

## Hermeneutics - **General Principles of Interpretation** - Review

### **Rule 1: *Work from the assumption that the Bible is authoritative***

The Bible is the final court of appeal - not tradition or experience

The Bible's Claims for Itself:

- A. It is infallible - *Psalm 19:7*
- B. It is Complete - *Prov. 30:6*
- C. It is Sufficient - *2 Timothy 3:15 - 17*
- D. It is Authoritative - *Isaiah 1:2*
- E. It is Determinative - *John 8:47* -
- F. It is Effective - *Isaiah 55:11*

### **Rule 2: *The Bible interprets itself; Scripture best explains Scripture***

### **Rule 3: *Saving faith and the Holy Spirit are necessary for us to understand and properly interpret the Scriptures***

### **Rule 4 - Interpret personal experience in the light of Scripture and not Scripture in the light of personal experience.** (pp 157-160)

The events of narrative passages (Acts) are interpreted by doctrinal passages, not the opposite. (158)

Experience attests to the validity of doctrine, but does not formulate doctrine (159)

You learn through experience, but you do not judge the Bible by it. (160)

### **Rule 5 - Biblical examples are authoritative only when supported by a command.** (pp 161-163)

We are obligated to follow Biblical examples only when they illustrate a Biblical command, but not when such a command is lacking. (161)

1. *A biblical examples can verify what you think the Lord is leading you to do.* (162)

2. *A biblical example can be a rich source of application for your life* (162)

You cannot apply an application in your own life to other people - for such would be making a biblical example into a command.

The believer is free to do anything that the Bible does not prohibit - i.e. the Bible sets boundaries on what cannot be done, not on what can be done. All things are lawful unless prohibited by a biblical command / precept (i.e. Thou shall not steal includes copyright infringement, etc.). (163)

### **Rule 6 - The primary purpose of the Bible is to change our lives, not increase our knowledge**

The Holy Spirit intended that by reading the Scriptures we will learn and apply its lessons (1 Cor. 10:6)

Lessons can be learned either by personal experience, or the experience of others (164)

We must understand before we can apply, but understanding without application does not make a person godly (164)

1. Some passages are not to be applied in the same way they were applied at the time they were written. (i.e. animal sacrifices in the present - to whom was it written?) (165)

2. When you apply a passage it must be in keeping with a correct interpretation (166)

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General Principles of Interpretation - Rules 7-9

**Rule 7 - Each Christian has the right and responsibility to investigate and interpret the Word of God for himself.** (pp 167-170)

This principle undergirded the Protestant \_\_\_\_\_ of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century resulting in the quest to translate the Scriptures into common languages. Tragically, though there are now many English translations, there is also a serious problem of even professing Christians being Biblically illiterate.

Jesus rebuked the Jews of His day for their \_\_\_\_\_ to know & understand the Scriptures. They studied, yet remained ignorant (John 5:39)

A distinguishing mark of a follower of Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_ in His word (John 8:31 - see also Col. 3:16 & 2 Tim. 2:15)

Good Bible study will lead to \_\_\_\_\_ questions than will be answered this side of Heaven

If your interpretation leads to a conclusion contrary to historic interpretation - a \_\_\_\_\_ light, not a red light, should be in your mind. Make diligent search to know why the difference in conclusions.

As you become skilled in Bible study, others become a \_\_\_\_\_ in checking your own study - not the primary source of your Scriptural intake

Your own study will lead you to \_\_\_\_\_ about the truths of the Bible - not just assent.

**Rule 8 - Church history is important, but not decisive, in the interpretation of Scripture.** (pp 170-172)

Scripture itself must be the \_\_\_\_\_ - not reason or tradition

Corollary - **The church does not determine what the Bible teaches; the Bible is to determine what the Church teaches.**

History is important because it gives us the insights of the wealth of Scriptural study of \_\_\_\_\_ generations.

**Rule 9 - The promises of God throughout the Bible are available to the Holy Spirit for the believers of every generation.**

Claiming promises is \_\_\_\_\_ - use the same cautions here as you would in determining the will of God.

Claiming promises is a specific form of application - it is \_\_\_\_\_ to interpret the passage containing the promise properly before claiming any promise.

Pg. 173 - author states: *It is permissible to claim a promise outside of its historical context as long as you are true to what the passage says and means.* NO! - You can gain understanding of God's character and nature and apply the principle of the text, but you cannot claim the specific promise!!!

You must have the proper \_\_\_\_\_. Promises are given to help you do God's will, not try to get God to do your own will. You defeat the purpose of promises when you make them self-serving.

Promises not fulfilled? Possibilities

- 1) God let you down - not a \_\_\_\_\_ possible conclusion
- 2) You misclaimed the promise - An often occurring problem due to taking a promise out of \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) It will be fulfilled at a \_\_\_\_\_ and / or in a way you don't expect (Hebrews 11:39f)

Types of Promises

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_ Promises - not made to any specific person or period of time  
i.e. 1 John 1:9 - available to all Christians - and basis of repentance for non-Christians
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_ Promises - given to a specific individual or group on a specific occasion

CAUTION: Specific promises can assure us of God's care and response to others, but that does not mean that promise is also specific to us. We must learn to trust in God's character, not misappropriated promises made to others. (i.e. - the Prayer of Jabez - 1 Chron. 4:10).

Guidelines:

1). *The Spirit of God gives them to individual Christians at particular times in their lives as He chooses.*  
CAUTION: NO, it is always best to keep the promises in the Scriptural context and apply principles from the text, and not the specific promise itself.

2) *Promises are often \_\_\_\_\_* - the condition must be met (look for the word "if")

3) *The Holy Spirit is \_\_\_\_\_* -

4) *Do not prejudge the Lord as to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the promise will be fulfilled in your life.*

5) *God gives His promises to make you \_\_\_\_\_ dependent on Him, not independent*

6) *God's intent is to \_\_\_\_\_ Himself by His promises - be sure to give Him that glory.*

Be sure to take full \_\_\_\_\_ for the decisions you make - you have determined God's will for yourself, which is fine, unless you mis-understand His will and misclaim His promises.