

D. The Middle Ages

A fundamental work in this area is the book by Beryl Smalley mentioned above. This period is so vast, and the developments so diverse, that it is hazardous to attempt any generalizations, but

1. The triumph of allegory

While there is some continuing influence of Antiochean exegetical method, particularly among the Victorines (Hugo, Victor, and Andrew), the prevailing approach is that of Alexandrian allegorism. Scripture might be interpreted to have four or even as many as seven senses. R.M. Grant (A Short History of The Interpretation of the Bible [New York: Macmillan, rev. ed., 1963], p. 119) cites a verse from the sixteenth century which explains the fourfold sense:

	<u>Explanation</u>	<u>Ex: Jerusalem</u>
"The letter shows us what God and our fathers did;	Literal	The city
The allegory shows us where our faith is hid;	Spiritual/Doctrinal	The church
The moral meaning gives us rules of daily life;	Application	Human The soul
The anagogy shows us where we end our strife."	Eschatology	Heaven

2. The decline of linguistic abilities

In the third century AD the language of theology for Western Christianity switched from Greek to Latin. In the following centuries, Western churchmen became more and more dependent on the Latin versions of the Bible (Old Latin and then Jerome's Vulgate). Hebrew studies did not entirely disappear, but certainly they were in decline. Greek study was even more impoverished.

3. The divorce of exegesis and theology

The old Patristic approach to theology was largely exegetical: the Fathers believed that the object of theology was to explicate the meaning of Scripture. During the Middle Ages, however, theology became increasingly enamored with philosophy (first Platonic philosophy, but subsequently Aristotelean philosophy). By consequence the exposition of Scripture went one way and theology the other. This can be seen, for example, in the great synthesis of Thomas Aquinas, the Summa Theologica.

E. The Renaissance and Reformation

These two movements arose together in the late medieval period. The Renaissance was the "rebirth" of knowledge, which among other things, involved a return to the classical texts and to the ancient languages of those texts. This included a renewed interest in Scripture and the biblical languages. Various humanistic scholars provided linguistic helps which became the tools of the Reformers. The greatest of all the northern Renaissance scholars was