

Jean L. Noel

Professor: Louis A. Decaro Jr.

NT615: Biblical Exegesis

February 4, 2023

5-3-1 on Fee & Stuart ch.3-4

QUESTIONS

1. Why do we need to understand the natures of the Epistles?
2. What is the distinction Adolf Deismann made between letters and epistles?
3. How do we use Historical context to interpret Epistles and letters in the Bible?
4. What is the issue for Christian who are committed to scriptures without the right context or historical facts?
5. What is the basic rule in interpreting a scripture?

Answers

1. First, we must understand that the New Testament Epistles are not always easy to understand. Thus, because of their importance to the Christian faith we need to understand them.

2. The former, the “real letters,” as he called them, were nonliterary, that is, they were not written for the public and posterity but were intended only for the person or persons to whom they were addressed. In contrast to the letter, the epistle was an artistic literary form or a species of literature that was intended for the public.

3. The first thing one must try to do with any of the Epistles is to form a tentative but informed reconstruction of the situation to which the author is speaking. What was going on in Corinth that caused Paul to write 1 Corinthians? How does he come to learn of their situation? What kind of relationship and former contacts has he had with them? What attitudes do they and he reflect in this letter?

4. The big issue among Christians committed to Scripture as God’s word has to do with the problems of cultural relativity — what is cultural and therefore belongs to the first century alone and what transcends culture and is thus a word for all seasons.

5. The basic rule is a text cannot mean what it never could have meant to its author or readers. This is why exegesis must always come first.

TERMS

Occasional Documents: Arising out of and intended for a specific occasion or recipients.

Task theology: Theology being written for or brought to bear on the task at hand.

Hermeneutic: The theory and methodology of interpretation of biblical texts.

SUMMARY

The introductory chapter 3-4 introduces the various biblical ways of interpreting the scriptures and why it's essential to learn to think in terms of contextuality when it comes to Bible scriptures. One reason is that the Epistles is the most familiar portion of the Bible for most people, and second, for many readers, they appear to be generally easy to interpret. The ease of interpreting Epistles can be deceptive.