

- (2) Scriptural spiritualization is sometimes a movement of thought from the external or physical to the spiritual.
- (3) Scriptural spiritualization is frequently a movement of thought from a feature of one dispensation to a corresponding feature of another dispensation, employing appropriate changes on concept and terminology.

An example of scriptural spiritualization is found in I Corinthians 10:1-4. Paul writes: "For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized unto Moses by the cloud and by the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the name spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ."

The flow of thought in this passage appears to move from (1) the Israelites' eating of physical food (manna) and drinking of physical drink (water), to (2) their eating of spiritual food (the manner sent down from heaven by God) and drinking of spiritual drink (the water miraculously brought forth from the rock by God through Moses), to (3) their drinking from the spiritual Rock that was to come, Christ.

This must mean that the Israelites all participated and shared in the physical blessings of the spiritual (i.e., supernaturally provided) manna and water; and that these spiritual blessings came to them through or from Christ (and His gracious atonement, through which all blessings come to fallen man).

Notice! The question is not whether they understood that certain benefits and blessings came to them through Christ. The question is rather whether these benefits and blessings actually came to them through Him. And the answer is emphatically yes! We are told that they all drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ!

- b. Unscriptural spiritualization refers to the unwarranted finding of this figure of thought in the Scriptures. Two characteristics of its misuse should be mentioned:
 - (1) Those who employ unscriptural spiritualization do so by interpreting a word or series of words as necessarily figurative, not because a literal interpretation would be manifestly impossible or absurd or contradict clear teachings of Scripture, but because a literal meaning simply would not fit with their theological system (especially in the areas of ecclesiology, eschatology, and ethics).
 - (2) Those who employ unscriptural spiritualization do so by taking the figurative meaning of a word or words and, without scriptural warrant, referring them to spiritual realities.

An example of unscriptural spiritualization may be found in a book by Jesse Hodges: