Walloon YAM

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# Let the Lion Out!

(Read your Bible)

Battle Cry – Let the Lion Out! The Word that became flesh and dwelt among us is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, which needs no defense but to be loosed to defend itself. I encourage you to adopt with me this spiritual battle cry: Let the Lion out! (Let the Bible loose in your life! Read your Bible.)

1. The Bible is from God. God spoke and men wrote it down. NEVER be persuaded otherwise!
    a. Moses wrote all the words of the Lord [Exodus 24:4].
    b. Thus saith the Lord [20+ Old Testament writers used this phrase].
    c. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God [II Timothy 3:16].
    d. Men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit [II Peter 1:21].
2. The Bible is unbreakable. Not one promise will fall.
    a. You are God, and Your words are true [II Samuel 7:28]. Your word is truth [John 17:17].
    b. God cannot lie [Titus 1:2]. It is impossible for God to lie [Hebrews 6:18].
    c. Scripture cannot be broken [John 10:35].
3. The Bible is sufficient. It is enough to thoroughly equip us for every good work. Do not supplement it.
    a. Scripture is useful…that man be complete, *thoroughly* equipped for *every* good work [II Timothy 3:16].
    b. He has given to us *all things* that pertain to life and godliness through knowledge of Him [II Peter 1:3].
    c. You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it [Deuteronomy 4:2; Revelation 22:18-19].
4. The Bible is indestructible. It has always existed and always will exist.
    a. Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven [Psalm 119:89 NKJV].
    b. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God stands forever [Isaiah 40:8 & I Peter 1:24-25].
    c. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words will never pass away [Matt 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33].
5. The Bible is powerful. It can change the human heart – the greatest of all miracles in the world.
    a. His Word is like a hammer that breaks the rocks in pieces [Jeremiah 23:29].
    b. His Word accomplishes what He pleases [Isaiah 55:11].
    c. At the word of the Lord, Ananias goes to Judas's house and calls murderous Saul *brother* [Acts 9:1, 17].
6. The Bible is for my good!
    a. God is abounding in goodness [Exodus 34:6], goodness that endures continually [Psalm 52:1].
    b. In fact, according to Jesus, God is the *only One* who is good [Matthew 19:17].
    c. Every good gift comes from the Father [James 1:17]. So, good gifts come from nowhere else!
    d. God commands us to obey His words…for our good [Deuteronomy 6:24 & 10:13; Jeremiah 32:39].
    e. By them I avoid destruction [Psalm 17:4], enjoy great reward [Psalm 19:11], and grow [I Peter 2:2].

These truths essentially establish the compelling importance of reading & understanding the Bible. The Bible is worth the effort to read and understand it.

Paraphrasing from the Introduction to The Moody Bible Commentary:

In order to understand the Bible, you must read it. If you didn't understand it the first time, read it again. More than anything else, understanding the Bible requires reading it, and then reading it some more. Since the Protestant Reformation, Christians have believed this. If followers of Messiah Jesus read the Bible, they can understand it, with these caveats:

a. Understanding the Bible requires effort – we need to work at studying the Scriptures.
b. Understanding the Bible will take time – we won't get it all immediately.
c. Understanding the Bible needs the Holy Spirit to open our minds and hearts to it.
d. Understanding the Bible will happen only if we are willing to obey what we read.
e. Understanding the Bible will never be complete – we can always learn more.

# Let the Lion Out!

Walloon YAM

# Qualifications for Understanding the Bible

Not everyone can understand the Bible. The truths of God are spiritually discerned; the natural man cannot receive or know them [I Corinthians 2:14].

1. You must be convinced the Bible needs to be studied. God will bring calamity because His people have not heeded His words [Jeremiah 6:19]. They were not convinced they needed to know His words & obey them.
    i. God's people were not valiant for the truth [Jeremiah 9:3].
    ii. They proceeded from evil to evil [v.3].
    iii. They did not know God [v.3].
    iv. God will avenge Himself on a people such as this [v.9].
    v. Why does the land perish [v.12]? Because they have forsaken My law [v.13].
    vi. Glory not in wisdom, might, or riches [v.23], but in knowing & understanding the Lord [v.24].

2. You must be a follower of Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit [James 4:5].
    i. The Spirit teaches us [John 14:26] and guides us into all truth [John 16:13]. If you don't have the Holy Spirit to teach you, you can't really understand the Bible, for He inspired it to be written [II Peter 1:21].

3. You must be diligent. To understand the Bible, you cannot be haphazard or casual.
    i. The Bereans [Acts 17:11]. They searched, examined, studied, investigated the Scriptures daily.
    ii. Study to show yourself approved to God, a worker that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth [II Timothy 2:15]. Study, be diligent, *do your best*, work hard to…rightly divide the Word.

4. You must desire to understand the Bible. You cannot be apathetic or disinterested. You must want it.
    i. Hunger for it. As a newborn babe, desire the pure milk of the word [I Peter 2:2]. Think about a baby's mind – obsessed with milk. Be that. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness [Matthew 5:6].
    ii. Seek it. Seek the Lord and you will find Him, if you seek with all your heart [Deuteronomy 4:29]. Seek the Lord while He may be found [Isaiah 55:6].
    iii. Treasure it. Job treasured the words of His mouth [Job 23:12]. Is the Bible precious to you?

5. You must be willing to obey the Bible. Live out what you read.
    i. Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only [James 1:22-25]. If you don't obey what you read, you'll forget it and you won't understand the next thing you read. Read verse 25 point by point – he who … looks into the law … & obeys it … is not a forgetful hearer, but a doer … WILL BE BLESSED.

6. You must pray. Pray specifically that God will help you understand the Bible, each time.
    i. Open my eyes that I may see wondrous things from Your law [Psalm 119:18]. Give me understanding according to Your word [Psalm 119:169].
    ii. Pray that the eyes of your understanding be enlightened [Ephesians 1:18].

# Hermeneutics

## How to Study the Bible

*A Practical Approach to Understanding Scripture*

Gene Taylor

# Introduction

It is vitally important that every person study the Bible properly in order to understand the truths it reveals. For, you see, a knowledge and understanding of those truths, along with obedience to them, are essential to the salvation of one's soul (John 8:32). This can only be accomplished by using correct study methods in reference to Scripture.

This material is being presented with that in mind. It is hoped that each student will develop or reinforce proper study methods and habits in their investigation of God's word.

This study is neither original nor exhaustive. Rather, it is a summary from a number of sources, a compilation of the best and most necessary concepts from each source.

I have relied heavily on *How to Understand the Bible* by W. Robert Palmer, *Hermeneutics* by D.R. Dungan, and *Principles of Interpretation* by Clinton Lockhart. I would recommend that the more serious student acquire and read them along with *Hermeneutics* by Bernard Ramm and *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* also by Ramm.

It is my prayer that each of us will properly understand God's word and accurately apply it to our lives so that we will derive the full benefits of its blessings.

Gene Taylor
July 1995

*"Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is."* (Ephesians 5:17)

## *Blessings Which Result From An Understanding Of The Bible*

- The Revelation of Divine Wisdom
- Salvation of the Soul
- Instruction in All Manner of Righteousness
- Strengthening of the Soul
- Knowledge of Those Things That Are Profitable
- Knowledge of Those Things That Will Last

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# Lesson One: Principles One Must Accept

1. **God has spoken**. The whole Bible is based on this fact. Unless one believes in God and that He has communicated His will to man, it is pointless to pursue a further study of Scripture.

2. **The Bible is a revelation of God's will.** Proof of the inspiration of the Bible is seen in:
    a. Its unity.
    b. Its miracles.
    c. Its prophecies.
    d. The grand scope of the whole book.
    e. Its influences.
    f. Its scientific accuracy and foreknowledge.
    g. Its historical accuracy.
    h. Its unexcelled moral tone.
    i. The uniqueness of its material.
    j. The uniqueness of its style.
        1) Its brevity.
        2) Its omissions.
        3) Its impartiality.
        4) Its calmness.

3. **The Bible has been accurately translated.**

4. **The Bible is infallible.**

5. **The Bible is complete and final.** "Notice the grand theme of the divine-human relationship and you will see that it is final. There is completeness in every divine plan, an ending to the long story of man, an ultimate goal to every purpose of God, perfection in the life and sacrifice of God's Son, a perfect pattern for the faith and life of the Christian, and final glory in the system of salvation for man." (W. Robert Palmer, *How to Understand the Bible*, p. 10)

6. **The Bible is intelligible**, i.e., it has the capabilities of being understood. It is a revelation, a manifestation of divine truth, an uncovering of that which is hidden so that it may be clearly seen.

7. **The Bible can be understood by mankind.** (Ephesians 3:1-5) Since God commands man to understand it (Ephesians 5:17), it, therefore, can be understood because God never places on man that which he cannot accomplish. (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:13)

8. **The Bible is authoritative.** It is authoritative because it is the word of God who possesses all authority (Matthew 28:18) and it comes from heaven. (Matthew 21:23-27)

9. **The authority of the Bible demands submission.** If it is from heaven, it must be obeyed. (Matthew 21:25)

# Questions for Review and Discussion

1. Why is the whole Bible based on the fact that God has spoken?

2. In relation to the Bible, what is inspiration?

3. In what ways do the following give evidence of the inspiration of the Bible?

    a. The unity of the Bible.

    b. Prophecies found in the Bible.

    c. The scientific and historical accuracies of the Bible.

4. What are some things that help us know whether or not the version of the Bible we are using is an accurate translation?

5. Define "infallible." Does this term apply to the Bible? Explain your answer.

6. Give some evidence to show that the Bible is:

    a. Complete.

    b. God's final revelation to man.

7. Define "intelligible." In what way is it related to man's ability to understand the Bible?

8. Why is the Bible authoritative? What are some direct consequences of its authority?

# Lesson Two:
# The Purpose and Place of Common Sense in Bible Study

Many people view the Bible as some mystical book whose message, in reality, cannot be completely understood. Therefore, they approach the study of the Bible in a special way. They fail to use the same reasoning they apply in the study of other books and disciplines. The Bible, though, is to be treated with the same logic and common sense as any ordinary, intelligent writing for, though it is from God, its message is conveyed to mankind in the same way that men communicate with each other.

## The Place of Reason

1. **To determine from evidence that the Bible is the word of God.** Two general areas of evidence exist: external and internal. External evidence is that evidence from sources outside the Bible which offer proof that the Bible is the word of God. Internal evidence is that supporting proof from within the text of the Bible itself. If one is going to profit from either of these areas of evidence, he must employ reason, logic and common sense in a consideration of them.

2. **To employ its powers in order to understand the Bible.** As stated above, since the message of the Bible is communicated in the same way men communicate with one another, the same reason, logic and common sense used to understand the communications of other men must be used to understand God's communication to man, the Bible.

## Violations of Common Sense That Contribute to a Misunderstanding of the Bible

1. **Prejudice.** The common spirit of bias and partiality found in so many men and women. One who allows prejudice to color his view of the Bible will never arrive at its true message.

2. **Preconceived opinion.** The practice of supposing something exists or assuming something is true without sufficient study or proof. One must go to the Bible to **obtain** doctrine not to sustain it.

3. **Wishful thinking.** To wish so strongly for something to be true that one comes to firmly believe that it is true.

4. **Generalization.** The fallacy of drawing sweeping conclusions from particular instances.

5. **Appeals to human authority.** The practice of "throwing around the weight" of big names and/or authorities, regardless of truthfulness and condition, in order to defend a point which is usually biased.

6. **Appeals to the popular.** Citing what the majority think as being conclusive evidence of right.

# Questions for Review and Discussion

1. Why should a study of the Bible be approached with the same logic as used in studying ordinary, intelligent writings?

2. State the two-fold purpose of reason in a study of the Bible. Describe each purpose and its bearing on understanding the Bible.

3. What is prejudice? How can it affect one's understanding of the Biblical message?

4. Why is having preconceived opinions when studying the Bible a dangerous practice?

5. How can one's understanding of the Bible be affected by "wishful thinking?"

6. What is generalization? Why is it an improper way to elicit the true meaning of Scripture?

7. How can human authorities hinder an understanding of truth? Of what help can they be?

8. Why is citing majority opinions not a valid evidence for truth?

# Lesson Three: Ten Attitudes Essential to Bible Study

One of the most prevalent causes which contributes to a misunderstanding of the Bible is when the student has wrong attitudes toward it or the study of it. If one is going to understand the Scriptures, he must develop and maintain proper attitudes toward the Bible and its study.

1. **Be willing to work.** No other attitude or activity can take the place of work. Those who seek enlightenment in any branch of knowledge must pursue it with vigor, enthusiasm, and labor.

2. **Trust the word of God.** The one who mistrusts will never be in the frame of mind to understand very much of what God says. A word of caution, though: make sure that in your study you are using a reliable translation of Scripture. Some so-called translations are, in reality, nothing more than paraphrases by those who are unqualified to properly translate Scripture or those whose bias and prejudice cause them to deliberately alter what the Scriptures really teach.

3. **Show reverence for the word.** Reverence: "A respectful, submissive disposition of mind, arising from affection and esteem, from a sense of superiority in the person reverenced." (*The Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia,* p. 1469)

4. **Expect delight.** To delight in the word of God is to thoroughly enjoy its study. Do not look upon your study of Scripture as a chore. Rather, consider it a blessed opportunity to learn of God and His will.

5. **Love the word.** It is an accepted fact that we pursue that which we love. If we are going to actively pursue knowledge of the word, we must develop a great love for it.

6. **Desire to understand the word.** When one has a negative attitude toward a discipline or if he begins by thinking he will never really understand it, most likely he never will. A positive attitude, coupled with hard work, goes a long way in helping one come to an understanding of God's word.

7. **Shun perversions of the word.** See point two above. One must never settle for anything less than the truth of God.

8. **Undergird your study with prayer.** Prayer avails much (James 5:16), but one need not expect God to do for him what he ought to do for himself. The prayers of a lazy, half-hearted, grumbling student cannot rise very high.

9. **Have a spirit of expectancy.** When one starts to study the Bible, he ought to expect to understand it. The apostle Paul gives him the assurance that he can (Ephesians 3:1-5).

10. **Desire to be obedient.** A mere curiosity about the Bible or an academic interest in it is not enough. One must develop a hunger and thirst for knowledge of Scripture having obedience which leads to salvation as his ultimate goal.

# Questions for Review and Discussion

1. Why is trusting the word of God essential to understanding it?

2. What is reverence? How does one manifest reverence toward the Bible?

3. What does the Bible say about "delighting" in the word?

4. What does it mean to "love" the word of God?

5. Why is it true, as taught by the Bible in Ephesians 3:1-5, that if one desires to, he can understand the teachings of God's word?

6. Define "perversion" as it applies to the word of God. How can God's word be perverted?

7. What part does prayer have in a study of the Bible?

8. Why is it more difficult to understand that which you do not expect to understand?

9. What does it mean to have an "academic interest" in the Bible? Why is it such a dangerous attitude?

10. List and briefly describe those attitudes you deem as necessary to understanding Scripture.

# Lesson Four: The Need for a Method of Interpretation

If one is going to arrive at the correct message of the Bible, he must use a systematic plan or procedure in his study of it. He must have a method in his approach to Scripture. Lack of method can only result in a puzzling, chaotic application of the word. The one who rejects a methodic study of God's word either has ulterior motives in his study or has been duped into thinking he can find truth without it.

### Why People Prefer Not to Have a Method

1. **Some are afraid of the truth.** They are afraid of what it may expose in their lives or their teaching and practice.

2. **Some claim to possess extra knowledge.** They think they have a special enlightenment that somehow overrides the Bible and its message.

3. **Some think the Bible is not to be understood as other intelligent writings.** They believe it is mystical in its teaching and, therefore, cannot be studied as other writings and disciplines.

4. **Some think the Bible is some sort of riddle.** They believe that it has no one real meaning. They think it can mean different things at different times. They subscribe to the notion that one opinion of its meaning is as good as another.

5. **Some think the Bible is like a box of assorted chocolates.** They believe one can go to the Bible and just pick out what he likes and leave what he does not like. This could also be called "The Smorgasbord Theory" because one can select only what he wants and, as usual at a smorgasbord, "overeat" on a few chosen items that he especially likes.

### The Need for a Method

1. The Bible is a normal message and should be interpreted in the same manner as any book.
2. There is original thought in the message—the thoughts of God.
3. God has revealed that thought to man through the Scriptures.
4. This message is written in ordinary human language.
5. The word of God must be interpreted, i.e., its proper message must be derived.
6. The Bible must never be misinterpreted.
7. One must apply the same scientific principles to interpreting the Bible that he uses in his normal, intelligent communications with man.

# Questions for Review and Discussion

1. Why should the Bible be interpreted in the same manner as any other book?

2. What are "thoughts?" How are thoughts expressed?

3. Define "reveal." How have the thoughts of God been revealed to man?

4. Why do you think God chose to reveal His thoughts to man in common, ordinary language?

5. What is meant when it is said the Bible must be "interpreted?"

6. Why is it dangerous to misinterpret the Bible?

7. List some ways in which the Bible may be misinterpreted.

8. How can the application of "scientific principles" help one understand the Bible?

# Lesson Five: Harmful Methods of Interpretation

The following methods have sustained those things known to be false, have made the Bible either teach what we know to be untrue or contradict itself, and have turned the Bible over to the "clergy."

1. **The Mystical Method.** This is one of the oldest avenues of approach to understanding the Bible. It originated in heathenism. It came from an old heathen idea that only certain persons are en rapport, "in tune," with God and can get the real meaning out of the written word. Thus, it gives position and prominence to men of "holy calling."

   It is based on the idea that behind the literal written word is a mystical meaning and that the latter is the real truth of God and the spiritual meaning one should desire. One is led to believe that the literal word of the Bible is inferior, even useless or dangerous, and must be discarded as unacceptable. It teaches that the real truth is often altogether different from that which is obviously said.

   "If the Bible does not mean what it says, there is no way by which we can know what it does mean." (D.R. Dungan, *Hermeneutics,* p. 60)

2. **The Allegorical Method.** Allegorical: "Having hidden spiritual meaning transcending the literal sense of a sacred text." (*Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary,* p. 23) In this method, the student treats the entire Bible as one big riddle. It promotes the idea that each person has the right to draw out of various passages of the Bible the lesson he feels is true for him. One, therefore, does not obtain the meaning of the text but rather thrusts something into it.

3. **The Superstitious Method.** This method is rich in emotion but poor in reason. The student digs for all manner of hidden meanings by passionately working over thoughts, numbers, items, etc., in the Bible and combining them so they form strange conclusions and odd arrangements. It plays up incidental details. It thrives on originality rather than accuracy. It confuses all the orderly arrangements and divisions naturally found in the Bible.

4. **The Ecclesiastical or Hierarchical Method.** This method affirms the church as the true exponent of the Scriptures. One who uses this method looks neither to God nor himself to understand the Bible but to the final authority—his church, church leader, and/or church creed. According to this method, decrees of the church are final.

5. **The Dogmatic Method.** This method came into existence in Catholicism during the Dark Ages because of the church's desire to rule in spiritual matters. By this method one can prove most anything. This method assumes a certain thing is true then defends it by showing, from Scripture, "proof " that it is true. It uses the practice of "proof-texting."

   The Bible is not designed as a proof for doctrines one might formulate. Instead, it reveals the doctrine of God.

6. **The Rational Method (Modernism).** According to Dungan, this method is "very nearly the rule of unbelief " (67). "Rational" refers to reason. This method exaggerates the position of reason by making it the supreme authority in all judgments instead of using it as a tool for understanding. It

considers human reason superior to anything revealed in the Bible so all passages are interpreted so as never to violate human reason. It, thus, accepts only those portions of Scripture which reason says is feasible or possible. The "unreasonable" parts of the Scriptures, such as the virgin birth of Jesus, the miracles and signs of Jesus, and the resurrection of Jesus along with His post-resurrection appearances, are either discarded or considered mythical.

7. **The Spiritual Interpretation Method.** This method is similar to the mystical method differing only in scope. Piety and a possession of the light of God in the soul supposedly enables everyone to understand the Scriptures in this spiritual way. It is strange, though, that those who claim to be enlightened in that manner, often do not interpret the Bible the same way.

8. **The Apologetic Method.** This method maintains the absolute perfection of all statements in the Bible. It regards anything and everything that can be found in Scripture to be from God no matter who is speaking. This is an unreasonable view because it stands opposed to one of the first rules necessary to fair and thorough investigation: to know who speaks.

9. **The Literal Method or Literal Interpretation.** Having originated as a reactionary move against the rational method, this method makes all the language of the Bible literal. It forces the Bible to be literal even when it is obviously symbolic. It may quote all passages with equal weight even putting a quotation of an uninspired man or of the devil himself on a par with the words of an inspired man.

## Questions for Review and Discussion

1. What is the mystical method of interpretation? On what is it based? What dangers does it pose?

2. Summarize the allegorical method of interpretation. What is its main danger?

3. What is the superstitious method of interpretation? Why does it tend to cause confusion?

4. What method of interpretation claims the church to be the true exponent of Scripture? Name some religious bodies who have held to this method. Why is it so dangerous?

5. When did the dogmatic method of interpretation come into existence? What is "proof-texting?" How does it apply to this method?

6. What is modernism? Which does it exalt, human or divine wisdom? In what way(s) is it exalted?

7. What is the spiritual interpretation method? What makes this method so suspect?

8. What is unreasonable about the apologetic method of interpretation?

9. What is the central error of the literal method of interpretation?

# Lesson Six: The Inductive Method

Induction is to reason by noting particular facts and instances and from them drawing general conclusions. That is how the inductive method operates. Developed mostly by Roger Bacon, this method is a leading or drawing off of a general fact from a number of instances, or summing up the results of observations and experiments.

**Roger Bacon (1214-1294)**
Roger Bacon was an English monk and philosopher. He was born in Ilchester, Somersetshire. Educated at the University of Oxford and the University of Paris, he remained at the University of Paris as a teacher until about 1251. He then returned to England and entered a religious order of the Franciscans and settled at Oxford where he carried on active studies and did experimental research, mainly in alchemy, optics and astronomy.

He was critical of the methods of learning of the times and, at the request of Pope Clement IV, he wrote his "Opus Magnus" (Major Work) in which he represented the necessity of a reformation in the sciences through different methods of studying the languages and nature.
His work was an encyclopedia of all sciences, embracing grammar and logic, mathematics, physics, experimental research and moral philosophy.

Because of his revolutionary ideas about the study of science, he was condemned by the Franciscans for his "heretical views." In 1278 the general of the Franciscan order, Jerome of Ascoli, later Pope Nicholas III, forbade the reading of Bacon's books and had him arrested. After ten years in prison, he returned to Oxford and wrote "A Compendium of the Study of Theology" (1292) shortly before his death.

**The Inductive Method**
This method demands that all facts be reported. By reporting all facts and allowing them to speak for themselves, no error will be possible. No interpretation of any fact can be true which does not harmonize with all other known facts.

Such is the law of analogy which this method employs: everything must be found to agree. Two truths are never contradictory. When any fact has come to be known, and about it there can no longer be any doubt, whatever may be reported afterward which contradicts that fact, is rejected as untrue.

The Bible recognizes this method as correct. All the facts are reported, given by God, and from them general conclusions are to be reached. Such is the way Jesus proved to two men the truth about Himself. In Luke 24, they were discussing His death and how they were saddened by it for they had hoped that it was He who would redeem Israel. They further stated how they were distressed because they had heard from certain women who had gone to His tomb and seen a vision of angels who said He was alive but others who had gone to His tomb had not seen Him. In Luke 24:25-27, Jesus said, "'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory.' **And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.**" Notice what Jesus did. He introduced all the facts from the Scriptures about Himself so that those two men would understand the truth about Him. He used the inductive method to establish the truth.

# Questions for Review and Discussion

1. Who was Roger Bacon? What influence does he have on hermeneutics?

2. Define "induction."

3. Summarize the inductive method of interpretation.

4. From a positive perspective, why, in the study of any matter, is it important to first collect all the facts?

5. List some of the dangers of not considering all the facts in any matter.

6. What is the "law of analogy?"

7. Does the Bible recognize and support the correctness of the inductive method of interpretation? Explain your answer.

8. Using Scripture, illustrate the inductive method of interpretation.

# Lesson Seven:
# Hermeneutics and Its Related Terms Defined

Many people are apprehensive to begin a study of hermeneutics just because they do not understand the term. Since it is neither found in Scripture nor commonly used in their daily lives, they do not see why they should devote time and energy considering it. Yet, when the serious Bible student comes to understand not only the term but also the concept it describes he then desires to familiarize himself with it.

The term "hermeneutics" has an interesting etymology. It has its basis in Greek mythology. It is derived from "Hermes," the Greek messenger of the gods and the interpreter of Jupiter.

## Hermeneutics Defined

1. "The science of interpretation." (D.R. Dungan, *Hermeneutics,* p. 1)

2. "The study of the methodological principles of interpretation (as of the Bible.)" (*Webster's New Seventh Collegiate Dictionary,* p. 389)

3. "The science and art of Biblical interpretation. It is a science because it is guided by rules within a system; and it is an art because the application of the rules is by skill and not by mechanical imitation." (Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation,* p. 1)

4. "Sacred hermeneutics is the science of interpreting the Scriptures." (Dungan, 1)

## Related Terms Defined

**Interpret.** "To explain or tell the meaning of: ELUCIDATE." (*Webster's,* 443)

**Interpretation.** "Is a generic term and may refer to any work of literature. Referred specifically to the sacred Scriptures, the science of interpretation is generally known as hermeneutics, while the practical application of the principles of this science is exegesis." (*International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia,* Vol. III, p. 1489)

**Exegesis.** "(from *ex,* out, and *egeisthas,* to guide or lead), means to lead out. It is the application of the principles of hermeneutics in bringing out the meaning of any writing which might otherwise be difficult to understand." (Dungan, 1)

**The relation of hermeneutics to exegesis.** "Whereas hermeneutics seeks to establish the ruling principles of biblical interpretation, exegesis seeks to fix the meaning of individual statements and passages." (*Baker's Dictionary of Theology,* pp. 204-205)

# Questions for Review and Discussion

1. Who was Hermes?

2. How is hermeneutics a science?

3. How is hermeneutics an art?

4. Define "interpret."

5. In relation to the Bible, what does interpretation mean?

6. What is exegesis?

7. How does exegesis complement hermeneutics?

8. How does exegesis differ from hermeneutics?

# Lesson Eight: Axioms of Hermeneutics

Axioms are "certain fundamental principles, which may be very briefly expressed, but which contain only the most primary and essential truths of the science." (Clinton Lockhart, *Principles of Interpretation,* p. 18)

1. The true object of speech is the impartation of thought.
2. The true object of interpretation is to apprehend the exact thought of the author.
3. Language is a reliable medium of communication.
4. Usage determines the meaning of words.
    a. Usage**:** the continued use or treatment of words by the people to whose language the words belong.
    b. The character of the influence of usage.
        1) A word receives its first meaning.
        2) A word may have its meaning changed.
        3) A word may receive many meanings.
        4) A word or a certain meaning of a word may become partially or wholly obsolete.
    c. The extent of this influence. A certain usage may prevail:
        1) Wherever the language is spoken.
        2) Only in a certain district.
        3) Only in a certain vocation, art, or science.
        4) Only in writings of a particular author.
5. Two writers do not independently express thought alike.
6. Every writer is influenced by his environment. "Inspiration is simply one of the influences of the writer's environment. Inspiration did not remove the writers of the Bible from their natural surroundings, but merely enlightened them to meet the exigencies of their circumstances." (Lockhart, 126)
7. Any writing is liable to modification in copying, translating, and the gradual change of a living tongue.
8. By one expression, one thought is conveyed and only one.
9. The function of a word depends on its association with other words. The meaning of a word that has more than one meaning depends on the words that accompany it. A lexicographer determines the meanings of words mainly by examining all their occurrences in literature and noting the associations of each word.
10. A correct definition of a word substituted for the word itself will not modify the meaning of the text.
11. One of two contradictory statements must be false, unless corresponding terms have different meanings or applications.

12. Truth must accord with truth; and statements of truth apparently discrepant can be harmonized if the facts are known.
13. An assertion of truth necessarily excludes that to which it is essentially opposed and no more. This is called the "law of opposition." A proposition purporting to set forth a truth must not be supposed to exclude everything as false that it does not contain.
14. Every communication of thought, human and divine, given in the language of men, is subject to the ordinary rules of interpretation.

## Questions for Review and Discussion

1. What is an axiom?

2. What is the true object of speech? What is the true object of interpretation? Explain each answer.

3. What makes language a reliable medium of communication?

4. What is meant by "usage?" How is it relevant to interpretation?

5. Given that the writers of the Bible were all inspired, how were they still influenced by their environment? Give evidence to support your answer.

6. How does a word's association with other words determine its meaning if the word has more than one meaning?

7. Why must truth harmonize with truth?

8. What is the "law of opposition?"

# Lesson Nine: Rules of Interpretation - I

1. **Every passage has but one meaning.** Exceptions to this rule exist but they in no way contradict it. Prophecies were given that had immediate meanings as well as remote meanings.
2. **The simplest, most obvious meaning of any passage is usually the correct one.** One should look for the most natural interpretation of a text unless otherwise indicated. If a passage has more than one interpretation, the simplest one is most apt to be what the Lord intended.
3. **Always allow an author's own explanation of a passage to stand.** A person has the right to explain the way in which he is using an expression. The author surely knows what he means better than anyone else does.
4. **Always interpret a passage in harmony with the context.** Context is the entire section of written thought in which the passage is found. It includes that which immediately precedes and follows and all parts properly connected to it. It may be a paragraph, a chapter, a large section or the entire writing. The writings of Scripture demonstrate a continuous, logical flow of thoughts and a passage should never be forcibly pulled out of this order and forced into the mold of some other thoughts. A knowledge of the context will greatly assist in the exegesis of any doubtful passage.
5. **An interpretation of a passage should always conform to the environment of the author.** The author used the conditions of life as he knew them to frame the revealed message. He drew upon the customs of his day, the opinions of his time, the circumstances surrounding his life, and the nature of his own personality. Some things to consider about the author:
    a. Was he an inspired man?
    b. Was he an educated man?
    c. What religious bias or prejudice did he have?
    d. What of the style of his message?
    e. A writer usually condemns the evils which appear the most dangerous to him.
6. **Each passage must be interpreted in harmony with all other passages.** This is the normal law of consistency in truth. No doctrine can be true if it is opposed to any clear statement of the word of God. When there seems to be a contradiction between the meanings of passages, one or more of the interpretations must be incorrect.
7. **One passage will often explain another passage.** Another passage may shed light on an obscure passage and bring understanding. Such a practice, though, can be overdone by forcing comparisons that are not relative.
8. **A passage must be interpreted in harmony with any idioms it contains.** An idiom is "any usage or construction peculiar to a certain language, especially a form of expression or a phrase adopted by the usage of a language with a signification other than its grammatical or logical use." (Clinton Lockhart, *Principles of Interpretation,* p. 126) For example:
    a. Repetition was used in the Hebrews' language for emphasis. (Genesis 22:17; Luke 22:14-15)
    b. "Love...hate" denotes comparison of one being loved more than the other. (Malachi 1:2,3; Luke 14:26)
    c. "Not...but" was an expression of comparison of importance. (1 Peter 3:3-4; Hebrews 10:25)

9. **All passages on any given subject must be studied.** No one should ever draw a general conclusion on any Bible subject until all passages concerning it have been collected, considered, and compared. Only the sum total of passages on a given subject will give complete understanding.

10. **Observe the proper balance of Scriptural truth.** Some passages have been exaggerated or overemphasized while others have been slighted. One must be sure to balance the truth as God wills it.

11. **Let plain passages determine difficult passages.** Some passages are difficult to understand. (2 Peter 3:15-16) Always choose the meaning of an obscure or difficult passage that harmonizes with the plainer or easier passages on the same subject.

## Questions for Review and Discussion

1. If it is true that every passage has but one meaning, how do you explain prophecies which had both immediate and remote meanings?

2. Why should the author's explanation of a passage always be accepted?

3. What is context? What bearing does it have on interpretation of Scripture?

4. What things must one take into consideration about the author of a passage which have bearing on the meaning of his writing?

5. What is the "law of consistency" in truth? How does it apply to the interpretation of Scripture?

6. What is an idiom? Cite some examples of idioms found in Scripture.

7. Why must all passages on a given subject be considered before one can have a complete understanding of the subject contained in that passage?

8. What is meant by the term "balance of Scripture?"

# Lesson Ten: Rules of Interpretation - II

## A General View of the Bible, Its Two Testaments, Three Dispensations, Major Covenants and Settings

12. **Rightly divide the book, the dispensations, the covenants and the settings.**

### The General View of the Entire Bible

1. **The harmony of purpose.** God revealed His will to sinful man so that he may be saved or redeemed.
2. **The harmony of theme.** The history, nature and hope of the grand theme of redemption unites all of the separate books into one Bible. It shapes the design of each book.
3. **The harmony of story.** The coming of Jesus Christ.
4. **The harmony of structure.** Every book is essential to the Bible as a whole. To damage or remove any one would injure the unity.
5. **The harmony of doctrine.** One harmonious flow of teaching exists throughout the Bible. Each law, covenant, commandment, warning, blessing, etc., has its designed place.

### The Two Testaments: The Two Main Divisions of the Bible

**Old Testament.** Five divisions, thirty-nine books.

- **Law:** Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.
- **History:** Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.
- **Poetry:** Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon.
- **Major Prophets:** Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel.
- **Minor Prophets:** Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

**New Testament.** Four divisions, twenty-seven books.

- **Gospels:** Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.
- **History:** Acts.
- **Epistles:** Romans, I Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, I Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, I Peter, 2 Peter, I John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude.
- **Prophecy:** Revelation.

Chapters and verses have been added to the Bible by man. The chapter divisions were developed by Cardinal Hugo and first appeared in 1250 A.D. The verses of the New Testament were set in order by Sir Robert Stephen in 1551 A.D. It was in the Geneva Bible of 1560 A.D. that verses and chapters were included in a complete Bible for the first time.

## The Three Dispensations

1. **The Patriarchal Age.** Its name comes from "father." God spoke to the fathers through visions, dreams and angels. There was no written law.
2. **The Mosaic Age.** God expanded His method of dealing with mankind from family to nation. The name of this period comes from the lawgiver, Moses. Through him, with the Ten Commandments at its center, God set down a definite written code for social, political, and religious life.
3. **The Gospel Age.** This age has Jesus Christ with all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). Its chief characteristic is that God turns from family and nation to the whole world. The grand purpose of God is fulfilled through His Son—the redemption of mankind.

## The Major Covenants

A covenant is a solemn agreement entered into by two parties in which they are bound together to do things on behalf of each other. In the Biblical use of the term, when referring to the God—man relationship, it means that God takes the leadership as the superior and graciously enters into a relationship with man whereby promises are fulfilled when certain holy conditions are met.

Each covenant is for the man, or men, to whom it was given and for whom it was intended. It belongs to no one else except when extended to them by its author.

One general condition runs through all covenants God has made with mankind—man must believe in, love, and obey God.

### Four Essential Parts of a Covenant

1. **The first party.** The covenanter or benefactor.
2. **The second party.** The covenantee or beneficiary.
3. **The conditions that have to be met.**
4. **The promises or blessings to be desired and received after the conditions are met.**

### Six Important Covenants

1. **The Covenant with Adam.**
   First party: God. (Genesis 1:28-29; 2:15-16)
   Second party: Adam and Eve. (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:16)
   Conditions.
   - Be fruitful and multiply. (Genesis 1:28)
   - Replenish the earth. (Genesis 1:28)
   - Subdue the earth and have dominion over every living thing. (Genesis 1:28)
   - Dress and keep the garden. (Genesis 2:15)
   - Not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Genesis 2:17)

   Promises: Given the garden to live in and every tree and herb for food. (Genesis 1:29; 2:8,9,16)
   Mediator: None.
   Token: None.
2. **The Covenant with Noah Before the Flood.**
   First party: God. (Genesis 6:13)
   Second party: Noah, his wife, their sons and their wives. (Genesis 6:13,18; 7:13)
   Conditions.
   - Build an ark. (Genesis 6:14-16)
   - Enter into the ark with his family. (Genesis 6:18; 7:1)
   - Gather a certain number of beasts, fowls, and creeping things. (Genesis 6:19,20; 7:2,3)
   - Gather food to eat. (Genesis 6:21)

Promises: Noah's family saved from death. (Genesis 7:21)
Mediator: None.
Token: None.

3. **The Covenant with Noah After the Flood.**
   First party: God. (Genesis 9:8,12)
   Second party: Noah and his seed after him. (Genesis 9:8-10)
   Conditions.
   - Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. (Genesis 9:1,7)
   - Not eat the blood of flesh. (Genesis 9:4)
   - Whoever sheds a man's blood, his blood will be shed. (Genesis 9:6)

   Promises.
   - God will not curse the ground anymore. (Genesis 8:21)
   - God will not smite every living thing anymore. (Genesis 8:21)
   - The days and seasons will not cease. (Genesis 8:22).
   - Man will rule over beasts, fowls, and fish. (Genesis 9:2)
   - Every moving thing and every herb can be used for food. (Genesis 9:3)
   - The earth would never be destroyed by flood. (Genesis 9:11)

   Mediator: None.
   Token: God set the bow in the cloud. (Genesis 9:12-17)
4. **The Covenant with Abraham.**
   First party: God. (Genesis 12:1; 17:1-3)
   Second party: Abraham and his seed to follow in all generations. (Genesis 17:7)
   Conditions.
   - Go out of his country and into a new land God would show him. (Genesis 12:1)
   - Walk before God and be perfect. (Genesis 17:1)
   - Offer his son, Isaac, for a burnt offering. (Genesis 22:2)

   Promises.
   - God would make of Abraham a great nation. (Genesis 12:2)
   - God would bless him and make his name great. (Genesis 12:2)
   - God would bless those who would bless him and curse those who would curse him. (Genesis 12:3)
   - God would bless all families of the earth through him. (Genesis 12:3; 22:18)
   - The land of Canaan would be given to his seed. (Genesis 12:7)
   - His seed would be in number as the dust of the earth. (Genesis 13:16)
   - He would have a son. (Genesis 15:4)
   - He would be the father of many nations. (Genesis 17:4)
   - God would be a God to him and his seed. (Genesis 17:7)
   - God would give his seed Egypt in which to sojourn. (Genesis 26:1-5)
   - God would return his seed to the Promised Land. (Genesis 28:10-15)

   Mediator: None.
   Token: Circumcision. (Genesis 17:10-14)
5. **The Law.**
   First party: God. (Exodus 20:1)
   Second party: All Israel. (Exodus 34:27; Deuteronomy 5:1-3)

Conditions. The Ten Commandments plus all the statutes and judgments pertaining to private, social (or political), and religious life. (Exodus 20 through Deuteronomy)
Promises.

- Israel would be a peculiar and holy nation. (Exodus 19:5-6)
- According to Leviticus 26, God would give:
  - Good harvests and ample food.
  - Safety and peace.
  - Deliverance from evil beasts.
  - Protection from and power over enemies.
  - Respect.
  - Growth in number.
  - His presence.

Mediator: Moses. (Deuteronomy 5:5)
Token: The Sabbath. (Exodus 31:12-17; Ezekiel 20:12,20)

6. **The Gospel.**

First party: God. (Romans 1:1,16; Hebrews 1:1-2)
Second party: All the world. (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15-16)
Conditions.

- Hear the gospel. (Romans 10:13-14; 1 Corinthians 15:1)
- Believe in Jesus Christ. (Mark 16:15-16; John 20:30-31; Acts 8:36-37; 16:31; Romans 10:13-14; 1 Corinthians 1:21; Hebrews 11:6).
- Repent of sin. (Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38; 17:30)
- Confess faith in Jesus Christ. (Acts 8:37; Romans 10:10; Philippians 2:11)
- Be baptized into Christ. (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:36-39; 9:18; 22:16; Galatians 3:27)
- Continue to grow in holiness as a Christian (Matthew 28:20; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Peter 2:1-3; 2 Peter 1:5-11) by worshiping the Lord (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:24-26); by teaching all men (Matthew 28:19; Acts 8:1-3,29,35; Colossians 3:16); by being a good steward of all life (1 Corinthians 4:1,2; 6:19-20; 16:2; 1 Peter 4:10); and remaining faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10).

Promises.

- Forgiveness. (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14)
- Election. (Romans 8:33)
- Redemption. (Romans 3:23-26)
- Justification. (Romans 8:1,30-31)
- Grace. (Ephesians 2:8-9; 2 Timothy 2:1)
- Salvation. (2 Timothy 2:10)
- Hope. (1 Thessalonians 1:3)
- Peace. (1 Peter 5:14)
- Wisdom. (James 1:5)
- Protection and help. (1 Corinthians 10:13; Philippians 4:19)
- Righteousness. (Romans 3:21-22; 5:17)
- Inheritance. (Galatians 3:26-29)
- Rest. (Revelation 14:13)

- Victory. (2 Corinthians 2:14)
- Glory. (2 Timothy 2:10)
- Eternal life. (Romans 6:23; 1 John 5:11)

Mediator: Jesus Christ. (1 Timothy 2:5)

Token: Gift of the Holy Spirit. (2 Corinthians 1:22; Galatians 5:22-25; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30)

### The Importance of Setting

One must be very careful to keep a passage in the setting in which it was first given. It must be put in its rightful place according to the period of time and the covenant involved. One must take an historical approach to Bible study to be fully aware of the entire setting of a passage in which the Holy Spirit first placed it.

Some things to consider in the setting include:

- Who is speaking or writing?
- To whom?
  - What is their history?
  - What about their education?
  - What were their customs?
  - To which sins had they been addicted?
  - To what temptations were they subject?
- About whom?
- When was it spoken (or written)?
- Where was it spoken (or written)?
- What were the circumstances?
- Why? What is the purpose or aim?

## Questions for Review and Discussion

1. What are some contributing factors to the harmony of doctrine seen in the Bible?
2. Tell why you believe God divided His dealings with mankind into different dispensational periods?
3. What is a covenant?
4. What are the essential elements of a covenant?
5 What does a mediator of a covenant do?
6. What has a "token" to do with a covenant?
7. What bearing do the following covenants have on mankind today?
   a. God's covenant with Abraham.
   b. The Law.
   c. The Gospel.
8. What is setting? Why is it important in understanding Scripture?

# Lesson Eleven: Rules on Interpretation - III

## The Language of the Bible

13. **Rightly divide the language.**

### Literal Language

A good portion of the Bible is plain, literal language. It was used by the Lord to state facts, name persons and places, relate incidents, issue commandments and warnings, and draw conclusions

Such things should be taken literally and one should not be constantly searching for hidden meanings and fancy figures of speech.

The literal meaning of a word is that meaning which is given it by those to whom it is addressed.

### Figurative Language

Figurative language involves the use of symbols, stories, or other descriptive means to express truth.

#### The Purpose of Figurative Language

1. To illustrate and graphically portray truth taught elsewhere in Scripture.
2. To teach things outside our experience. To explain the unseen by the seen.
3. To make truth stand out more vividly.
4. To make a more lasting impression.
5. To conceal truth from its enemies.

#### When Language is Figurative

1. When a literal interpretation involves an impossibility or an absurdity. (Luke 9:60)
2. When a literal interpretation involves a contradiction or inconsistency. (John 11:25-26)
3. When a literal interpretation involves an immoral conclusion. (Matthew 18:8-9)
4. When such is implied by the context.
5. When such is stated. (John 2:18-21)
6. When common sense determines it to be. (John 4:10-15)

#### Rules for Understanding Figurative Language

1. Determine what kind of figure it is.
2. Follow the author's explanation, if he gives one. (Luke 8:11; 12:16-21)
3. Harmonize the figurative with the literal.
4. Harmonize the figurative with the customs of the time.
5. Do not press the meaning too far.
6. Remember that figures of speech may change their meaning from one instance to another and do not always represent the same things. (Matthew 13:33; 16:6-12)

**Some Figures of Speech**

1. **Parable.** A simple, normal, real life story or illustration used to present some moral truth. The Scriptures record at least thirty parables that Jesus used in His ministry. They had a way of concealing truth from those who would not receive or follow it.
2. **Fable.** A fictitious or imaginary story whose purpose was to teach some moral lesson. (2 Kings 14:8-10)
3. **Simile.** A thing or action that is said to be "like" or "as" something of a different kind or quality. (Matthew 3:16; Isaiah 1:18; 53:6)
4. **Metaphor.** A word or phrase which is said to be something else because of a likeness involved. It is calling one thing by another word, more descriptive and figurative. (Luke 13:32; Matthew 26:26)
5. **Allegory.** A metaphor extended into a complete story to illustrate some truth. The writer does not identify all the particular parts but leaves the reader to infer their meaning. (Ephesians 6:11-17)
6. **Riddle.** An analogy written up as a puzzle. To unravel it will thus produce some truth. (Judges 14:14)
7. **Hyperbole.** An exaggeration of some statement for the purpose of emphasis. (Psalm 22:6,14)
8. **Irony** and **sarcasm.** A sharp remark uttered in contempt or ridicule. The latter, sarcasm, is more severe in degree and intensity. (Matthew 27:29; Mark 15:31,32)
9. **Interrogation.** To question for effect, often not seeking an answer. It will bring out a point very strongly or even argue to the contrary. (Hebrews 2:3)
10. **Metonymy.** To substitute one word for another because they are related. (1 Corinthians 11:25,26; Acts 15:21)
11. **Personification.** Inanimate beings have personal attributes. (Psalm 114:3)
12. **Anthropomorphism.** The ascribing of human forms or attributes to God. (Exodus 33:22,23)

**Four Types of Language That Make Great Use of the Figurative**

1. **Poetry.** The use of artistic and imaginative ideas expressed in a language of rhythm.
2. **Proverb.** A profound but short pithy statement of truth, commonly held and valuable to those who will heed.
3. **Prophecy.** An instruction from God to man in regard to some significant fact of the past, the present, or the future. It makes man more aware of God's providential work in the world, His law, and how man should react to it. Its element of future prediction needs special care in interpretation. Predictions are divine and they have a definite holy purpose. Watch for the fulfillment of prophecies stated elsewhere in Scripture. Consider each prophecy in the light of its own setting and in harmony with all other Scriptures. Remember that many have both an immediate and a long range significance. Also remember that many figures of speech were used by the prophets to express them.
4. **Type.** A person, object, or incident prefiguring something greater and more exalted to follow. (Romans 5:14; Hebrews 7:17; 1 Corinthians 5:7; 1 Peter 1:19)

# Questions for Review and Discussion

1. Define "literal" in relation to language.

2. Define "figurative" in relation to language.

3. How does figurative language:

    a. Make truth stand out more vividly?

    b. Conceal truth from its enemies?

4. Why is it impossible to interpret the language of Luke 9:60 literally?

5. What bearing do the customs of the times in which a figure of speech is used have on the meaning of that figure?

6. What is a parable? What is its purpose(s)? Why do you think it so little used today?

7. Can you think of any problems in the church today that are related to a misunderstanding or misapplication of metonymy? Explain.

8. Before the true meaning of a prophecy is determined, what must be taken into consideration?

# Lesson Twelve: Rules of Interpretation IV

## The Meaning of Words and Statements

14. **Know the meaning of words and sentences.** If one wants to know the exact meaning of God's word, he certainly must know the exact meanings of the words He chose.

### Rules to Determine the Meaning of Words

1. Seek the original meaning of a word. Modern usage of it is meaningless. One must see the words strictly from the viewpoint of the writers.
2. Each word in a given instance has but one meaning.
3. The definition of the writer is always the best.
4. Of a word with many meanings, determine which meaning the author intended.
    a. Use that shade of meaning in use at the time of the writing.
    b. Look at the context where the word is found.
    c. Observe closely the purpose of the writer or the general scope of the writing.
    d. Use comparison by consulting similar or parallel passages where the same word occurs, especially passages in the same book.
5. Recognize some words as having a specific Biblical meaning ("Good news," conversion, saint, church, deacon, elders, apostle, fellowship, repent, faith, etc.).

### The Meaning of Sentences

A sentence is words in a definite arrangement so that they compose a unit of thought. Two steps are necessary to determine the meaning of sentences:

1. Observe all the simple rules of grammar and rhetoric.
2. Use all the rules of comparison as advocated in the case of individual words.

## Questions for Review and Discussion

1. Why is modern usage of a word "useless" when it comes to understanding its Biblical use? Cite examples.

2. If a word has many meanings, how can one determine which meaning the author had in mind?

3. What are the non-Biblical meanings of the following words?
    a. Church.
    b. Fellowship.
    c. Elder.
    d. Saint.

4. Why is a knowledge of grammar and rhetoric important to an understanding of Scripture? Cite a specific example.

5. Is it important to have an understanding of the languages, and their rules of grammar, in which the Bible was originally written?

# Lesson Thirteen: Rules of Interpretation V

## The Limit of Divine Revelation

15. **Know the limit of divine revelation.** One must be able to ascertain the exact limit of all that God has said. One must only operate in the realm in which God has spoken, His divine authority.

### The Old Testament Has No Authority Today

We are not guided by the Old Testament today. It has served its purpose (Galatians 3:24-27) and was fulfilled by Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:17). It has been "taken...out of the way." (Colossians 2:14)

No practices or doctrines of the Old Law are to be used today to justify any practices in religion. To do so, causes one to be severed from Christ. (Galatians 5:4)

The Old Testament does serve to teach us about Jesus (John 5:39) and to provide examples, both positive and negative, for us to emulate or abstain from. (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11)

### The New Testament Is Our Authority Today

The New Testament is our authority today because it contains the word of Christ (John 12:48; Hebrews 1:1-2), the one who possesses all authority (Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:22-23). His words provide all things necessary for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3) and thoroughly furnish us to every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Therefore, all is to be done in His name, i.e., by His authority (Colossians 3:17).

### How the New Testament Instructs

The authority of Christ is expressed in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9). The doctrine of Christ is the perfect, complete revelation of God's will in the gospel, the New Testament. (Hebrews 1:1-2)

The authority of Christ teaches us in three ways: 1) Direct command or statement; 2) Approved example or precedent; 3) Necessary inference or implication.

#### Direct Command or Statement

This is a direct statement of something that must or must not be done. Acts 2:38 is an example of this type of teaching.

The command or statement can either be specific (Ephesians 5:19) or general (Matthew 28:19). Specific commands exclude all things not specified. General commands include everything that is necessary to carrying out the general command.

#### Approved Example or Precedent

This is the example of the practice of the New Testament church under the guidance of the apostles (Philippians 4:9), who in turn taught and practiced what they received from the Lord. (1 Corinthians 11:1) We do not follow every example for many of them are purely incidental.

#### Necessary Inference or Implication

A necessary inference or implication is something that is not expressly stated nor specifically exemplified, yet necessarily implied or inferred by the clear import and meaning of the language used.

A good illustration of this is Hebrews 10:25. In this passage an assembly is commanded. This verse does not mention a place to assemble but one must necessarily infer that people cannot assemble without some place at which to meet.

# Questions for Review and Discussion

1. What are some things which necessitated changing from the Old Law to the New?

2. What is said of a person who today tries to justify his religious practices by the Old Law?

3. Why, in relation to Scripture, is it important to remember that Jesus possesses all authority in heaven and on earth?

4. Analyze Acts 15:1-21 to see how the first century church determined whether or not the rite of circumcision was an authorized religious practice. Explain what you find.

5. Why are some New Testament examples binding while others are not?

6. Illustrate a necessary implication by using Scripture.

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