

Principles of Interpretation

1. It must be consistent with itself;

- 2Ti 3:16 All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:
- Pr 30:5 Every word of God [is] pure: he [is] a shield unto them that put their trust in him.
- See also Ps 19:7

2. The common person can understand - It must be adapted to our understanding, as it was given for man's instruction. We should study the Scriptures for ourselves, and ascertain if every apparent contradiction can not be harmonized.

- These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Acts 17:11 whoso readeth, let him understand:” Mt 24:15
- Ps 19:7 The law of the LORD [is] perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD [is] sure, making wise the simple.

a) As far as possible, lay aside all preconceived opinions

- ...received the word with all readiness of mind... Acts 17:11
- For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. Isaiah 55:8

3. Dispense with commentaries, compare scripture with scripture

- The work of explaining the Bible by the Bible itself is the work that should be done by all our ministers who are fully awake to the times in which we live.-- Letter 376, 1906, p. 7.
- “For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little:” Isa 28:10

a) Use the aid of the marginal references and the concordance.

4. Use a regular and methodical manner

a) Proceed no faster than the meaning of the several passages so unfolded as to leave one free from all embarrassment.

- Let all things be done decently and in order. 1 Corinthians 14:40
- These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Acts 17:11

5. Compare it with every other text which seemed to have any reference to the matter under consideration. (since it is the same author that wrote all of it)

a) It must be able to be harmonized with every collateral (related to, parallel) passage

- Noah Webster: COLLATERAL, a. 1. Being by the side, side by side, on the side, or side to side. 4. Running parallel.
- For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost. 2Pe 1:21

6. Every word should be permitted to have its proper bearing upon the subject of the text

- Lu 4:4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.
- Pr 30:5 Every word of God [is] pure: he [is] a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

7. Study with earnest prayer -

- The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple. Psalm 119:130.
- For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.” 2Pe 1:21
- If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. Jas 1:5