

SOUND PRINCIPLES OF BIBLE STUDY/INTERPRETATION

The Bible itself is the primary source of study to learn about God and what the Bible teaches. To get to know God, we must study the Bible, His revealed Word.

It is very important that Christians learn to properly study the Bible. There are sound principles that must be followed to avoid bizarre interpretations, based upon inadequate foundations. Faulty interpretations are most likely to take place when verses are taken out of context of the whole, symbolic meaning is read into verses meant to be taken literally, historical context is not considered, Scripture is not used to interpret Scripture and original language is not considered for difficult passages and concepts.

Below are some basic principles which must be followed:

CONTEXT RULES

1. You must consider the historical, geographical, political and cultural context, in relation to the passage/chapter/book.
2. Develop a personal habit of reading the Bible through regularly each year, so that you have a context in which to base your understanding on what a particular passage means. (Today, you can download the spoken Word on to your iPhone or purchase a digital copy, and listen to it while you work or drive, to continue build/refresh your knowledge of the whole of Scripture. It is recommended that you invest in a respected study Bible.)
3. As you study, ask: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?
4. Consider the relationship of various chapters and verses to each other to determine meaning.
5. Don't base your interpretation/doctrine on a single verse, but on the whole of Scripture.

SCRIPTURE INTERPRETS SCRIPTURE

1. Obscure passages must be understood in the light of clearer ones.
2. Remember that no part of the Bible can contradict any other part. If one passage seems to contradict another, one of the passages is being misinterpreted, or even both.
3. As God's Word, the Bible must be consistent with itself.
4. Don't base your convictions on an obscure passage of Scripture.

INTERPRET SCRIPTURE LITERALLY

1. Scripture is to be read in its literal sense.
2. Understand God's words just as you would interpret the language of normal discourse.
3. Look first for the literal meaning, not some mystical, deeper, hidden, secret or spiritualized interpretation.
4. If there is symbolic meaning, use Scripture to interpret Scripture..

CONSIDER GRAMMER/ORIGINAL LANGUAGE TO DETERMINE MEANING

1. Be aware of the sequences of the words and phrases, tenses, and part of speech (verb or noun), to determine meaning.
2. Often it is necessary to consider the original language to fully understand the passage. (Today, there are Greek/Hebrew lexicons, Bible study software, or free sites like www.blueletterbible.org , www.biblegateway.com, etc. that can help you understand.)

APPLY BIBLICAL TRUTH

1. The Scripture is meant to be applied to life, not just read.
2. Ask: What does this mean in regard to our world? How does this apply to me? What needs to change in the way I think and act?

We strongly recommend that all Bible students invest in one or two respected study Bibles. Be sure to make one of your study Bibles the NIV Fire Bible (Global Study Edition) and, also, include an ESV Study Bible or an NASB Study Bible (Ryrie, Zondervan, or Inductive). The NKJV Spirit Filled Life Bible (compiled by Jack Hayford), is also a great resource. All study Bibles include Bible book background information, cross references, maps, time-lines and basic commentary, which is very helpful when study time is limited. Students, who want to go deeper, may wish to invest in some respected Bible study software.

Some places to find discounted Bible and books: www.hpbmarketplace.com and www.christianbook.com.