



Contemporary Biblical Interpretation for Preaching

Ronald J. Allen

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The pressures of today's church life with its added demands on the minister's time often leave few hours for sermon preparation or for searching deeply into a biblical text. To overcome this obstacle, Allen suggests a disciplined, informed approach that utilizes the insights of critical exegesis but that is simple enough to be practiced weekly. Each chapter offers a clear, simplified explanation of one form of biblical interpretation. Allen discusses the pertinence of the discipline to preaching, formulates key questions from its viewpoint, illustrates with a case study how the discipline may inform preaching, and provides suggestions for further reading. His methods open the door to fresh biblical interpretations that will speak forcefully to the vital concerns of the congregation.

Topics covered include:

• Historical background: how to get the feel of the world in which the text came to life and to which it speaks.

- Word studies: how to infuse flesh-and-blood meaning into ancient biblical texts.
- Redaction criticism: ways in which the meaning of an individual text can shed light on the whole work.
- Structuralism: how this discipline can enlarge understanding as it moves both preacher and congregation from one thought to another.
- Sociological exegesis: its significance in relating the sermon to different social perspectives.
- Liberation theology: how it can help preachers to focus on previously unnoticed dimensions of the biblical text.
- Interpreting a biblical text as a work of art.
- Canonical criticism: its contemporary significance.
- Hermeneutics: how to make the transition from ancient to contemporary meaning.

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