

The Six Rules of Bible Interpretation

“Knowledge must **precede** Faith; Rom. 10:17,
4:20-21; Jn. 10:24, 25, 38; I Tim. 2:4”

Miller, Dave. 1996, *Piloting The Strait*. p. 152. Sain Publications.

The rules of Bible interpretation and first 2 paragraphs, from the desk of
Bro. Doc Marlow, Las Vegas, NV.

These rules of Bible Interpretation should be placed in your study Bible. Every subject can be understood well enough to do the right thing if all these rules are applied.

Note:

One must take everything in the Bible as literal unless the context forces us to understand it as a figure of speech. Except in Revelation, parts of Daniel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and other Apocalyptic passages of the O.T, and N.T. In that figurative type language, one must take everything as a figure unless the context forces us to do otherwise. Care must be taken when using passages to create a doctrinal position from Revelation. If the passage or similar passage cannot be found in other parts of the Bible, the Revelation passage should not be used as doctrinal stance.

Rules of Bible Interpretation

1. The Bible never contradicts itself
2. The Bible is its own best interpreter
3. All Scripture to be understood in its own CONTEXT
4. When was it said, Old Testament or New Testament?
5. Who said it?
6. To whom was it spoken?

Ways Scripture Conveys Information (Dave Miller)

I. The Hermeneutical Triad (Approaches to Interpretation)

- A. *Direct Statements*: What relevance does the statement have for people living today?
- B. *Accounts of Action*: A description of what some individual or group did or the historical account of what someone said.
- C. *Implication*: For example, if I know that Bill is taller than Jack and that Jack is taller than Fred, I know that Bill is taller than Fred by implication. Or, to read that God continued to be (in the N.T.) the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to know that they have been dead for hundreds of years is to know by implication that the three men are still in existence beyond the grave! Jesus used Implication constantly. (Everything the Bible teaches us today is by implication because nothing in it is written specifically to an individual in the year 2001.)

II. The Six Hermeneutical Principles/How to arrive at the intended meaning of Scripture. (Dave Miller)

- A. *Absolute, Objective truth exists.* Jn.17:17, 8:32, 7:17, 6:45 God has a body of truth He has made available to us. He expects us to use our mental faculties and cognitive powers to understand that truth.
- B. *We must reason correctly to arrive at God's Truth.* I Tim.1:8, II Tim.2:15, I Thess. 5:21.
- C. *The task of learning what God wants us to know requires considerable effort.* We must peruse and analyze. IITim. 2:15, Acts 17:11, Deut. 6:6-9.
- D. *We must recognize that there are incorrect interpretations.* II Cor. 4:2, Acts 20:30, Gal. 1:7, II Tim. 3:7-8. These passages show that there are false teachers aplenty! I Jn. 4:1, II Pet. 3:16, 2:1, Matt. 7:15. In God's sight there is **only THE truth** or various departures from that truth.
- E. *The interpreter must remain within the framework of Scripture.* Prov. 30:5-6 teaches that "Every word of God is pure...add not to His words, lest He reprove you, and you be found a liar. DON'T GO BEYOND WHAT IS WRITTEN! I Cor. 4:6, Gal. 1:6-8, II Jn. 9, Rev. 22:18-19 We also must recognize the role of "silence" in Scripture. Sometimes it is restrictive and sometimes it's not. Study hard to find the truth when dealing with silence.
- F. *A right attitude must be retained* A genuine desire to know the will of God and an honest heart to accept the truth no matter how difficult the demands of that truth might be. Matt.5:6, II Thess. 2:10, Have a ready mind: Acts 17:11, Luke 8:15, We shouldn't **go** to the Scriptures with attitude of getting our way or proving our position.

"...We give ourselves credit for having the ability to operate sensibly and communicate with one another intelligibly. Yet we turn right around and imply that the God of heaven, the one who is infinitely wiser and more capable than humans, is incapable of making His will known to humanity in a clear and understandable fashion! When we come to the Bible, we suddenly do an about face and **insist** that we can't be sure what God's will is, we can't be dogmatic on doctrine, we must allow for differing opinions on what is spiritually right and wrong!..."

Dave Miller, *Piloting The Strait.* p. 159.