

Practical Rules of Interpretation

Rule #1 – The Bible is to be read like any other book. It is not like any other book, but it is to be read under the rules of grammar like any other book, for example, a noun is a noun, a verb is a verb, and so on.

Rule #2 – The Bible is to be read in historical context.

Rule #3 – Historical narratives are to be interpreted by the didactic portions of Scripture.

Rule #4 – The implicit is to be interpreted by the explicit.

Rule #5 – We should carefully determine the meaning of words, and the context in which they are used.

Rule #6 – Ask yourself the four basic rules of a reader:

1. What is the book about as a whole?
2. What is being said in detail?
3. Is what is being said true?
4. If it is true, why is it important?

When it comes to the Bible, the first two questions are the interpretation, the third question is always yes, and the fourth question is the application.

Rule #7 – Find the important key words and verses of the text.

Rule #8 – Look at the difference between sentences and propositions. Sentences may or may not contain propositions. Sentences may be questions. Propositions are answers to questions. They are declarations of knowledge or opinion. So find the propositions in the book.

Rule #9 – Once you find the propositions in the book, look to see if these form arguments.

Rule #10 – Look for solutions to the arguments.

Above all, don't forget that the Bible is God's inspired Word. The most important rule is to approach the Bible with a clear conscience, having prayed to God that He would help you understand the text through the work of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:12-13).