

Magee Chapter 7 Modern Scholarship and the Bible

1. Be able to articulate the difference between the scientific and traditional approaches to scripture.
2. Be able to name and discuss several achievements of the scientific approach to scripture:
 1. The Sources of the Pentateuch
 2. The authorship of Isaiah
 3. The authentication of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Paleography, archeology, ink analysis, scroll content: allusions, style, quotation
3. What is the significance of Albert Schweitzer's *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*?
4. What is the Synoptic Problem and what is the standard solution?
5. What is demythologizing. (Rudolf Bultmann)
6. What is *Formgeschichte* (Tradition History)?
7. Be able to define Kerygma.
8. What is existentialism (Hint: Human beings as deciders.)
9. What is The New Hermeneutic (Hermeneutic means theory of interpretation)?
 - A. The Old Hermeneutic – What's the content of a text and how did the author understand it?
 - B. The New Hermeneutic – What is the meaning of a text for today? How can a text have authority in a world to which its author didn't intend it to speak?
10. The New Quest for the Historical Jesus – Schweitzer saw Jesus as an apocalyptic prophet which leads to the New Quest's question: What of the Gospels is Jesus speaking and what is the early church?
11. Be able to discuss the question: Does an uninterpreted Bible exist? Be prepared to relate questions of translation, cultural context and textual variation to your answer.
12. Be able to discuss the elements of Western history which changed Biblical interpretation from a matter for a cultural elite to a universal possibility. Remember to consider the invention of printing, the rise of the physical sciences, the rediscovery of the Graeco-Roman (classical) past.

13. Understand the premise of modern Biblical criticism: the examination of the Bible using the same tools and methods as are used in the examination of other ancient documents.
14. Understand the importance of being able to identify what questions a document is asking before you start extracting answers from it. If you get answers from a document are you asking it its questions or yours?
15. Be able to say something about Spinoza and Richard Simon as early scientific interpreters of scripture.
16. What does it mean to be able to distinguish the sources of a Biblical document?
- 17.

Magee Chapter 9

The Literature and Faith of the New Testament

1. Understand the *Life of Jesus* and distinct from the *Career of Jesus*.
2. Be able to describe the major divisions of Judaism at the time of Jesus.
 - A. The Zealots
 - B. The Sadducees
 - C. The Pharisees
 - D. The Essenes: The Dead Sea Scrolls
 - E. The Am ha' aretz
3. Know Something of the Different Elements out of Which the Gospels Structure the Story of Jesus
 - A. Birth narratives: The Distinction between faith literature and scientific literature
 - B. "Hidden Years": Synagogue School and Rabbinic Commentary
 - C. Baptism of Jesus by John in the Jordan
 - D. Temptation in the Wilderness (Rejection of traditional religious expectations)
(Note the connection between the temptations and ***The Grand Inquisitor***)
 - E. The Galilean Ministry (Centrality of the idea of the Kingdom of God and the Pattern of Mission/Retreat)
 - F. Declaration of Peter that Jesus is the Christ: (Note that the Gospel according to John has a strikingly different pattern in which Jesus knows and claims his identity as Christ from the beginning of his ministry.)
 - G. Journey to Jerusalem and his Entrance into it
 - H. Institution (Founding) of the Eucharist or Lord's Supper (Holy Communion)

- I. Passion Narrative (the story of Jesus's trial and execution)
- J. Resurrection narratives
- K. The Holy Spirit present in the church

4. The Teachings of Jesus

- A. Epigrammatic, not expository, and consisting of stories, parables, symbolic acts
- B. The universal availability of God's love
- C. The Coming of the Kingdom of God as the center of the teaching of Jesus
 - 1. It erases the distinction between earth and heaven
 - 2. Ambivalence as to the temporal nature of the Kingdom: both present and future.
- D. Life takes precedence over religious institutions
- E. Dialogue with God the foundation of an ethical life rather than obedience to a code.
- F. The distinction between sonship and messiahship.
- G. Ambiguity of our records concerning Jesus's teachings about himself.

5. The Church's Teachings about Jesus

- A. The New Testament itself contains several different approaches to understanding who Jesus is. Know something about the differences.
- B. The Distinction between theology and faith.
- C. The distinction between the faith of Jesus and faith in Jesus
- D. The Church as tolerant of a variety of approaches to understanding Jesus.

Magee Chapter 10

The Authority and Significance of the Bible

1. Know Magee's perspective on what the Bible isn't.
 - A. Not a science textbook
 - B. Not a book of forecasts (Know the idea of a prophet as an interpreter of God, not as a foreteller of the future.) Also know the meaning of the word "occultism."
 - C. Not a textbook of systematic theology
 - Know something about the problem of multiform interpretation and the Roman Catholic solution: The Church as Divinely appointed interpreter or

the scriptures.

2. The Bible as Revelation

- A. The meaning of Revelation: The Unveiling of the Ultimate
- B. Revelation as possessing an authority which changes the person to whom it comes. (Additional information alone does not usually change a life at a basic level.)
- C. “Without response there is no revelation” The Bible as a foundation for dialogue.
- D. Be able to say something (intelligent) about the idea of “Heilsgeschichte.”
Hint: The difference between objective history and existential history.
- E. The Bible as asking for a person’s total life orientation – the Bible is authoritative for people who find themselves within the Biblical story.

3. The Life World of the Bible

- A. Understand something of the differing concepts of Life World/Thing World
- B. The importance of dialogue to a Life World understanding.
- C. Greek thought as grounded in knowledge of principle rather than in the experience of dialogue. Hebrew/biblical thought grounded in the experience of dialogue as the primary mode of knowing the real.

4. Non-Biblical and Biblical Views Contrasted

- A. History – Bible View: inherently purposeful
Non-Biblical View: Under the control of Impersonal forces or fate
- B. Human Existence – Non-Biblical View: Human life as part of the natural world and to be understood in terms of abstract explanatory principles

Biblical View – Human life emerges from dialogue. It is a unique experience.
- C. Nature – Biblical: There is no autonomous realm of the natural, its regularity is an expression of God’s trustworthiness, not the operation of law

Non-Biblical: Nature is an autonomous realm operating according to regular principles which are impersonal, predictable and general rather than specific or personal.
- D. Uniqueness – In Non-Biblical western thought uniqueness tends to be a meaningless category.

Biblical : Uniqueness is the order of the day. People are unique, events are unique, even elements of the inanimate world, trees, springs,

mountains, are understood more in terms of their uniqueness than of their commonality.

E. Miracle: In modern thought, no place for miracle except as a superstition or as a mistake. In understanding Biblical miracle one must operate in a personal system in which everything is caused by will and not by law. The ancient world had not context of natural law in order to be able to gage miracle as an exception to it.