

INTERPRETING THE BIBLE

INTERPRET THE BIBLE AS IT IS WRITTEN

The only valid way of interpreting the Bible is the method of literal interpretation. literal interpretation means that we are to interpret the Bible as it is written. Various forms of literary expression are used in the Bible and are to be interpreted according to the normal rules of communication. History is to be treated as history, parables as parables, and metaphors as metaphors. The following is a sample of the forms of writing found in the Bible.

Historical	Prophetic (Prophecy)
Narrative	Didactic (explanatory & instructional teaching)
Poetic	Figurative
Parabolic (Parables)	Idiomatic

INTERPRET THE BIBLE BY THE BIBLE

The chief rule of interpreting the Bible is "The Bible is its own interpreter." What may be unclear in one part of Scripture may be explained clearly in another. To interpret the Bible by the Bible means that no one passage is set against another; but rather, all related passages are considered, thereby allowing the Bible to explain itself. Each passage must be understood in light of its immediate context and also in light of the context of the whole of Scripture.

INTERPRET THE BIBLE LOGICALLY

Because the Bible is absolutely true it is also very logical in its teaching. You may not know exactly what a passage is saying but you can know what it is not saying. Like all didactic literature the following rules apply to interpreting the Bible.

*Interpret the apparent by the known. Apparent conclusions must be interpreted in light of known facts.

In Genesis 22:12, the apparent interpretation would be that God did not know if Abraham feared Him. The known fact is that God is Omniscient- He knows everything.

*Interpret the implied by the expressed. Let clearly expressed truths in the Bible interpret implied statements.

Genesis 6:6 seems to imply that God made a mistake in the beginning by making man. Many other passages clearly express that God made no mistake. Adam's fall and man's subsequent depravity is part of His eternal plan.

*Interpret the general by the specific. Specific or detailed statements must always be considered when interpreting general ones.

1 John 3:17, 18 teaches that if we see our Christian brother in need we must help him. 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 specifies that if our brother is in need because he is lazy, then we must not help him.