

God Sense: Reading the Bible for Preaching

Paul Scott Wilson



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Throughout the modern period, history has been the dominant lens through which preachers have viewed the biblical text. The historical-critical method--with its emphasis on the context of a scriptural text's origins--has been the principal, or sole, tool with which preachers have approached the question of the text's meaning. Preachers have been in danger of losing the Bible as revelation and with that losing the rich varieties of God-centered meanings that our ancient forebears understood were the purpose of Scripture. They devised multiple 'lenses' through which the preacher was enabled to study Scripture, seeking to find there the Spirit's word to the congregation.

Paul Wilson draws on the practice of patristic and medieval exegesis to inform the contemporary preacher's encounter with Scripture. He begins by examining what earlier exegetes meant by the 'literal' meaning, which, at its core, centered on the theological message that the text was intended to convey about the gospel. He then demonstrates how a critical and informed understanding of the 'spiritual' meanings of the text, rather than importing meaning into the text as is often claimed, opens new possibilities for a faithful proclamation of the biblical witness.

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