



Hermeneutics: Principles & Conclusions: Introduction: the Principle of Evil Is Founded on Spiritual Death & Total Depravity & Expressed by the Sinful Nature

XII. Principles & Conclusions

Introduction:

1. Our study was initiated by Paul's reference in Romans 7:21 to his discovery that the "principle of evil is present in me."
2. The principle Paul discovered involves the problem of spiritual death which results in total depravity, the status quo that characterizes all humanity prior to salvation.
3. Spiritual death is a dichotomous separation from God in time. Total depravity is total helplessness to establish a relationship with Him on the basis of any human function.
4. These circumstances were brought about by the fall of Adam and the creation of a sinful nature that is passed down genetically through procreation.
5. The aftereffects of total depravity remain after salvation since the sinful nature still retains the characteristics of the spiritually dead person prior to salvation.
6. The sinful nature retains in the body the trends toward self-righteous legalism and self-indulgent antinomianism; the propensity toward personal sins and the predilection to produce human good.
7. From all these comes the principle of evil to which the believer without doctrine will revert, even though he may have a desire to do otherwise.
8. Although Paul's desire to perform divine good is sincere, his concept of divine good is flawed by legalistic wheel-tracks.
9. It is because of ignorance of God's plan, policy, and purpose that men go astray and submit to the dictatorship of the first husband.
10. When this occurs all submission to biblical guidance is replaced by self-righteous assumptions of what one thinks the Bible ought to mean and imposing these ideas upon the text—through allegory if necessary.
11. This explains why certain churches spend more time defending their denomination's theological statement rather than examining the Scripture to determine its message.
12. The obligation of the theologian is to approach the Word of God as a student without portfolio, to allow the Scripture to speak to him, not the other way around.
13. To do differently results in bad hermeneutics and bad hermeneutics is the result of the principle of evil ever active in the sinful nature of each of us.
14. Thus the text of the Word of God places restraint upon the interpreter. He is bound by the obligation to determine the meaning of the author and once discovered to not be shy about instructing his flock about its message.



15. In our study of hermeneutics with placed emphasis on the two most popular methods utilized in the Church Age: (1) the literal-grammatical-historical which was practiced at Antioch and (2) the literal-moral-allegorical developed at Alexandria.
16. Our study did not stress the mechanics of hermeneutics but rather addressed the validity of Antioch's system as opposed to that of Alexandria and the ramifications of the ascendancy of the latter in the mid fifth century.
17. In doing so we were able to establish that a poor system of hermeneutics results in the principle of evil emerging in the thinking of the theologian and its effect upon the interpretations he develops.
18. A review of some of the major principles addressed in our study will serve as a conclusion to this series.