

BGM BIBLE COLLEGE

BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS

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LECTURE NO 4

INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS

The Necessity of Understanding the Scriptures

The understanding of this Book is of great necessity; for the proofs of the truthfulness of Holy Scripture appear in two forms:

1. **The Internal Evidence of Scripture,**
2. **The External Evidence.**

I. THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF SCRIPTURE

The Bible's Testimony Concerning Itself

The first witness is that **the Biblical text beareth witness of itself**, declaring that it is the Word of God. The second witness is that **Christ Himself**, and afterward **Paul the Apostle**, made frequent use of the Old Testament Scriptures, thereby affirming their divine authority.

Christ's Testimony through His Use of Scripture

In the Gospel according to Matthew, chapter 4, in the account of the temptation, when the Tempter came with his enticements—to command stones to be made bread, to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, and to bow for the kingdoms of the world—the Lord Jesus answered each temptation with the words, “**It is written.**” And each of His answers came from **Deuteronomy**:

- Deut. 8:3 — “*Man shall not live by bread alone.*”
- Deut. 6:16
- Deut. 6:13

Thus the Lord Christ grounded His answers upon the written Word.

Again, in the Sermon on the Mount, He saith, “*Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time...*” and then He cited from **Exodus 20:13–14**, proving by His own example that the Book of Exodus is the Word of God.

In John 15:25, during the account of the Last Supper, Christ again quoted the Scriptures, drawing from **Psalm 35:19** and **Psalm 69:4**, showing that the Book of Psalms likewise is the inspired Word.

Christ's Testimony Concerning Old Testament Persons

Not only did Christ quote the Scriptures, but He also acknowledged the historical persons of the Old Testament.

- In **Mark 10:6–8**, He affirmed Adam and Eve as created by God, male and female.
- Thus the teaching of Christ standeth against all ungodly doctrines that oppose the order of God's creation.
- In **Luke 11:51**, He speaketh of Abel, acknowledging the earliest history of mankind as true.

If therefore **Christ the Son of God** quoted the Old Testament, taught from it, and affirmed its persons, then the Old Testament is indeed the Word of the living God. This is Scripture's **internal testimony**.

The Witness of Noah and the Flood (Luke 17:26–27)

And as it is written in the Gospel according to Luke, chapter 17, verses 26 and 27, the Lord Jesus Christ speaketh of **Noah** and of the **Flood** that came upon the earth. Thus the Master bringeth forth the account recorded in *Genesis chapters 6 and 7*, and cited it as truth. Hence it becomes manifest that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself **acknowledged the Book of Genesis as the Word of God**, for He would not have quoted it had He not received it as divine Scripture.

The Witness of Lot and the Judgment upon Sodom (Luke 17:28–29)

Again, in **Luke 17:28–29**, the Lord makes mention of **Lot**, and of his wife, and of the fire that fell upon **Sodom and Gomorrah**. If the Lord Christ bringeth these matters before His hearers, then verily He confirmed the historicity and truthfulness of the Old Testament accounts.

The Testimony Concerning Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matthew 22:32)

In **Matthew 22:32** the Lord Jesus Christ speaketh of **Abraham**, **Isaac**, and **Jacob**, thereby bearing witness that the patriarchal narratives of the Old Testament are true and trustworthy. By such citations the Lord Jesus received the Old Testament as the inspired Word of God.

Thus from these many references—of which there be more in the Gospels, in the concordances, and easily found in common study tools—we understand that the Lord Jesus Christ **openly accepted the Old Testament as divine Scripture**.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES AND NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS

The Witness of Paul and the Writer to the Hebrews

Furthermore, when we behold Paul the Apostle, and likewise the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, we observe how frequently they quote from the Old Testament. The writer of Hebrews speaketh of **Rahab**, of **Moses**, of **Abel**, and of the heroes of faith in Hebrews chapter 11—all taken from the ancient Scriptures.

Thus all the **New Testament writers**, without hesitation, cite the Old Testament, and they receive it as **the Word of God**.

THE TWO-FOLD EVIDENCE: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

Internal Evidence Defined

If any should inquire what is meant by the *internal evidence* of Scripture, the answer is this: **The Bible itself beareth witness that it is the Word of God.**

External Evidence Defined

And if any asked concerning *external evidence*, it is this:

The testimony of literature, history, and persons outside of the Bible, bearing witness that the Scripture is true.

Thus we behold two lines of testimony—one within, and one without.

2. EXTERNAL EVIDENCE OF SCRIPTURE'S TRUTH

Josephus: A First-Century Jewish Historian

In the first century A.D. there lived a Jewish historian whose name was **Josephus**. His full name is often given as *Flavius Josephus*. Though he was a Jew and not a Christian, yet in his historical writings he recorded that there was indeed a **man named Jesus**, whom the Romans crucified.

This he wrote in his work entitled **“Antiquities of the Jews.”**

Though he wrote not to prove Christ, nor to defend the Christian faith, yet God in His providence used even such men to confirm the truth of the Holy Scriptures.

Josephus on the Miracles of Jesus

Moreover, Josephus makes mention that this Jesus was known for **wondrous works**; though Josephus himself was not a disciple, yet he recorded such things as matters of history.

Thus even from the writings of those without the church, testimony arises that Jesus lived, wrought wonders, and was crucified—as the Scriptures declare.

Tacitus: A Roman Historian

After Josephus, we behold **Tacitus**, a Roman historian. His work is entitled **“Annals of Imperial Rome.”** Therein he recorded that in the days of **Pontius Pilate**, a man called Christ was crucified.

Tacitus was no Christian; yet his testimony agreed with the Gospel record, and thereby becomes an external witness to the truth of Scripture.

THE PURPOSE OF SUCH TESTIMONIES

These men were not Christians—one a Jew, the other a Roman—and they wrote history from their own standpoint. Yet the Lord used their writings to confirm that the God of the Bible is true, and that the Holy Scripture is faithful and reliable.

We do not build our faith upon their testimony, yet their witness **strengthened** that which Scripture already declared concerning itself.

Biblical Hermeneutics

Bāiblī Ilm-ul-Tafseer o Tawjeh

Now we shall examine matters relating to **Biblical Hermeneutics**.

There is a Greek verb: **Hermēneuō**

H-E-R-M-E-N-E-U-O

this is the verb.

The noun, the Greek noun, is **Hermēneia**

H-E-R-M-E-N-E-I-A

So the verb is **Hermēneuō**, and the noun is **Hermēneia**.

Now these Greek words—according to the opinions of various scholars, commentators, and interpreters—are seen within Greek mythology or Greek philosophy. There was a Greek god by the name **Hermes**. This Hermes was mentioned in Greek philosophy. And it is said that the subject of “Hermeneutics” sprang from the representation of this god Hermes. His task was to carry communication between two gods—facilitating exchange of thoughts, or what in Urdu is called **ablāghiyāt** (communication).

So the meaning becomes this:

to give **clarity**, to **explain**, and to **make known** the meaning of a matter to someone.

When you bring it into Biblical matters, then **to understand** the holy verses of the Holy Scriptures and **to make them understood**—this is Biblical Tafseer. When you explain, you are communicating; therefore it becomes Biblical Ilm-ul-Tafseer.

To go even deeper: it means to understand the **truths** of Scripture and then to make those truths known unto others.

Now in this matter there are two elements:

1. **Explanation** (Tawjeh / Wazāhat)
—English: *Explanation* or *To Explain*

The goal is that the **truth** of the verse you are interpreting may reach others.

Another English word used for this work is **Interpretation** — to interpret. This also falls under Tafseer and Tawjeeh.

Write the definition of Hermeneutics

Ilm-ul-Tafseer is **both a Science and an Art**.

A science, and also a craft.

In which we learn to interpret the Holy Bible.

This means—definition continues—that Ilm-ul-Tafseer is a **science** because in it we learn the *principles and rules* of interpretation.

And Ilm-ul-Tafseer is an **art** because in it we learn how to apply those principles practically.

The basic purpose of Ilm-ul-Tafseer is to reach the **meaning that is in the mind of the author**.

The basic goal, purpose, aim of Tafseer is to reach that meaning which the author had in mind.

If David wrote the Psalm in his age, then it is not my wish to impose my own meaning. No—the meaning intended in the mind of David, *that* meaning must be reached. Many pastors, many preachers, when preaching Psalm 23: “The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want”—they jump directly to Jesus. “Jesus is our Shepherd.” I do not deny this—Jesus indeed is our Shepherd. But Pastor Sahib, please first explain who the shepherd was in the Old Testament. The king was called the shepherd of the people. Yahweh was called Shepherd. The Hebrew word YHWH—how do we view that? In the New Testament it becomes *Kurios*. How shall we understand all that?

So first explain why David writes, “The LORD is my Shepherd,” in the Old Testament context. *Then* come to Jesus Christ.

Thus Hermeneutics is the name of a **scholarly discipline, a method, a system, a way** by which we interpret Scripture in order to reach its true intended meaning.

Exegesis

Exegesis is the determining of the message from the Biblical text.
Meaning: to determine the meaning from the Biblical text.

You determine the meaning—the meaning that conveys the truth of that verse.