

Series "Fixed On 66"
"Interpreting 66"
Part – 3

John 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16

How Do You Interpret the Bible? (How to understand the Bible)

Through the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit:

We need to note that the unsaved person cannot experience the illumination ministry of the Holy Spirit, only the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Interpretation: Illumination, though assured, does not always guarantee automatic understanding.

The Christian must study using both the abilities and the means at his own disposal.

- 1. Why Bible Interpretation Is Important**
- 2. General Rules for Interpreting the Bible**
- 3. Qualifications for Interpreting the Bible**
- 4. Problems in Bible Interpretation**
- 5. Definitions of Hermeneutics and Related Terms**
- 6. Divisions of Hermeneutics**

1. Why Bible Interpretation Is Important:

1. It is essential for understanding and teaching the Bible properly.
2. Bible interpretation is essential as a step beyond observation.
3. Bible interpretation is essential for applying the Bible properly.

2. General Rules for Interpreting The Bible:

By way of Introduction, 10 general rules for interpreting the Bible:

- 1. The Bible is Authoritative:** The Bible is the final authority.
- 2. The Bible interprets itself; Scripture best explains Scripture.**
- 3. Interpret personal experience in the light of Scripture and not Scripture in light of personal experience.**
- 4. Bible examples are authoritative only when supported by a command.**

Baptism: John baptized, Jesus and His disciples, later Jesus commanded it and the apostles practiced it.

5. The primary purpose of the Bible is to change our lives not increase our knowledge: 1 Corinthians 1-2 Wisdom puffs up!

6. Correct interpretation is essential before you can make correct application:

Example: (Paul and Silas arrested placed in Philippi jail, they are praying, and an earthquake takes place - **Acts 16:28-31** This is a historical account; it does not mean that if we believe we have the guarantee that our family will also all be saved.

7. Interpret a passage in harmony with its context: Example - **Matthew 18:20**

8. Interpret Scripture in light of its historical context: Example - word faith usage - **3 John 1:1-2**

9. A doctrine cannot be considered biblical unless it sums up and includes all that the Scriptures says about it: (Acts, History) and the epistles (Doctrine) Example – Filling of the Holy Spirit, Jesus, Acts and Epistles.

10. When two doctrines taught in the Bible appear to be contradictory, accept both as scriptural in the confident belief that they resolve themselves into a higher unity:

1. The Trinity

2. The dual nature of Jesus Christ (Fully God, Fully Man)

3. The sovereign election of God and the responsibility of man

3. Qualifications for Interpreting The Bible:

1. No one can fully comprehend the meaning of the Bible unless he/she is regenerated (Born Again). The unsaved person is spiritually blind (2 Corinthians 4:4) and dead (Ephesians 2:2) (1 Corinthians 2:14).

2. More than regeneration is necessary. Also reverence for and interest in God and His Word are essential to interpreting the Bible properly.

3. Other spiritual qualifications are a prayerful attitude and humility.

4. The Scriptures should also be approached with a willingness to obey them; a willingness to put into practice what has been learned in the Word.

5. The interpreter must also depend upon the Holy Spirit.

4. Problems in Bible Interpretation:

1. A time gap (chronological) Example: Matthew arranged in topical/subject.
2. A space gap (geographical) Arid climate, agricultural.
3. A customs gap (cultural) Example Hospitality was all important.
4. A language gap (linguistic) Greek can be more exact, 5 words for love
5. A writing gap (literary) Hebrew poetry.
6. A spiritual gap (supernatural).

5. Definitions of Hermeneutics and Related Terms:

Quote by Bernard Ramm:

HERMENEUTICS - The word is ultimately derived from Hermes the Greek god who brought the messages of the gods to the mortals, and the god of science, invention, eloquence, speech, writing, and art.

HERMENEUTICS - is the science and art of Biblical interpretation. The meaning of the biblical text is determined. 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.

EXEGESIS - The determination of the meaning of the biblical Text in its historical and literary contexts.

EXPOSITION - The communication of the meaning of the text along with its relevance to present-day hearers.

HOMILETICS - The science (principles) and art (task) by which the meaning and relevance of the biblical text are communicated in a preaching situation.

6. Divisions of Hermeneutics:

The rules of interpretation are divided into four categories:

1. General Principles of Interpretation
2. Grammatical Principles of Interpretation
3. Historical Principles of Interpretation
4. Theological Principles of Interpretation

1. General Principles of Interpretation - 8 Rules

RULE ONE: Work from the assumption that the Bible is authoritative.

Attitudes Towards the Bible:

1. Rationalism
2. Romanism

3. Mysticism
4. Neo-orthodoxy
5. Cults
6. Orthodoxy: The Bible alone is the ground of authority.

Different views of inspiration:

1. Natural;
2. Mechanical.
3. Fallible Inspiration;
4. Conceptual;
5. Inerrant, verbal, plenary inspiration.

RULE TWO: The Bible interprets itself; Scripture best explains Scripture.

1. Let the Bible be its own commentary.
2. The Bible's obscure passages are to be interpreted in light of clear passages.

Interpreting in context involves 3 main steps:

1. *Study the immediate context.*
2. *Study the more remote context.*
3. *Consider the context of the entire book.*

RULE THREE: Saving faith and the Holy Spirit are necessary for us to understand and properly interpret the Scriptures.

1 Corinthians 2:14-16

RULE FOUR: Interpret personal experience in light of Scripture and not Scripture in light of personal experience.

RULE FIVE: Biblical examples are authoritative only when supported by a command.

RULE SIX: The primary purpose of the Bible is to change our lives, not increase our knowledge.

RULE SEVEN: Each Christian has the right and responsibility to investigate and interpret the Word of God for himself.

RULE EIGHT: Church history is important but not decisive in the interpretation of Scripture.

2. Grammatical Principles of Interpretation:

RULE ONE: Scripture has only one meaning and should be taken literally.

Literal interpretation - means the words and sentences of scripture are understood in their normal meaning – the way that words are understood in normal communication.

RULE TWO: Interpret words in harmony with their meaning in the times of the author.

RULE THREE: Interpret a word in relation to its sentence and context.

RULE FOUR: Interpret a passage in harmony with its context.

RULE FIVE: When an inanimate object is used to describe a living being, the statement may be considered figurative.

RULE SIX: When an expression is out of character with the thing described, the statement may be considered figurative.

RULE SEVEN: The principal parts and figures of a parable represent certain realities. Consider only these principal parts and figures when drawing conclusions.

RULE EIGHT: Interpret the words of the prophets in their usual, literal, and historical sense, unless the context or manner in which they are fulfilled clearly indicates they have a symbolic meaning.

3. Historical Principles of Interpretation

The historical principles deal with the historical setting of the text. To whom and by whom was the book written? Why was it written and what role did the historical setting play in shaping the message of the book? What are the customs and surroundings of the people?

RULE ONE: Since Scripture originated in a historical context, it can be understood only in the light of biblical history.

RULE TWO: Though God's revelation in the Scriptures is progressive, both Old and New Testaments are essential parts of this revelation and form a unit.

"The Old Testament Is The New Testament Concealed, The New Testament Is The Old Testament Revealed."

RULE THREE: Historical facts or events become types of spiritual truths only if the Scriptures so designate them.

Persons

1. Melchizedek Heb 7:3, 15-17 Christ's perpetual priesthood.
2. Aaron Heb. 5:4-5 Christ's priestly ministry.

Events

3. Passover feast 1 Cor. 5:7 Christ our sacrifice.
4. Feast of Un-leavened Bread 1 Cor. 5:7-8 Believer's holy walk.
5. Feast of First fruits 1 Cor. 15:20-23 Christ's resurrection, a pledge of the believer's resurrection.
6. Feast of Pentecost Joel 2:28; The coming of the Holy Spirit Acts 2:
7. Feast of Trumpets Matt. 24:21-23 Israel's regathering.
8. Day of Atonement Zech 12:10; Israel's national Rom. 11:2-27; conversion by the blood of Christ. Heb. 9:19-28
9. Feast of Tabernacles John 7:2, 37-39 God's provision for man's need (with Israel in the kingdom).
10. Sabbath Things Col. 2:17; The Christian's spiritual Heb 4:3, 9, 11 rest Things.
11. Tabernacle Heb 8:5, 9:23-24 Christ, the believer's access to God and basis of fellowship with God.
12. Tabernacle curtain Heb 10:20 Christ, the believer's access to God.

13. Burnt offering Lev. 1; Heb 10:5-7 Christ's offering Eph 5:2 of Himself as the perfect sacrifice.
14. Grain offering Lev 2; Heb 10:8 Christ's offering of Himself as the perfect sacrifice of the highest quality.
15. Fellowship offering Lev 3; Eph 2:14 Christ's offering of Col 1:20 Himself as the basis for fellowship with God.
16. Sin offering Lev. 4:1-5:13; Christ's death for the Heb. 13:11-12 sinner in relation to the guilt of sin.
17. Guilt offering Lev. 5:14-6:7; Heb. 10:12 Christ's death as an atonement for the injury of sin.

4. Theological Principles of Interpretation

INTRODUCTION: Theology is the study of God and His relation to the world. The source book for this study is the Bible. Theology seeks to draw conclusions on various broad and important topics in the Bible.

RULE ONE: You must understand the Bible grammatically before you can understand it theologically.

RULE TWO: A doctrine cannot be considered biblical unless it sums up and includes all that the Scriptures say about it.

RULE THREE: When two doctrines taught in the Bible appear to be contradictory, accept both as scriptural in the confident belief that they resolve themselves into a higher unity.

RULE FOUR: A teaching merely implied in Scripture may be considered biblical when a comparison of related passages supports it.

Application: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

- 1. Scripture -Reveals What Is Right: and profitable for teaching, doctrine.**
- 2. Scripture - Reveals What Is Not Right: for reproof, (Negative),**
- 3. Scripture - Reveals How To Get Right: for correction, (Positive),**
- 4. Scripture - Reveals How To Stay Right: for training in righteousness;**