.

B. (New realities—Post-World War II)

New Hermeneutic

field of linguistics, language as “actor”

“language-event” creates its own reality in reading and questions reader (not reader questioning text)

history takes a back seat

Canon Criticism

response to weakness in biblical theology

interpretation must include the canonical shape

(Hosea → Minor Prophets → Major Prophets)

20th cent.

Hermeneutics—Modern: 20th Century



Modern Models — 20th Cent.

B. (New realities—Post-World War II)

Charismatic hermeneutics

renewed interest in hermeneutical discussion

rationalist evangelical perspectives critiqued

authority: Bible, or Christ through Spirit?

Third Quest for the historical Jesus

“Jesus Seminar”: North American movement

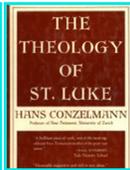
controversial criteria for authentic Jesus sayings

varying portraits of Jesus

20th cent.

Hermeneutics—Modern: 20th Century

Quest for the Historical Jesus



First Quest
(1800s)

Second Quest
(1950s)

Third Quest
(1990s)

Group	Rationalist Protestants	Bultmann's students	Jesus Seminar
Methodology	source	redaction	sayings

Hermeneutics—Introduction: Purpose

Modern Model

ATHEISTIC

Modernism

TEXT	INTERPRETER	AUDIENCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authority shifted to rationalism Emphasis on new definition of history Hist.-crit. method Focus on historical layers underneath text, wider cultural context 	<p>Hermeneutical Key</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> worldview: atheistic, scientific exegetical key: new philosophies, developmentalism, positivism, existentialism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> everyday world assumed very different from ancient practical needs in general presumed unrelated

Hermeneutics—Modern: Model

Post-Modern Models



Pluralism
and
Beyond

Post-Modern Models

A. Beyond the Historical-Critical Paradigm

Developments

- disillusionment with meager results
- perceived limitations of "historical" research
- abandonment of positivistic philosophy as naive
- adoption of new philosophies, such as pluralism

New focus for research

- focus on text as literary object
- eliminates need for external validation
- does "end-run" around historical questions

20th cent.

Hermeneutics—Post-Modern: Models



Post-Modern Models

B. New Approaches

Literary methodologies

- rhetorical study: text as "speech act" following principles of ancient rhetoric
- narrative study: text as story analyzing elements of plot, character, theme, narrative time, etc.
- structural study: text as deep structures encoding universally recurring opposition pairs, story actants
- reader response: reader as text producing meaning internally generating multiple meanings
- deconstruction: text as tensions with inevitable erosion of meaning into relativistic anarchy

20th cent.

Hermeneutics—Post-Modern: Models



Post-Modern Models

B. (New Approaches)

Social science methodologies

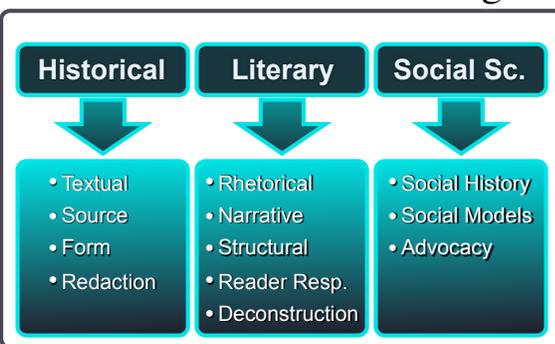
- social history: analyzing texts through social worlds, shared values, and interpersonal dynamics
- social models: analyzing ancient societies using social-scientific models of contemporary societies
- advocacy: interpreting texts through the lens of social advocacy groups (liberationist, feminist, etc.)

20th cent.

Hermeneutics—Post-Modern: Models



Modern/P-Mod. Methodologies



Hermeneutics—Mod/P-M: Methodologies



Modern/Post-M. Evaluation

A. Contributions

inherent limitations of historical research
 significance of worldview for hermeneutical result
 role of philosophy in interpreter's preunderstanding
 literary analysis can reveal ignored features of text
 theological endeavor must have social balance

20th cent.

Hermeneutics—Post-Modern: Evaluation

Modern/Post-M. Evaluation

B. Limitations

positivism has its own naïveté
 presuppositions transcend reason
 theological dimension of text can be lost
 normative textual authority lost to skepticism
 some meager results or meaningless meanings
 modern social model analogies can be anachronistic
 advocacy trivializes Bible into one issue and creates
 its own canon within the canon

20th cent.

Hermeneutics—Post-Modern: Evaluation

Post-Modern Model

ATHEISTIC

20th Cent. Discoveries/Realities

TEXT	INTERPRETER	AUDIENCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authority shifted to text as literature Emphasis: moving beyond hist.-crit. Literary, social scientific methods Focus on speech, narrative, reader, social worlds 	<p>Hermeneutical Key</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> worldview: post-modern, pluralism exegetical key: text as object, social reconstruction, advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> movement away from application reader validation or no meaning social comparison either without evaluation or advocacy extremes

Hermeneutics—Post-Modern: Model

Evangelical Model

GOD

Christian Faith

TEXT	INTERPRETER	AUDIENCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authority in text Plain, literal words Grammar, structure important Historical context Social, cultural context Literary context Genre is crucial 	<p>Hermeneutical Key</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> worldview: theocentric, but awareness of roles of philosophy, pre-understandings key: christocentric (both testaments) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> practical application the goal use principles to update application keep theologizing from overwhelming social context

Hermeneutics—Post-Modern: Model
