

**Allegory Introduced by Jews to Christian Theologians at Alexandria; Allegory Is Obscure, Literalism Is Lucid; What We Know: Rom7:18; 1 Thess 4:1b-5; 5:1-5**

3. *Christian Allegorism.* The allegorical system that arose among the pagan Greeks, copied by the Alexandrian Jews, was next adopted by the Christian church and largely dominated exegesis until the Reformation, with such notable exception as the Syrian school of Antioch. (p. 28)

The early Christian fathers had as their Bible the Old Testament in Greek translation [Septuagint]. One of the most basic convictions of the early church was that the Old Testament was a Christian document ... and the allegorical method was the primary means of *making* the Old Testament a Christian document. (pp. 28-29)

The difficulties of the method are many. (i) There was a lack of a genuine historical sense in exegesis. The historical connections of a passage of Scripture were usually completely ignored. (ii) Their method of citing the Old Testament revealed that they had a very infantile understanding of the progress of revelation. They had the basic understanding that a great shift had taken place from the Old to the New Testament. (iii) They considered the Old and the New Testaments filled with parables, enigmas, and riddles. The allegorical method alone sufficed to bring out the meaning of these (literary devices). (iv) They confused the allegorical with the typical, and thus blurred the distinction between the legitimate and the improper interpretation of the Old Testament. (v) They believed that Greek philosophy was in the Old Testament and it was the allegorical method which discovered it. (vi) In that the method is highly arbitrary, it eventually fostered dogmatic interpretation of the Scripture. (pp. 29-30)

(Kemper) Fullerton's judgment against the allegorical method at this point is very sharp:

Instead of adopting a scientific principle of exegesis they introduce Church authority under the guise of Tradition as the norm of interpretation. The movement of thought which we have been following now becomes associated with the great dogmatic consolidations of the second and third centuries that led directly to ecclesiastical absolutism. [*Prophecy and Authority*, p. 81.] (p. 30)

The curse of the allegorical method is that it obscures the true meaning of the Word of God and had it not kept the Gospel truth central it would have become cultic and heretical. In fact, this is exactly what happened when the Gnostics allegorized the New Testament. The Bible treated allegorically becomes putty in the hand of the exegete. Different doctrinal systems could emerge within the framework of allegorical hermeneutics and no way would exist to determine which were the true. This was precisely one of the problems in refuting the Gnostics. The orthodox wished to allegorize the Old Testament, but not the New. The Gnostics accused them of inconsistency. The only method of breaking an exegetical stalemate created by the use of the allegorical method is to return to the sober, proper and literal interpretation of the Scriptures. The allegorical method puts a premium on the subjective and the doleful result is the obscuration of the Word of God. To cite Fullerton again: (p. 30-31)

*When the historical sense of a passage is once abandoned there is wanting any sound regulative principle to govern exegesis. ... The mystical [allegorical] method of exegesis, is an unscientific and arbitrary method, reduces the Bible to obscure enigmas, undermines the authority of all interpretation, and therefore, when taken by itself, failed to meet the apologetic necessities of the time. [Prophecy and Authority, p. 75.] (p. 31)*

35. Admittedly, this extended excerpt from a textbook on hermeneutics is mostly over the heads of young adolescents, but this should not be so for those in high school. The notes are before you and you own. You also should have a backlog of doctrine so that these things not only could become understandable if not already, and also provide you with information that clarifies the “whys” of the method and system used here to teach the Bible.

36. For those younger students that have not understood these readings, your parents should take the time to the details on your level of understanding. But a few key things to remember are these: (1) there is no consistent source of truth available to the human race beyond the Bible, (2) it is the only source that claims to be a direct revelation from God the Holy Spirit, (3) all other systems depend on either human viewpoint or personal contact with non-human sources, such as “imaginary cultic gods,” “angels,” “wise men,” or “golden plates,” and (4) when studied from its original languages and when accepted at face value, there is only one way to interpret the Bible.
37. Finally, the thing to remember is that the Bible speaks to us, we do not speak to it. To make sure we have a clear understanding of its message requires that pastors teach boring Bible classes.
38. However, the more you learn about the Bible the less boring it gets, the more powerful becomes your ability to think, and the more confident you become about its truthfulness.
39. Once you are convinced that the Bible’s message is true then here are a few of the things you will come to *know* as undeniable *truth*:

**Romans 7:18** - I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh [ the sinful nature ]; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.

**v. 19** - For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want [ temptations from the sinful nature trump biblical guidance ].

**1 Thessalonians 4:1b** - ... as you have received from us instruction of how you ought to walk [ lifestyle of the Spirit-filled believer ] and please God, that you excel in blessings even more [ believers who walk in the light do so in happiness and tranquility of soul ].

**v. 2** - You know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus [ the Thessalonians knew the doctrine but were not applying it ].

**v. 3** - For this is the will of God, your sanctification [ to be set apart for special service to do the will of God including the responsibility of protecting the right man-right woman relationship ]; that is, that you abstain [ ἀπέχω, *apechō*: to hold back oneself; to refrain; to abstain ] from sexual immorality;

**v. 4** - that each of you believers know how to possess his own vessel [ σκεῦος, *skeuos*: a vessel; particularly a hollow vessel for containing things; figuratively, a wife as the vessel of her husband ] in sanctification and honor [ so that the marriage will honorably represent the relationship between Christ and His Church: the Lord as Groom and the Church as His Bride, or right woman ],

**v. 5** - not in lustful passion [ sexual lust ], like the Gentiles [ those involved in sexual activities associated with idolatry ] who do not know God.

**1 Thessalonians 5:1** - Now as to the times [ the various dispensations ] and the seasons [ specific dispensations, i.e., the Church Age ], you have no need of anything to be written to you.

**v. 2** - For you yourselves already know full well that the day of the Lord [ rapture of the church ] will come just like a thief in the night [ suddenly and without warning ].

**v. 3 -** While they [ unbelievers living in delusion ] are saying, "Peace [ through fragile man-made treaties and diplomatic agreements ] and safety [ the delusion that these things are the reliable sources of safety ]!" then sudden destruction [ the rapture sets the stage for the events of the Tribulation that will bring about the most devastating historical events in all of human history ] shall come upon them, as the labor pains [ once the pains start they do not stop until delivery, which in this case is the option for salvation ] upon a woman, and they shall not escape [ they must enter the Tribulation ].

**v. 4 -** But you, fellow believers, are not in darkness [ ignorance of these things, or rejection of these things because of life in the cosmic systems ] that the day [ of the rapture and subsequent world events ] would overtake you like a thief [ the Church Age is the dispensation of light while the Tribulation is the dispensation of darkness; believers will be removed from the temporal light of the Church Age into the eternal light of heaven, and delivered from the temporal darkness of the Tribulation ];

**v. 5 -** for you are all children of the light [ the Church Age and the divine power system ] and children of the day [ rapture qualified ]. We are not of the night [ the dispensation of the Tribulation ] nor of darkness [ the cosmic systems ].