

Rules of Interpretation

1. Work from the assumption that the Bible is authoritative.
2. The Bible interprets itself; Scripture best explains Scripture.
3. Saving Faith and the Holy Spirit are necessary for us to understand and properly interpret the Scriptures.
4. Interpret personal experience in the light of Scripture and not Scripture in the light of personal experience.
5. Biblical examples are authoritative only when supported by a command.
6. The primary purpose of the Bible is to change lives, not increase our knowledge.
7. Each Christian has the right and responsibility to investigate and interpret the Word of God for himself.
8. Church history is important but not decisive in the interpretation of Scripture.
9. The promises of God throughout the Bible are available to the Holy Spirit for the believers of every generation.
10. Scripture has only one meaning and should be taken literally (normally).
11. Interpret words in harmony with their meaning in the times of the author.
12. Interpret a word in relation to its sentence and in its context.
13. Interpret a passage in harmony with its context.
14. When an inanimate object is used to describe a living being, the statement may be considered figurative.
15. When an expression is out of character with the thing described, the statement may be considered figurative.
16. The principal parts and figures of a parable represent certain realities. Consider only these principal parts and figures when drawing conclusions.
17. Interpret the words of the prophets in their usual, literal, and historical sense, unless the context or manner in which they are fulfilled clearly indicates they have a symbolic meaning. Their fulfillment may be in installments, each fulfillment being a pledge of that which is to follow.
18. Since Scripture originated in a historical context, it can be understood only in light of biblical history.
19. Though God's revelation in the Scriptures is progressive, both Old and New Testaments are essential parts of this revelation and form a unit.
20. Historical facts or events become symbols of spiritual truths only if the Scriptures so designate them.
21. You must understand the Bible grammatically before you can understand it theologically.
22. A doctrine cannot be considered biblical unless it sums up and includes all that the Scriptures say about it.
23. When two doctrines taught in the Bible appear to be contradictory, accept both as Scriptural in the confident belief that they resolve themselves into a higher unity.
24. A teaching merely implied in the Scripture may be considered biblical when a comparison of related passages supports it.