*Session 7*

*Wesleyan Interpretation*

Recognizing our presuppositions helps us do many things: 1) find our strengths, 2) identify weak assumptions so we can grow, and 3) find our place in the larger theological scene

1. **The Thought of John Wesley** (1703-91)
   1. Personal Piety

Wesley’s directions for reading the Bible

1. Set a little time every morning and evening.
2. Read a chapter out of the Old and one out of the New Testament.
3. Read to know the “whole will of God.”
4. Have a constant eye to the “Analogy of Faith”
5. Have serious and earnest prayer before consulting the “Oracles of God.”
6. Frequently pause and examine ourselves by what we read
   1. Wesley’s Hermeneutical Rules
7. Start with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the need to use faith and knowledge
8. Use Scripture phrases to describe the sense given in Scripture
9. Use the literal sense unless it leads to contradiction with other Scriptures or makes no sense
10. Interpret the text with regard to its literary context
11. Scripture interprets Scripture, according to the analogy of faith and by parallel passages
12. Commandments are covered promises law and gospel agree
13. Interpret literary devices appropriately
14. Seek the most original text and the best translation
15. **The “Quadrilateral”**
    * + - * Diamond
          * Tegrahedron
          * Three-legged stool
          * House
16. Scripture is Primary
17. *Homo unius libri*

“man of one book”

1. Doctrine of Inspiration

“Spirit dictated”

“oracles of God”

“the history of God”

1. Knowledge of the Biblical Text

Original languages

Critical Methods

1. The Analogy of Faith: use Scripture to interpret Scripture
2. Reason
3. Part of the *Imago Dei* “image of God”
4. The Importance of Reason
5. Role of Reason

Know history, ancient customs, chronology, geography, science, logic, philosophy

Know people and the world

1. Tradition

Confirms interpretation

Especially post-apostolic period

1. Experience

The practical application of Scripture

1. Summary: All three are needed to interpret Scripture but cannot replace it
2. **The Role of the Holy Spirit**
3. Inspires Scripture
4. Provides Internal Witness: Validates interpretation
5. Helps people apply the truths of Scripture
6. Brings an encounter with the Living Word
7. On-going Inspiration: writing and the reading
8. The Spirit confirms the Word
9. **What is the focus of Wesley’s hermeneutic?**
10. Holiness
11. Soteriology
12. Love
13. Christ
14. **Hermeneutics and Wesleyan Theology**
15. Focus on heart holiness, love, and recreation into Christlikess
16. Cleansing from sin and perfected in love
17. Prevenient grace
18. Sanctified interpretation
19. *Via* *Media* in interpretation: not afraid to tackle difficult questions or methods
20. Thus, neither fundamentalist nor liberal
21. Use the best scholarly tools
22. Openness to culture but limited by conviction.
23. Faith is the open door as faith
24. Goal: to know God through the Bible

**Big Ideas**

* 1. John Wesley emphasized reading the Bible for personal spiritual growth.
  2. Wesley believed the Holy Spirit is involved in the writing and reading process.
  3. The Wesleyan Quadrilateral starts with Scripture as primary, supported by Tradition, Reason, and Experience.
  4. The goal of studying the Bible is to be remade into Christ’s holy and loving likeness.
  5. Wesleyans use the best knowledge from other traditions and critical methodologies in order to understand the Bible.