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解釋聖經的五個原則

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《解經的五個主要原則》是史百克弟兄於 1957 年一次遠東特別聚會的開頭所講的話。

認識解釋聖經的原則極為重要。我們若不懂得如何解釋聖經，那麼聖經對我們仍是一本關閉的書，充其量我們只能知道一些表面的字句，無法明白藏在其中真實的屬靈意義。為此盼望大家瞭解又記得我現在所要講的，並且隨時應用在以後的研讀中。

解釋聖經有許多原則，其中重大的有五項：

1. 神的永遠性；
2. 基督的包含性；
3. 聖靈是聖經的解釋者；
4. 解釋聖經的鑰匙；
5. 解經的唯一價值乃在乎屬靈的果效

第一個原則：神的永遠性。

我們要記得，在神眼中任何時間都是現在。我們的觀念中有以往、現在和將來，但在神眼中都是現在。神是永遠的神，祂沒有時間的問題。

建築師作業時，他心中先有一個完整的計劃和圖樣。一項巨大的工程開工之先，必定先有一個具體而細微的模型，表明工程完成之日的全貌。無論是一所大廈或是一座城市，原則上都是如此。建造者總是朝著最後所要完成的樣子，一天又一天的工作。有些人所看見的只是建築的一部分，就無法明白建築的整體。他們不該誤把部分當作整體。一個建築中每一部分的意義和重要性，全然系在建築的整體。只有當人看見整體時，他才明白這一部分的意義。整本聖經就是這樣，充滿了許許多多部分，這些部分在神的眼光中，都是整體的一部分，神心目中所看見的是整體。

神是一位偉大的建築師，祂在動工創造之先，已經有了一幅完美的圖樣與計劃，神所經營所建造的工程，具有神的永遠性。從它所包含的許許多多部分中，都能看出神的永遠性。所以我們必須記得，在神的工程每一部分的背後，都藏著神對那工程的完全概念。換句話說，是神對那工程永遠並完整的概念，支配著神的一切工作。我們必須記得，神的這個概念永遠不會增加，也不會減少，如同神自己是永遠不改變的一樣。在我們眼前出現的一切事物中，都包藏著神永遠並完整的概念。

我們要注意，聖經中所記載的任何事，都具有兩方面的意義：一個是當時的意義，說明這事如何應用在當時的情況中；另一個是將來的意義，說明這事在將來完成時所顯出的意義。聖經中的任何事，若有當時的應用，也必有將來完滿的意義。這是解釋聖經的頭一個原則——神的永遠性。

第二個原則：基督的包含性。

基督是全本聖經的解釋，要明白聖經必須先認識基督。像彼得和保羅都明白聖經，但他們都是等到認識基督以後，才明白聖經的。我們也是先認識了主耶穌，再透過祂來看聖經，我們才開始明白聖經。基督是解釋聖經的鑰匙。

真正瞭解聖經的人都知道，聖經實在是一個人（person），不僅是一本書。聖經是一位活的人，不是一本死的書。聖經中的這一位是無限量的，因此聖經也是無限量的，這是一個極重要的原則。有一些聖經學者研讀聖經，一遍又一遍地教導別人，但到老年時，發覺很難有新鮮的領受。他們只是重複講解從前所領受的，這是因為他們只把聖經當作一本書來研究。然而人若認識基督，在基督裡明白聖經，在聖經裡明白基督，就不會如此。容我重複說，主耶穌是無限量的，在祂裡面是取之不盡，用之不竭的豐富。當聖靈把主耶穌向我們啓示的時候，聖經就成了一本活的書。

第三個原則：聖靈是聖經的解釋者。

哥林多前書第二章十三節說：「我們講說這些事，不是用人智慧所指教的言語，乃是用聖靈所指教的言語，將屬靈的話解釋屬靈的事。」後面的話應翻成：「把屬靈的話，解釋給屬靈的人。」這一點非常重要，確定了我們所要說的原則——聖靈是聖經的解釋者。我們知道聖經是一本聖靈所啓示的書，它不是出乎人。我們若從聖經只得著一些字句，若干條文，那麼認真說，我們並未得著聖經。

埃提阿伯的太監是一個很貼切的例子。當腓利靠近他的車子時，聽見他在讀以賽亞書第五十三章，便問他說：「你所念的，你明白嗎？」他說：「沒有人指教我，怎能明白呢？」這給我們看見，從一方面來說，聖經是在他手中，而且他正在讀它，似乎他擁有聖經，但實際上他並未得著聖經。這是因為聖經是聖靈的書，不是人頭腦的書。人的頭腦和聖靈的思想完全是兩回事。許多基督徒不認識這件事，甚至有不少教導聖經的人也不認識這件事，因此就產生了許多問題和紊亂，使原本屬靈的書，變成屬地的。這也是許多神的兒女在屬靈方面幼稚、軟弱，以及起爭端的基本原因。

除了對屬靈的人之外，聖經是一本關閉的書。主耶穌回答尼哥底母的話：你若要曉得天上的事，就必須從天上生一重生，正說明了這個原則。我們屬靈的程度，決定我們明白聖經的程度。這說明我們信主之後，為何主常叫我們經歷各種不同的事。目的就是要讓我們明白聖經。我們向著天然頭腦死的程度，常常測量出我們屬靈的程度。請牢記這一點。我們必須先經歷一些事，才能明白聖經。我們不能單憑參加一次特會，有人給我們一些講解教導，就能明白神的話。這些方法都不足使我們明白神的話，我們對神的話明白的程度，完全根據屬靈生命增長的程度，這是解釋聖經的第三個原則。

第四個原則：最後的記述

聖經中提到的每一件事，最後一次提起時，常常是明白那事的意義之鑰匙。有些事聖經一再提起，末後一次說到它時，往往指明了先前說過多次的那件事的意義。我們可以從它末次出現時上下文的關係中，看見它的意義。

我且舉一個例來說明這一點：啓示錄第二十二章二節，是聖經中最後提到生命樹的章節。創世記第二章就提到生命樹，但並未說明它的意義，只說：「園子當中又有生命樹。」此外別無任何解釋。到了聖經末了，末次提到生命樹的時候，我們才找到它的解釋，而這解釋又是從它的上下文的關係中顯示出來的。

我們從啓示錄第二十二章來看，第一節：「天使又指示我在城內街道當中一道生命水的河，明亮如水晶，從神和羔羊的寶座流出來。」我再說，讀經要注意上下文；這裡說生命水的河，是從神和羔羊的寶座流出來的。要知道寶座的意義，必須將啓示錄全卷讀過。啓示錄前幾章常說到神和羔羊的寶座。我們需要知道神的寶座是什麼，羔羊寶座有什麼意義——在寶座中有一隻羔羊。第一節給我們看見，這一道生命水的河，是與神和羔羊的寶座相關聯的，因為它是從神和羔羊的寶座流出來的。

第二節：「在河這邊與那邊有生命樹，結十二樣果子，每月都結果子，樹上的葉子乃為醫治萬民。」在這裡所看見的生命樹，它結生命果，是永存不死的果子，死亡在這裡完全沒有地位。生命樹每月都結果子。「樹上的葉子乃為醫治萬民」。這樣的翻譯不太準確，原文的意思是「樹上的葉子乃是為著萬民的健康」。有人也許要問：兩者的分別何在？今日眾人都熟知，預防重於治療。生命樹的葉子使疾病全然消蹤。到了啓示錄第二十二章，列國屬靈的病都已治好，但列國的健康還需要保持。所以生命樹的葉子不是為治病，乃是為保健。因此接下去就說：「以後再沒有咒詛。」

這些簡短的話，涵蓋了整本聖經。因著亞當的犯罪，咒詛臨到列國與萬民，全地都受毀壞，遍地所見儘是死亡、悲哀，處處都受敗壞的轄制，這些正是咒詛的結果。啓示錄第二十二章說得非常清楚，生命樹是與生命水的河相關聯的，而生命水的河又是從神和羔羊的寶座出來的：所以生命樹是代表生命的得勝。生命勝過一切，生命是極其豐盛的。

這樣解釋，大家就可以明白，聖經所提起過的任何事，那件事的意義要從最後的記述中去找，那裡有解開的鑰匙，這也是解經的原則之一。

第五個原則：解經的唯一價值乃在乎屬靈的果效。

我們研讀聖經的時候，必須牢記，不應該只羨慕多得知識，多受教導。這原本是件好事，遠比什麼都不想知道好多了，但其中藏著危機。那引誘人的，在此布了陷阱；亞當夏娃就是為此被撒但擄去的。撒但說：「你們吃的日子眼睛就明亮了，你們便如神能知道善惡。」這是知識樹，吃知識樹的果子，不能使你得著生命，只能引至死亡。解經唯一的價值在乎進入屬靈的實際，屬靈的價值乃在乎增進我們與神的關係。我實在盼望當時亞當能明白這件事。當撒但引誘他吃知識樹果子的時候，亞當若先問：「這事對於我在神面前的生命，將會有何種影響？」他就可免去這慘痛的災難。

所以讓我再說一遍，屬靈的價值在乎對我在神面前生活的影響。換一句話說，屬靈的價值在乎基督身量的增長。如果基督是聖經的解釋，那麼我們對聖經的認識一定會增長我們基督的身量。如果我們這次的查經不能叫我們裡頭基督的身量加增，那我們就失敗了。倘若只是你們筆記簿中多增加了一些知識，你們並未多認識基督，更像基督，基督的身量沒有增加，你們就完全失敗了。所以我請你們自始至終多多禱告，讓這次查經能使你們在屬靈方面有所長進，不是擴大我們的頭腦，乃是屬靈的實際增長。判斷任何事物的價值在乎它對神的旨意有多少，一切屬靈的知識都促進基督身量的增長，成全神最終的目的，問題在於這件事裡面有多少屬靈的生命。

在主的裡面，一切天然的絲毫沒有地位。唯獨屬靈的實際，也就是基督的身量，在神的眼中才算得了數。因此該留意的是，我們在主的身上得了什麼？在屬靈生命裡得了什麼？在屬靈的事上領會了什麼？因為這些才決定我們在神的範圍中的價值。我在這裡並不盼望只給你們一些講論，只向你們講解聖經，讓你們多得一些聖經知識；我是盼望透過這些知識，而讓你們至終認識基督，因而到基督那裡得豐盛的生命供應。

Five Important Principles of Interpreting the Bible

Austin Sparks

It is very important for us to be able to know how the Bible is to be interpreted. Unless we do understand the principles of the interpretation of the Bible, the Bible is not an open book; we may know what is in the Book as a book, but we do not understand it until we have the principles of interpretation. So I ask you to try and remember what I am going to say now and bring it over into our later study. We will consider five important principles of interpreting the Bible:

1. The Eternity of God;
2. The Comprehensiveness of Christ;
3. The Interpreter of the Bible is the Holy Spirit;
4. The Final Mention;
5. The Only Real Value is the Spiritual.

1. The Eternity of God

The first principle of the interpretation of the Bible is the eternity of God. We must always remember that all time is present time with God. There is no past and future with God: all that is past and future with us has been present with God always. At any moment in what is time to us, eternity is present with God.

The architect always has the completed plan before him. If he is the designer of a ship, he has a model made of that ship before anything is done. He sees in the model the completed object that is, exactly how the thing will appear when it is finished. If it is a great building, or even a city, it is the same. The architect draws what we call a scale model, and he sees in that model exactly how the building, or the city, will be when it is finished. The builder works day by day according to that completed plan. Those who only see the parts cannot understand, and must not take the parts as being the whole. Sometimes when you look at the parts of a building, you cannot for the life of you understand what it is going to be. It is only as the completed thing is seen that you can understand the parts.

Now the Bible is just full of parts, but they are all the parts of something that God sees in completion. God is the Great Architect, He has the completed and perfect plan before Him before He begins any work. God's eternity is in every part. So we must realize that God has His full Mind behind everything that He does! *GOD'S FULL INTENTION GOVERNS EVERYTHING THAT HE DOES!* You must realize that God's Mind never grows - God Himself is incapable of development.

The temporary form of anything contains the eternal and full thought of God. You must realize that there are always *TWO MEANINGS* in anything that is in the Bible. There is the present meaning, that is, how that applies to the present situation; but there is also the future meaning. Everything in the Bible, while it has a present application, has a fuller meaning in the future. That is the first law of interpretation: it is the eternity of God.

2. The Comprehensiveness of Christ

The second law of interpretation is the comprehensiveness of Christ. Christ is the interpretation of the entire Bible, to know Christ is to understand the Bible. Men like Peter and Paul knew the Bible, but they did not understand it until they knew the Lord Jesus. We first know the Lord Jesus, and then we take Him back into the Bible, and He is the interpretation of the Bible. Therefore, we cannot really understand the

Bible until we know the Lord Jesus. That results in this - that the Bible is really a Person, and not a book. The Bible is a Living Person, and not a dead letter. Because this Person is inexhaustible, He makes the Bible inexhaustible.

Now that is a more important principle than perhaps you realize. It is possible to exhaust the Bible as a book. We have known great Bible teachers, who went through the Bible teaching it again and again, but at the end of their lives they were having difficulty in finding something fresh; and they were only repeating again and again things that they had said in past years. The reason for this is that they dealt with the Bible as a book. That will never happen if you know the Lord Jesus and see the Bible in Him, and Him in the Bible. I repeat that the Lord Jesus can never be exhausted. As the Holy Spirit reveals the Lord Jesus to us, the Bible is always more alive. So, we have our first two principles of interpretation: (1) The Eternity of God and (2) The Comprehensiveness of Christ.

3. The Interpreter of the Bible Is the Holy Spirit

Now we come to number three: the interpreter of the Bible is the Holy Spirit. I have said that Jesus is the interpretation of the Bible. I am saying now that the Holy Spirit is the *INTERPRETER* of the Bible. We are familiar with the words in the Letter to the Corinthians, but let us just look at them again now. The First letter to the Corinthians, chapter two and verse thirteen: "*Which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.*"

Now I do not know if you have marginal references in your Bible but the more correct translation of those words is this: "interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men." Let us read the whole passage again in that way:

Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men.

That scripture is a very important statement, and it definitely affirms the principle that we are now setting forth - the interpreter of the Bible is the Holy Spirit. First of all then, the Bible is the Holy Spirit's Book. The Bible is not firstly man's Book, it is not our Book, and we have not got the Book. We have got certain writings which are called Scripture, but in truth we do not possess the Book.

You remember the case in Acts of the Ethiopian eunuch. When Philip came near to his chariot, he heard the Ethiopian reading. He was reading the Book at Isaiah 53. Philip said to him, "Do you understand what you are reading?" and he said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" Here is a man who had the Book in a certain sense, but in a real and profitable sense he did not possess the Book. We can have the Book as a volume, and yet we may not possess the Book, because the Bible is the Holy Spirit's Book first. The mind of man and the Mind of the Spirit are two altogether different things!

Do you know that there are many, many Christians who do not recognize that! There are many Bible teachers who do not recognize that! And this is the cause of very much confusion, and the reason for very much spiritual smallness and weakness. I think this may lie at the bottom of most of the controversy. **THE BIBLE IS A CLOSED BOOK TO ALL BUT SPIRITUAL MEN.** This is the principle that the Lord Jesus set before Nicodemus: *You must be born from above before you can see what is above.*

Our measure of understanding of the Bible will be just in accordance with the measure of our spiritual life. This is why the Lord takes us through experiences in order to bring us to understanding. The measure

of our death to the natural mind will be the measure of our understanding of the things of the Spirit. Please remember that in these days which are before us - something has got to happen *IN US* before we understand the Scripture. We cannot understand the Word of God by just deciding that we are going to have a training course, that we are going to have some classes for Bible teaching. No, that is not the way in which we come to understanding of the Word of God. We shall only understand according to the measure of our spiritual life. That is the third principle of Biblical interpretation. Now we come to the fourth.

4. The Final Mention

The final mention of any particular matter in the Bible is usually a key to all its meaning. That is something that we must think about! We find certain things mentioned again and again in the Bible; but when we come to the final occasion where that thing is mentioned, we usually find the key to all that has been said about that matter before. If you take a particular matter, where it is mentioned for the last time, and then note the setting and the context and the relationship, you will get the full meaning of all that has been said about that before.

Now that is a statement that I have made, and you will need to think and to work on that, but I will help you by taking just one illustration. In the last chapter of the Bible, Revelation twenty-two and verse two, we have the last reference to "*the tree of life*." Now when we go right back to the beginning of the Bible, we have "*the tree of life*" mentioned, but we are told nothing about it - it is just referred to as something that exists. We have no explanation, we are not told what that tree is, or what it means; it is just referred to as "*the tree of life*." We have to go to the end of the Bible for the explanation, and when we come to this last chapter of the Bible, by the context and relationship, we have a very large explanation.

Let us look at the passage. Revelation 22: "*And He showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb,*" - note the context, '*the throne of God and of the Lamb*.' you have got to read the whole book of the Revelation to understand that! There is a tremendous amount in the early chapters of this book about "*the throne of God and of the Lamb*." And you need to understand what the throne of God is and what is the significance of the throne of the Lamb - in the midst of the throne is a Lamb!

Now in relation to "*the throne of God and of the Lamb*," there is "*a river of the water of life... in the midst of the street thereof. And on either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve manner (kinds) of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and His bondservants shall serve Him.*" There is "*the tree of life*." It bears immortal fruit. **THERE IS NO PLACE FOR DEATH HERE.** Its fruit is born every month: this is fruit immortal, or fruit without death. The leaves of this tree are for the HEALTH of the nations. I am sorry that in most versions the word "healing" is wrongly translated. I do not know what the word is in your translation, but the original is not for "the healing of the nations," but for "the health of the nations." You may ask, "What is the difference?" Well, one is **THE REMOVAL OF DISEASE** and the other is **THE PREVENTION OF DISEASE.**

In Revelation 22, we have come to the time when the spiritual diseases of the nations have been healed, but the health of the nation needs to be preserved. It is a state that is to be maintained. Thus, the leaves are not for healing, they are for preservation. And so it says: "*And there shall no longer be any curse.*"

You see, you have got the whole history of the Bible in those words. You have got all that came on the nations through Adam's sin. You have corruption and death - moral disease - the result of a curse. All that

is now cleared up, and "*the tree of life*" represents *VICTORY OF LIFE* over all that, *Life Triumphant*, and *Life Abundant*. Here the full meaning of "*the tree of life*" is revealed. And it is like that with all other matters. When you come to the last mention, you have the key to the whole subject. That is a principle of the interpretation of the Bible.

5. The Only Real Value Is The Spiritual

Now I come to the last principle for the present, number five: the only real value is the spiritual. We must remember this when we are reading and studying the Bible, and we must keep this in mind in these times in which we are together. We must not come here just with a thirst for more information or a craving for more knowledge. There are people who just want to get more and more knowledge and education. Now that constitutes a danger. That is exactly how Adam was caught. You see, Satan said: "If you take of this tree, you will know"; it was "the tree of knowledge." And there is always a danger in eating of that tree. It might just lead us into death and not into life. So, I repeat this principle of Biblical interpretation: the only real value is the spiritual. And spiritual value is just how something affects our life with God! I do wish that Adam had recognized that! When Satan tempted him to take of "the tree of knowledge," if only Adam had said, "How will this affect my life with God?" he, and we, should have been saved all the trouble.

So, let me say this again, spiritual value is just how something affects our life with God. Shall I put that in another way - spiritual value is just how much something increases the measure of Christ. If Christ is the interpretation of the Bible, then the spiritual knowledge of the Bible results in an increase of Christ. If our days together do not result in an increase of the measure of Christ, we have missed the Way. If we do not go away more Christ-like men and women, with a larger measure of the Lord Jesus, this training course has failed. So I beg of you to pray all the way through that this time together may mean *SPIRITUAL INCREASE* and not intellectual enlargement, but *SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE*.

Everything has got to be judged by how much it contributes to the Ultimate Purpose of God. We have to ask, "Where does this lead us? Is it leading us anywhere? What is it leading us to?" All spiritual knowledge leads to an increase of Christ; it contributes to the ultimate purpose of God. The question always is "How much of Life is there in it?" It is not a matter of interest; it is not a matter of fascination with Bible truth; it is not a matter of making us more important people, by the enlarging of our natural stature, but *it is just a matter of the measure of Christ. That is the real spiritual value.*