



Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present

Gerald Bray

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Voted one of *Christianity Today's* 1997 Books of the Year! Never before has there been so much scholarly effort devoted to the study of the Bible. And yet, ironically, the church is in perilous danger of forgetting its rich inheritance of biblical interpretation. With this textbook, Gerald Bray sounds the call to draw biblical interpretation back to the heart of the church. Evangelical in perspective but ecumenical in both its historical breadth and its vision of the future, Bray's work is a comprehensive guide to biblical interpretation, past and present. Bray begins by introducing basic concepts in biblical interpretation that have remained constant through the ages: divine revelation, the nature of the canon, the relation of the biblical text to the life of Christian churches, and the tensions inherent in the act of biblical interpretation. He follows this introduction with three main sections, each covering an epoch of development within the history of biblical interpretation. The first surveys the period from the ancient church to the beginnings of modern historical-critical interpretation in the Renaissance and Reformation. The second engages the rise of modern historical-critical interpretation from the late seventeenth century through the twentieth century. The third investigates current trends in biblical interpretation that seek to offer alternatives to the dominant school of historical criticism. Each section is divided into chapters focusing on periods or schools of interpretation. And, as a further aid to readers, each chapter is divided into standard subsections:

- an introduction to the period or school of interpretation
- a brief who's who of major interpreters and their works
- an introduction to key critical, doctrinal or hermeneutical issues
- discussion and illustration of principal interpretive methods
- an examination of an particular book or passage that played a crucial role in biblical interpretation for the period or school under discussion

Bray's organizational scheme allows readers to quickly grasp the issues, methods and interpreters of each period or school and to observe how classic issues and pivotal questions have shaped the church's use of the Bible in various historical contexts. Seminarians, pastors, teachers and lay leaders will welcome *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present* as an instructive guide to both the high points and the impasses of biblical interpretation. Here is history with a clear message, written out of the conviction that biblical interpretation and Christian doctrine go hand in hand.

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