

Justin White

QUESTIONS

1. What is a common misconception with the Epistles?
2. What is one item that all of the Epistles have in common?
3. How do the authors refer to the implied theology that came out of the occasional nature of the Epistles?
4. What is the basic rule as it pertains to hermeneutics?
5. What is the second rule of hermeneutics?

ANSWERS

1. The misconception with the Epistles is that they are easy to interpret. Epistles are not as easy to interpret as is often thought.
2. What all of the Epistles have in common are the is of Occasional Documents.
3. The authors refer to this implied theology as “task theology”. This was the theology being written for or brought to bear on the task at hand.
4. The basic rule is that a text cannot mean what it never could have meant to its author or its readers.
5. Whenever we share comparable particulars with the first-century hearers, God’s word to us is the same as his word to them.

TERMS

Letters- Nonliterary; not written for the public and posterity but were intended only for the person or persons to whom they were addressed

Epistles- An artistic literary form or a species of literature that was intended for the public.

Occasional Documents- Arising out of and intended for a specific occasion.

SUMMARY

It’s important to know the Epistles were not theological treatise, but rather letters that were addressing specific needs within the church. In order to interpret these passages correctly, one has to reconstruct the historical situation that was taking place at that time. In understanding these passages in their historical in literary contexts, we must the ask “what do these texts mean to us?” The texts can never mean to us what they have never meant to the original hearers.