How to interpret the Bible (Part 1)   © 2014 David J Keyser PhD

1.Remember that the Bible is the Word of God, a supernatural word and cannot be understood with the mind alone.

Example: For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

2.Take the most obvious meaning first.

Example: and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. Rev 20:4d

3.Is a word used literally or metaphorically?

Metaphor:
A figure of speech in which an implied comparison is made between two unlike things that actually have something in common. A metaphor expresses the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar. "Love is a rose," "rose" is the vehicle for "love."

Simile:
A figure of speech in which two fundamentally unlike things are explicitly compared, usually in a phrase introduced by *like* or *as*.

Example: He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.
Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.
He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Psalm 91:1-4

4.Always consider the context of the passage.

Example: And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.
But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Rev 20:4-5

5.Do word research studies.
Example:
monogenés: only begotten
Original Word: μονογενής
Part of Speech: Adjective
Transliteration: monogenés
Phonetic Spelling: (mon-og-en-ace')
Short Definition: only, only-begotten, unique
Definition: only, only-begotten; unique.
Strong's number 3439 *monogenḗs* (from 3411 /misthōtós, "one-and-only" and 1085 /génos, "offspring, stock") – properly, *one-and-only*; "one of a kind" – literally, "one (*monos*) of a class, *genos*"