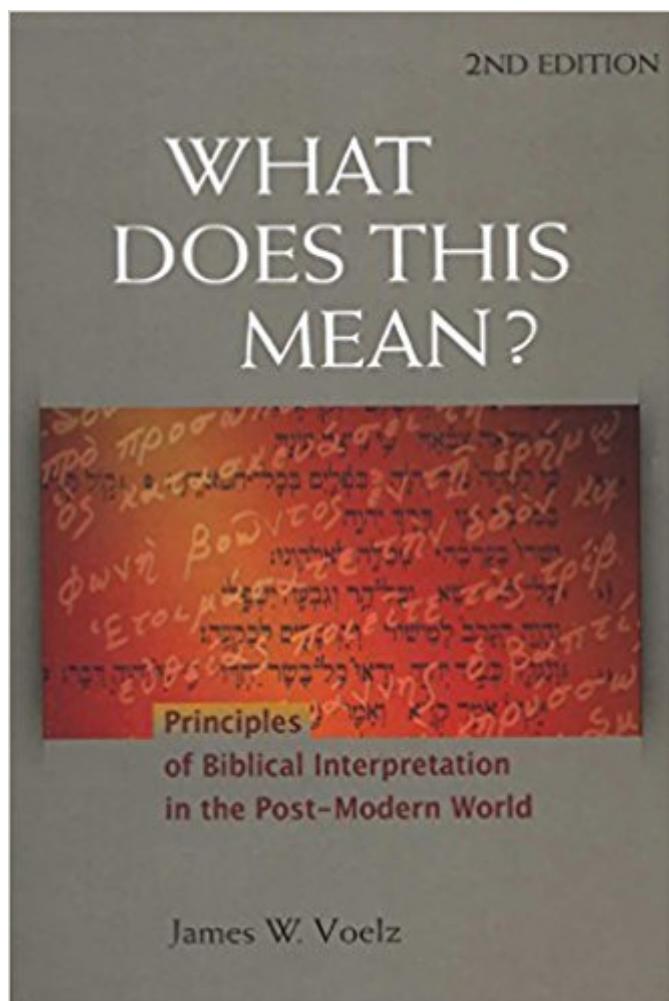


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What Does This Mean (Concordia Scholarship Today)



Synopsis

In its second revised edition, this book is a basic hermeneutics textbook for traditional Christians, especially those of the Lutheran tradition. It discusses textual criticism, semantics, pragmatics, and application of biblical texts to postmodern contexts. It considers areas related to language, thought and reality, and more.

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Customer Reviews

For those trying to understand the Scriptures as we now have them, Voelz's work is valuable, though not for the casual reader. This book is well organized and clearly written. Even those who do not read Greek and Hebrew can glean a great deal from this book. A very useful book for those who wonder "who decided which manuscripts to include in the accepted text for the Bible and why were other versions left out?"

A great work. I thoroughly enjoyed it. One caution, you should not make any conclusions till you

reach the end. You could get the wrong idea if you only read part of the book and don't finish it. There's also a free set of lectures by Voelz on iTunes U called Biblical Hermeneutics where he teaches through this text. I recommend going through both the book and the lectures. Voelz is brilliant and entertaining.

Excellent coverage of what hermeneutics of the Bible entails in Post Modernist societies. It is helpful to know the grammar and semantics of several languages, including Greek and Hebrew for this book.

"What Does This Mean" is a textbook for the author's course in Biblical hermeneutics at Concordia Seminary. It covers a range of topics including textual criticism, basic theory of semantics and communications, different genres, the origin of scripture and the controls on interpretation provided by a confessional community. Abundant examples using controversial Bible passages accompany the theory demonstrating the care that sound interpretation requires. Using difficult passages however sells short the broad agreement that the historic church has had on essential doctrines. The book is written from the standpoint of a high view of scripture consistent with the stance of the historical Lutheran church but with heavy borrowings from 20th century linguistic theory and a splash of postmodernist distrust of claims to objectivity. This mix provides useful insights that can alert the interpreter to potential pitfalls and aids in detecting faulty interpretations of others. But theories and principles are presented without discussion of alternative theories and without an obvious unifying theology or theory of knowledge. The overall effect is disjoint with loose ends and indeterminate outcomes, as if the book is a compilation of lecture notes rather than a completed work. A puzzling aspect of the book is the author's insistence that it uses a postmodern perspective. The issue of authorship of scripture is handled from the traditional standpoint that the words are fully divine and human at the same time. Postmodern views of the subjectivity of the author or his disappearance into the community that creates and transmit texts are downplayed. With regard to the reader there is postmodern-like solution to subjectivity in the merger of the reader's world with the world of the intended audience. Community and in particular the historic ecumenical and Lutheran confessions are brought into play as controls on interpretation but with an emphasis on apostolic foundations of both scripture and confessions. At best this appears to be a rather lopsided sort of postmodernism. On the other hand, the apparently ad hoc selection of models and methods, lack of confident outcomes in interpretation and emphasis on community might be a very postmodern way of saying that contemporary Christians should acknowledge the limited perspective

of their community, but sit back and enjoy the flight in any case.

Well pleased with all book shipments

Voelz's book is very good, as far as its scholarship goes. It is an excellent overview of linguistic theories, etc., that causes us to ask the right questions when we approach the Bible for serious (and I mean serious!) study. Yet, its layout is rather difficult to follow. It is in outline form, with many many addendums throughout. This would be an excellent tool for those of you who are linguistically inclined. It is full of great examples from Scripture, showing how each point applies. I would have given it a 9 rating, but the layout--its difficult to follow an outline over 360 pgs--dropped it to an 8.

This book is a great resource to use as Seminary students (I am one) explore hermeneutical principles and gain a greater understanding of what Scripture (in the Greek and Hebrew) said (as in what it meant when the author wrote it). While it is not an easy read, I think it has the same value as Greek being difficult in that it forces a slow, careful, and complete reading that results in the context soaking into the skull (make sure you read the chapter on non-literal language as this sounds painful or discomforting to you).

This book was very difficult to follow. The primary audience of this book is seminary students who are already fluent in greek, hebrew and latin. Dr. Voelz even takes simple things and explains them with examples that are difficult to follow. There are many good books in the Concordia Scholership Series for the layman, but this is not one of them. I gave up after a few chapters.

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