

Introduction

Forged From Reformation: How Dispensational Thought Advances the Reformed Legacy, edited by Christopher Cone and James Fazio, Southern California Seminary Press, 2017.

The History of Interpretation:

The importance of understanding history:

1. To learn from mistakes of others:
2. To have a more balanced view of the Church fathers

- Historically: Two Schools of Interpretation:

- The Literal School:

- The Allegorical School:

Some approaches to Interpretation of the Scriptures throughout history:

(1) Ezra, the Scribe (ca. 445 B.C.)

- Nehemiah 8:1-8

(2) Jewish interpretation during the Inter-Testamental Period (400B.C.—
A.D.10)

1. Letterism

2. The School of Rabbi Hillel (70 B.C.—A.D. 10(?))

- Two examples:

- In Genesis 15:2

- Psalm 68:20

- A Critique of Letterism

(3) The rise of the allegorical method (Before Christ)

- An Important Conclusion:

- Q. How did allegorizing start?

- Examples of some accounts thought too embarrassing to include:

- Exodus 15:3 "The Lord is a warrior"
- Exodus 32:14 "The Lord changed His mind (repented) of the evil He said He would do to His people."
- Lot's incest with his daughters (Genesis 19)
- Noah's drunkenness (Genesis 9:20-23)

- Early Jewish allegorizing:
 - Philo of Alexandria (ca. 20 B.C.—ca. A.D. 54)
 - A statement that was deemed to be “unworthy of God”:
 - Genesis 3:8, “They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.”
 - A seeming contradiction: Cain had a wife —
 - An example of Philo’s allegorizing of Scripture:
 - Genesis 2:10-14 — The four rivers that flowed out of the Garden of Eden:
- Jesus’ interpretation of the Old Testament:
- The Apostles’ use of the Old Testament:

- The Early Church Fathers (A.D. 100—500)

"From these early church fathers it is obvious that while they may have started out well, they were soon influenced by allegorizing" (Roy Zuck)

1. The Alexandrian School (Allegorists)

- The Epistle of Barnabas

- Pantaenus (ca. 180) - A teacher in the school at Alexandria - the first to formally adopt the allegorical method of interpretation.

- Clement of Alexandria (150-215) -
 - Example: Leviticus 11:7, 13-19. The Mosaic Law prohibitions against eating swine, hawks, eagles and ravens represent respectively unclean lust for food, injustice, robbery and greed

 - Example: Matthew 14:13-21. The two fish Jesus used to feed the five thousand represent Greek philosophy.

- Origen (ca.185-254) He believed that Scripture is one vast allegory in which every detail is symbolic. He so ignored the literal, normal meanings of Scripture that his allegorizing became unusually excessive. As one writer stated, it was 'fantasy unlimited'!"
 - Example:
 - Noah:

 - The Ark:

 - Example: The two donkeys used in Christ's triumphal entry:

 - Example: Rebekah's drawing water at the well for Abraham's servant:

 - The problem with this kind of hermeneutic:

Next Time: The history of Bible interpretation: From the fourth century to the present day.