

## Emmaus Chapter 10 – Mike Baran

### Grasping God's Word – Chapter 10

#### Assignment 10-1

*Reader Response:* Meaning is determined by the reader or by a culture or community of readers.

*Authorial Intent:* Meaning is determined by the intention of the author.

#### Assignment 10-2

The issue of *communication* lies at the heart of any decision about how to interpret a text. If the intention of the text is understood to be a means of communicating information to the reader then the meaning contained in the text should be interpreted in exactly the same way as the *author intended*. In such circumstances we should not be looking to create our own meaning (to deconstruct the text) but rather we should be looking to discover the meaning that the author wrote into the text. Consequently, when reading or studying the Bible, we should be looking for the meaning and instruction that God intended for us to understand and apply in our lives if we want to have a faithful and a covenant relationship with our creator. We should not interpret scripture in a way that suits our personal view of life such that it reflects a personal worldview or the worldview of the society in which we live but we should rather adhere to a biblical worldview; the worldview of God.

#### Assignment 10-3

A reader may intentionally change an author's intended meaning when the text in question loses its status, for whatever reason, as a communications medium. Such a change can be permissible and appropriate especially when there are no negative consequences associated with such a change.

Changed interpretation may also be seen to be applicable when there is a clear underlying meaning of a word in the text. For example, Paul says in Romans 2:29: "He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal. *His praise* is not from men but from God."

Here in Romans 2:29 we can understand the expression "His praise" to mean "His Jewishness" since the name "Judah" (Y<sup>e</sup>hūḏāh) in Hebrew means "celebrated" or "praised" and so a Jew is someone who is a Judean; someone descended from the tribe of Judah. In this scripture, though, Jewishness is not necessarily inherited just from being a descendant of the tribe of Judah but is granted or recognized by God towards faithful gentile Christians. This is also suggested in Romans 11 where righteous Gentiles are said to be grafted into the natural olive tree that is Israel, which then makes such Gentiles to be seen to be Israelites (Jews) in the same way as natural Israelites (Jews) and together they are then said to be the "Israel of God" (Gal 6:15-16); their Jewishness is from God.

Changed interpretation may also be applicable when, what may appear to be an obvious statement, has in fact, a different meaning to what may appear to be the case. This may be because a word has multiple possible meanings or when an expression needs to be interpreted. For example, in Galatians 2:19 we have Paul saying: "For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God."

This is a rather unusual expression if we understand "the law" to be the commandments of God, since it is somewhat illogical to be able to use the commandments to set aside the

commandments. The fact that in the Greek text the word “law” is anarthrous (without the article) means that we should read the text to be saying that through or by means of “a law I died to a law.” This then suggests that the word “law” in this text does not necessarily refer to the commandments of God as such, or even to the exact same law in both instances. Rather, what this text is telling us is that by means of the law of faith (a particular law – see Romans 3:27) Paul was able to die to the law of sin and death (a different law – see Romans 8:1-2). In other words, our faith in God and in what Jesus has done on our behalf will save us – will redeem us – from the second death, which is otherwise the natural consequence of our sinful lives (“the soul who sins shall die” – Ezekiel 18:20).

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