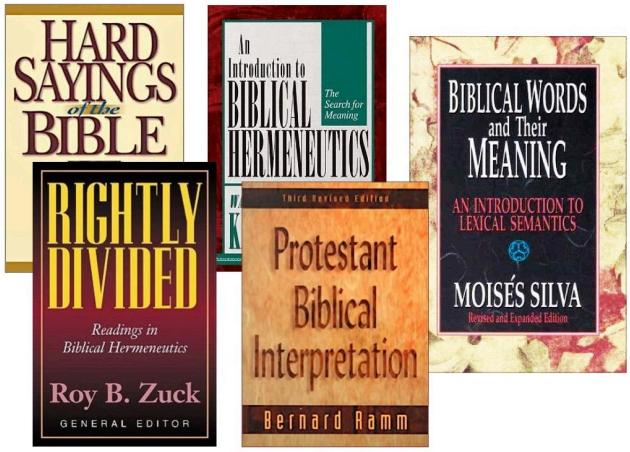
Bible Interpretation

Principles Of Bible Study And Bible Interpretation



There is a right and a wrong way to interpret scripture. If we interpret everything in the Bible literally we will end up with many wrong interpretations. The context matters along with how a word is used elsewhere in scripture. Also, our interpretation of a passage must be in harmony with what the rest of the Bible has to say about the subject at hand. Nowhere is this more important than with major Bible doctrines such as those pertaining to Predestination, Election, God's sovereignty and man's depravity. The theological term for the theory and methodology of Bible interpretation is called "hermeneutics". Christians who understand the importance of studying and searching the Scriptures like the Bereans of Acts 17:11, will be very interested in the subject of proper Bible interpretation. Also, Christians who want to find out if their pastor or favorite Bible teacher is on target or off base, will be very anxious to do their own studies of the Scriptures, using proper Biblical hermeneutics.

Bible Interpretation Posts At Our Website:

The Question Of Hermeneutics (a good starting point)
Hermeneutics – Many Resources Regarding Principles Of Bible Study
Word List for the King James Bible
A Disputation On Holy Scripture

Here is an excellent collection of articles and guidelines for Bible Study.

Start here: Personal Qualifications For Understanding
- **Rule 1:** There are no contradictions in the Bible.
- **Rule 2:** Interpretations must agree with their context.
- **Rule 3:** Compare Scripture with Scripture.
- **Rule 4:** Rightly Divide Scripture.

Rule 5: Obey the Rules of Grammar.
Rule 6: Reason by Proper Rules of Logic.
Rule 7: Distinguish relative or absolute texts.
Rule 8: Learn the Basic Figures of Speech.
Rule 9: The Argument from Silence Is Invalid.
Rule 10: The Prophets Used Similitudes.
Rule 11: Use Parables and Proverbs Cautiously.
Rule 12: Observe the Emphasis of Scripture.
Other Minor Rules: Additional guidelines for studying and interpreting Scripture.

We MUST be sure that our hermeneutic (method of Bible interpretation), is a legitimate one. We must not assume that we can take some lazy way out, and just look at one Bible verse and assume our first impression is the right one. We must read scripture IN CONTEXT and in agreement with similar passages about similar issues/subjects. A lot of Christians are NOT like the Bereans of Acts 17:11. They are too anxious to have answers – especially answers that back up their already solidified opinions – and don't want to do the WORK involved in searching for biblical truth.

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, whether those things were so." Acts 17:11

God doesn't always reveal the meaning of Scripture instantaneously:

"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Matthew 11:25

God, the Holy Spirit, has to open our understanding to the Scriptures. It is not always a simple or automatic process:

"Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures" Luke 24:45

Peter knew that not everything in Scripture is easy to understand:

"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are SOME THINGS HARD TO BE UNDERSTOOD, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." 2 Peter 3:15-16

It is BECAUSE many Christians don't KNOW HOW to properly STUDY the Bible, that we have these Bible Study and Hermeneutics resources on our website. This sad state of affairs regarding Bible study is largely due to most churches neglecting to teach their members how to properly interpret Scripture. They simply have one or two preachers spoon feeding the

congregation every time they gather together. That may be a good way of keeping the sheep lazy, ignorant and under control, but it sure does not turn babes in Christ into mature, knowledgable disciple-makers.

Sure, SOME things in Scripture are plain and straightforward. But MANY things are NOT and require diligent STUDY. Also, it is not a sin or mistake to see what other students of the Bible, who are more mature in the faith than we are (and who are more knowledgeable in a particular area of doctrine) have to say about Bible subjects that we are studying.