



Principals of Biblical Interpretation

General

- Begin with the assumption that the Bible is authoritative
- Let Scripture interpret Scripture
- Saving faith and the Holy Spirit are necessary to fully understand and properly interpret the Scriptures
- Interpret personal experiences with Scripture, not Scripture with personal experiences
- Biblical examples are authoritative only when supported by a command
- The purpose of Bible study is a changed life, not merely for knowledge
- Each person has a personal responsibility to investigate and study the Word of God
- Appreciate and learn from church history, but it is not the law in interpreting Scripture
- Through the Holy Spirit, the promises of the Bible are available to believers of every generation (keeping in mind the proper context of the immediate passages)

Grammatical

- There's only one meaning, take it literally
- Words are to be interpreted with the correct meaning during the time of the author
- Words ... then sentence ... and context
- Interpret a passage in harmony with its Context
- Consider figurative language (figures of speech)
- Figurative language can also be identified when the expression is considered out of character with the thing described
- The principle parts and figures of a parable represent certain realities. Consider only these principle parts and figures when drawing conclusions.
- Interpret the words of the prophets in their usual, literal, and historical sense, unless the context reveals a symbolic meaning

Historical

- Since Scripture originated in a historical context, it can be understood only in the light of Biblical history
- Though revelation occurred progressively, the entire Bible (revelation of God) forms a unity
- Historical facts or events become symbols of spiritual truths only if the Scriptures designate them so (e.g. typologies)

Theological

- You must understand the Bible grammatically before you can understand it theologically
- A doctrine cannot be considered Biblical unless it sums up and includes all that the Scriptures say about it (theological systems are only as strong as their cohesive and consistent parts)
- When two doctrines taught in the Bible appear to be contradictory, accept both as Scriptural in the confident belief they will resolve themselves into a higher unity
- A teaching merely implied in Scripture may be considered Biblical when a comparison of related passages supports it