
001-C: PRINCIPLES

1: BASIC BIBLE STUDY RULES



The Most Important Principle of dealing with Biblical Prophecy is that the Bible is its own Interpreter and the Holy Spirit, Who is the true Author of the Scriptures, will aid the honest in heart to understand its truths.

Rules of Biblical Understanding

Turning on the Light! 7emca7: 2014

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Psalm 119:105

At prophecy schools and group study, we often hear some folk lamenting that they cannot seem to see and understand the things that are being presented. "I just don't see it," is the complaint. Others seem to be easily grasping the various presentations while these folk find themselves groping in mist and darkness. What could be making the difference?

There are many factors that can affect our ability to receive the deeper things of the Word of God. Of course the biggest blockade to understanding is an attitude of just not wanting to see it; but what if the one issuing this sad lament really does want to learn, but is not grasping the material. If you find yourself in that category, do not despair; there are solutions for you. Let's explore things that affect our perceptions.

Our Backgrounds.

For many folk these days, learning something new is not easy. Many have bad experiences connected with study and reading; others have problems with dyslexia and other perceptive challenges; these things can make the task seem insurmountable. But take courage; we have a promise for such situations:

James 1:5 "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

Remember, Jesus has extra special compassion for us bashed up sheep; the patience He shows and the special protection He gives such persons is amazing. One can only fall to one's knees before Him in amazement at His grace and mercy!

What you have to do is acknowledge all your weaknesses to Him; don't allow yourself to keep thinking that "this is just the way you are and it can't be helped". It can be helped; just get real close to Jesus and keep asking Him for help in all you do. When you have to do something you know is hard for you, plead for extra angels to be sent you for special help and guidance. Ask for the Holy Spirit and all of the heavenly powers to come to your aid. All the help you will ever need is available to you just for the asking.

Many people believe they are just too common and unworthy to be able to claim the very powers of heaven for assistance. They have this mind-set that God has super people and it is

only to those He gives all these promises. Many have this idea that the 144000 are going to be polished, special, super-people, so strong and healthy and everything. This is not so; they are going to be gathered from the very dregs of this world's pile of rubbish. They are going to be the little people from the highways and hedges and dung-hills of this world! Jesus is going to demonstrate to the universe His power to recreate the most messed up and broken, fitting them to stand with Him, and for Him through all that Satan can throw at them and on into Eternity. Fail not to grab hold of all that is your privilege to receive from Jesus!

Zechariah 12:8 "In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them."

Living up to Light we have:

We must live up to all the light we have, before God will teach us more. As truth is opened to our understanding, we should determine by God's grace to walk in its light. God has set before us an upward pathway and it is His will that we should walk in His footsteps. As our Savior therefore leads us further along the pathway of advanced truth, we must determine to follow, if we would keep in step with Him, and remain His disciple. Also, living according to the truth that we already have, qualifies us to receive more light and truth from God.

"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:31, 32.

"And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts. I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed. And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes." Psalm 119:45-48.

Distractions in our Lives.

Do you have television or other worldly entertainment in your home? Do you watch it? Do you play video or computer games or watch movies? Do you listen to the music of the world? Indulgence in these worldly things will place us where the Holy Spirit cannot teach us and God's angels cannot be with us in our homes. When that happens, the devil's angels come right in and take their place. We cannot be 'double-minded' wanting one foot in the world and the other on the heavenly path; there will be no clarity of spiritual understanding in such a case.

I have found personally that even watching a so-called 'good movie' creates a dullness of spiritual perception that takes days to overcome. It is like when Mary and Joseph lost track of Jesus and sought after Him for three days. I have also experienced that worldly music or stories seem to have a most adhesive nature when it comes to staying in our minds and crowding out spiritual thoughts.

Importance of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit's job is to lead each individual person into truth through the pure Word of inspiration and He will give the true hearted the ability to discern truth from error.

We should ask the Heavenly Father, in the Name of Jesus, to send the Holy Spirit to guide us as we study the Bible. Though written by men, the Bible has been supernaturally inspired. We therefore need the Holy Spirit, the Author of all scripture, to guide and instruct us as we study. Prayer for divine instruction and enlightenment should always precede study of God's Word. Without heaven's assistance to render our minds spiritually receptive, it is not possible to

properly interpret and appreciate the truths of the Bible, which are often hidden beneath the surface and readily missed by the casual, superficial approach.

“But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

1 Corinthians 2:10-14.

Our Purpose and Attitude in the Study of the Scriptures

Come with me to explore a little story found in the book of Acts. Paul was presenting Present Truth to Sergius Paulus, who was a deputy in the government and there was a man present who had great impact previously with the deputy. He was determined to keep the Deputy from accepting the Present Truth, as this would certainly cause him to lose all his influence with the man.

Acts 13:8 “But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. 9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, 10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? 11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.”

Now this was a dramatic occurrence and helped a lot to further the gospel in that area. But I want to draw attention to the last sentence; “And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.” Notice; he did not repent of his wickedness and seek the Lord’s forgiveness and ask God, or even beg Paul to restore his sight; no he went about ‘seeking some to lead him by the hand’.

This is what is behind these theories of ‘Higher Criticism’ and ‘Historic Grammatical’ theories of Bible exegesis. People and leaders are determined to turn away from the simple and obvious Bible Truths that require a commitment on their part. The ‘Bible just as it reads’ cuts across their path of self-indulgence and their ambitious plans of self-exaltation, and they have to find a method of making that cutting Word null and void; they seek a method of ignoring the Word that will pass as a method of exalting it, and also bring the adulation of men to themselves.

When we despise and turn from the plain Word of God, then whether we are common lay persons or the highest authority in the religious system, we move into mist and darkness. Then it is that we seek some to lead us by the hand; we look to scholars and theologians who are more than glad to tell us what to believe. They will lead down any and all winding devious paths that can satisfy the carnal heart and shield from the pricking of the conscience by the sword of the Word.

If our goal in study is to evade responsibility presented to us by the Authoritative Word of God, then we will always grope in mist and darkness, seeking the theories of so-called 'higher Education' to lead us by the Hand.

"Yea hath God said?"

It is a most dangerous thing when people are not allowed to simply read and believe the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy just as it plainly reads, but they must accept and submit to the mind of another weak and erring mortal man who interprets what inspiration REALLY means for them. This is not only a repetition of the serpent's words "yea, hath God said", but is directly in conflict with Miller's rule which states that "if I should have another man interpret the Bible for me, and he should guess at its meaning, then his guessing, creed, etc. becomes my rule and not the Bible".

If you accept any person as your authority and guide in spiritual matters, you are in no way different from Roman Catholics who kneel at the feet of the Pope and make him their god. People all need to pray and study Scripture and inspiration for themselves because that is our path to know truth. The theologians are not that source of light, nor are any human being or group here on earth.

Jeremiah 17:5 Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

Freedom of Conscience

It is totally contrary to the very spirit of the Character of God to think that any man has the right to sit and judge and denounce everyone they don't agree with, and try to coerce or manipulate or threaten all into following only what he holds as truth. Even in attempting to do that, that man loses the Holy Spirit; and without this Heavenly Guide, that man's 'truth' will only degenerate into mist, darkness and foolishness.

As human beings we have no right to forbid others the same privileges of religious and doctrinal freedom that we expect for ourselves. We are not to try and do the job of the Holy Spirit! We cannot use the devil's methods to promote the Lord's work. God will have nothing to do with methods that do this! The solemn thing is, if we get into a position where the Holy Spirit cannot support us because we have unconfessed sin in the way, we will lose all the light we had and go far away into darkness and not know it! We will be as the blind leading the blind by the hand when they both are in mist and darkness.

Praying for the Spirit to Teach us

I am very serious about the praying for guidance—it is not a formality. Satan is out to destroy all and humanly we cannot throw off the blindness he casts over people. When once we have accepted a mixture of truth and error as solid ground, we can study our eyes out, and we will not see the clear answers because of mist and darkness. This is a heart thing; none of us can do this for another; like the wise Virgins could not share their oil with the foolish. We need all to seriously pray and plead that we will be able to see! We need to be 'full of eyes'.

One thing all must search out in their heart is; "Am I willing to see possible error in what I have formerly considered truth? Or am I really deeply determined to stay where I am in understanding? Have I determined already that I am right and am not willing to actually hear anything otherwise?" Pray and ask God to please allow you to see your heart. The Holy Spirit will never be given to drag us to truth—we have to be willing to go there.

An Experience in Deception

I am going to tell you a story that happened to this writer a long while back. It may help you to understand what I am trying to share here.

Many years ago I stumbled onto a writer that I enjoyed very much. When I first got one of his books I thought I had discovered the greatest light! For years I bought and read every one of his books I could get and sad to say, I also bought many and gave them to others! There was something about his message that seemed to be a break-through into a higher spiritual experience; maybe a bit like how Eve felt when she ate the fruit! But I never found any real victory in my life through his teachings, and I never saw anyone else who actually did either! In fact, they would often stop progressing spiritually altogether.

There came a time when I began to really know there was something wrong with his teachings, and I would take the books and struggle and try so hard to be able to see what the problem was and I could not see it! Still, I felt for sure there was something wrong.

By the way, this impression that there was something wrong only came to me at the time I began listening to the pure KJV Bible on cassette tapes. Always remember the Holy Spirit speaks to us mainly through the Bible and the unadulterated Spirit of Prophecy. So the Holy Spirit began impressing me that there was a problem, but I still could not see it.

Finally one day in desperation, I got down on my knees and I PLED with the Lord, "Oh Lord, I know there is a problem and I can't see it! Please help me! Please show me the problem!" This was how I prayed; then I took the books again, and suddenly I could see! It was a jumble of truth and error; one page would contradict another and so on. I could see it clearly; the Lord showed me! I destroyed all of those books I had left and I still feel badly that I shared them with others.

I know that unless you actually truly want to know truth—and not just defend your own ideas—you will not see no matter what. The Lord dwells with those of a humble and contrite heart; seek to have a teachable spirit; plead to have your eyes opened and the Holy Spirit to guide you, and light will open before you in glorious rays.

Principles

In order to study the Bible, including the Prophetic aspects of it, and arrive at an accurate conclusion, we must be willing to abide by the following principles:

1. We must believe that the whole Bible is the inspired word of God, or at least we must have a desire to find out. We must be willing to abide by its teachings, even if they go contrary to our own personal ideas and practices.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4.

2. We must be humble and teachable. However great and extensive our knowledge and educational achievements humanly speaking, we must come humbly to the word of God, not seeking to study it from a secular standpoint, as a scientific or philosophical work, with a dependence upon human intellect. If we are putting our trust in intellectual pride and humanistic opinion, it will prevent us from being able to understand the deep spiritual truths of the Bible. God requires us to come humbly and with a teachable attitude, sincerely and prayerfully seeking to understand His word. Jesus 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

3. We must compare scripture with scripture, and allow the Bible to explain itself. It is not uncommon to find individuals and groups of people who build a whole theology upon one single statement of the Bible, when other passages would show a completely different meaning. This can be very dangerous and misleading. The only correct and safe way of securing an understanding of a particular truth, is to study everything that the Bible has to say about that specific topic.

We must study broadly, permitting the Bible to define its own terms. This will preserve us from the practice of taking an isolated passage and twisting it to fit or “prove” our own ideas. We should always approach the Bible with an open and honest attitude, willing to lay aside any established beliefs and practices, whenever we find them to be without scriptural foundation.

“Whom shall He teach knowledge? And whom shall He make to understand doctrine?... For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line, here a little, and there a little.” Isaiah 28:9, 10.

4. We must truly desire to know truth before we can learn truth. Our motives for studying the Bible must always be honorable and acceptable to God if we would receive instruction and guidance from the Holy Spirit.

If it is our determined purpose to research the Bible in order to find arguments against the truth, God will leave us to our own devices. For example, some use a few isolated verses to supposedly prove that God’s law was abolished when Jesus Christ died upon the cross. A proper method of research will clearly demonstrate that such is not the case, and the verses used to substantiate this idea, are found to say no such thing when placed in their proper context.

Only those who are willing to love and accept the truth when it is made plain, and not seek to construct arguments against it, will be preserved from the dangers of self-deception. God will not force us to believe anything against our will. His Word clearly describes what will happen to those who still choose contrary to what He has plainly revealed:

“Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.” 2 Thessalonians 2:10, 11.

5. Bible study must become a priority in life. Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven to:

“a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.” Matthew 13:45, 46.

We must earnestly search for truth, recognizing that it is worth more than anything else in life. This quest must be made a priority, when other things seek to crowd into the time that should be allocated to personal Bible study. Our desire, our relish and our love for the Bible will strengthen and deepen, as we discipline ourselves to study it every day. God’s promise to us is:

“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:13.

2: *The Principles of Prophetic Interpretation*

In the early 1800s a man named William Miller set himself to study to discern whether the Bible was, or was not, a truly inspired document. In the process of his study he was led by the Lord into searching out the Prophecies and also the Biblical Rules of Prophetic Interpretation which we will list below. The results of his studies shook the religious world to its very foundations and resulted in the Great Second Advent Movement.

We live in the last days of earth's history and various prophetic viewpoints abound on every hand. How can we know the true from the misleading? It is essential that we become familiar with the Bible's own rules of interpretation as then we can find solid rock for our feet.

William Miller's Rules of Prophetic Study.

RULES OF INTERPRETATION William Miller

In studying the Bible, I have found the following rules to be of great service to myself, and now give them to the public by special request. Every rule should be well studied, in connection with the Scripture references, if the Bible student would be at all benefited by them.

RULE I—Every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented in the Bible.

PROOF: Matthew 5:18. "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

RULE II—All Scripture is necessary and may be understood by a diligent application and study.

PROOF: 2 Timothy 3:15–17. 15 "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

RULE III—Nothing revealed in the Scripture can or will be hid from those who ask in faith, not wavering.

PROOF: Deuteronomy 29:29; "The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law."

Matthew 10:26–27; "Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. 27 What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops."

1 Corinthians 2:10; "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

Philippians 3:15; "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you."

Matthew 21:22; "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

John 14:13–14; “And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.”

John 15:7; “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”

James 1:5–6; “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.”

1 John 5:13–15. “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. 14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”

RULE IV—To understand doctrine, bring all the scriptures together on the subject you wish to know, then let every word have its proper influence, and if you can form your theory without a contradiction, you cannot be in an error.

PROOF: Isaiah 28:7–29; “But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. 8 For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean. 9 Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. 10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: 11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. 12 To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear. 13 But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken. 14 Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. 15 Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: 16 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. 17 Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. 18 And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. 19 From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report. 20 For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it. 21 For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act. 22 Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth. 23 Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken,

and hear my speech. 24 Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground? 25 When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rie in their place? 26 For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him. 27 For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. 28 Bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen. 29 This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.”

Isaiah 35:8; “And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.”

Proverbs 19:27; “Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.”

Luke 24:27; “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”

Luke 24:44–45; “And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. 45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

Romans 16:26; “But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:”

James 5:19; “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;”

2 Peter 1:19, 20. “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.”

RULE V—Scripture must be—its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound it to me and he should, guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed or wisdom is my rule, not the Bible.

PROOF: Psalm 19:7–11; “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.”

Psalm 119:97–105; “O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. 98 Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. 99 I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. 100 I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. 101 I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word. 102 I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me. 103 How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! 104 Through thy precepts I get

understanding: therefore I hate every false way. 105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

Matthew 23:8–10; “But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. 9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. 10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.”

1 Corinthians 2:12–16; “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.”

Ezekiel 34:18–19; “Seemeth it a small thing unto you to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? and to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet? 19 And as for my flock, they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet; and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet.”

Luke 11:52; “Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.”

Malachi 2:7–8. “For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. 8 But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.”

RULE VI—God has revealed things to come, by visions, in figures and parables, and in this way the same things are often time revealed again and again, by different visions, or in different figures, and parables. If you wish to understand them, you must combine them all in one.

PROOF: Psalm 89:19; “Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people.”

Hosea 12:10; “I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.”

Habakkuk 2:2; “And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.”

Acts 2:17; “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:”

1 Corinthians 5:6; “Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?”

Hebrews 9:9, 24; “Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;” 9:24 “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:”

Psalm 78:2; “I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:”

Matthew 13:13, 34; “Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.” 13:34 “All these things

spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:"

Genesis 41:1–32; "And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river. 2 And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favoured kine and fatfleshed; and they fed in a meadow. 3 And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favoured and leanfleshed; and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river. 4 And the ill favoured and leanfleshed kine did eat up the seven well favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke. 5 And he slept and dreamed the second time: and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good. 6 And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them. 7 And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream. 8 And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh. 9 Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day: 10 Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's house, both me and the chief baker: 11 And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. 12 And there was there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret. 13 And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged. 14 Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. 15 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it. 16 And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace. 17 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river: 18 And, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fatfleshed and well favoured; and they fed in a meadow: 19 And, behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill favoured and leanfleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness: 20 And the lean and the ill favoured kine did eat up the first seven fat kine: 21 And when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke. 22 And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good: 23 And, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them: 24 And the thin ears devoured the seven good ears: and I told this unto the magicians; but there was none that could declare it to me. 25 And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do. 26 The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one. 27 And the seven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine. 28 This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh. 29 Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt: 30 And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; 31 And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous. 32

And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.”

Daniel 2, 7, 8; “They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it. 8 The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me.”

Acts 10:9–16. “On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: 10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, 11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: 12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. 14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. 15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. 16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.”

RULE VII—Visions are always mentioned as such.

PROOF: 2 Corinthians 12:1. “It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.”

RULE VIII—Figures always have a figurative meaning, and are used much in prophecy, to represent future things, times and events; such as mountains, meaning governments; beasts meaning kingdoms. Waters, meaning people. Lamp, meaning Word of God. Day, meaning year.

PROOF: Daniel 2:35, “Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.”

Daniel 2:44; “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”

Daniel 7:8, “I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.”

Daniel 7:17; “These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth.”

Revelation 17:1, 15; “And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:” 17:15 “And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.”

Psalms 119:105; “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

Ezekiel 4:6. “And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.”

RULE IX—Parables are used as companions to illustrate subjects, and must be explained in the same way as figures by the subject and Bible.

PROOF: Mark 4:13. “And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?”

See also; the explanation of the ten virgins: Miller’s Lectures, Number 16.

RULE X—Figures sometimes have two or more different significations, as day is used in a figurative sense to represent three different periods of time.

PROOF: Ecclesiastes 7:14. “In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.”

1. Indefinite.
2. Definite, a day for a year.
3. Day for a thousand years.

If you put on the right construction it will harmonize with the Bible and make good sense, otherwise it will not.

PROOF: Ezekiel 4:6; “And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.”

2 Peter 3:8. “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”

RULE XI—How to know when a word is used figuratively. If it makes good sense as it stands, and does no violence to the simple laws of nature, then it must be understood literally, if not, figuratively

PROOF: Revelation 12:1–2; “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: 2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.”

Revelation 17:3–7. “So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: 5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. 6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. 7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.”

RULE XII—To learn the true meaning of figures, trace your figurative word through your Bible, and where you find it explained, put it on your figure, and if it makes good sense you need look no further, if not, look again.

RULE XIII—To know whether we have the true historical event for the fulfillment of a prophecy. If you find every word of the prophecy (after the figures are understood) is literally fulfilled, then you may know that your history is the true event. But if one word lacks a fulfillment, then you must look for another event, or wait its future development. For God takes care that history and prophecy doth agree, so that the true believing children of God may never be ashamed.

PROOF: Psalm 22:5; Isaiah 14:17–19; 1 Peter 2:6; Revelation 17:17; “For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.”

Acts 3:18. “But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.”

RULE XIV—The most important rule of all is, that you must have faith. It must be a faith that requires a sacrifice, and, if tried, would give up the dearest object on earth, the world and all its desires, character, living, occupation, friends, home, comforts, and worldly honors. If any of these should hinder our believing any part of God’s word, it would show our faith to be vain. Nor can we ever believe so long as one of these motives lies lurking in our hearts. We must believe that God will never forfeit his word. And we can have confidence that he that takes notice of the sparrow, and numbers the hairs of our head, will guard the translation of his own word, and throw a barrier around it, and prevent those who sincerely trust in God, and put implicit confidence in his word, from erring far from the truth, though they may not understand Hebrew or Greek.

These are some of the most important rules which I find the word of God warrants me to adopt and follow, in order for system and regularity. And if I am not greatly deceived, in so doing, I have found the Bible, as a whole, one of the most simple, plain, and intelligible books ever written, containing proof in itself of its divine origin and full of all knowledge that our hearts could wish to know or enjoy. I have found it a treasure which the world cannot purchase. It gives a calm peace in believing, and a firm hope in the future. It sustains the mind in adversity, and teaches us to be humble in prosperity. It prepares us to love and do good to others, and to realize the value of the soul. It makes us bold and valiant for the truth, and nerves the arm to oppose error. It gives us a powerful weapon to break down infidelity, and makes known the only antidote for sin. It instructs us how death will be conquered, and how the bonds of the tomb must be broken. It tells us of future events, and shows the preparation necessary to meet them. It gives us an opportunity to hold conversation with the King of kings, and reveals the best code of laws ever enacted. This is but a faint view of its value; yet how many perishing souls treat it with neglect, or, what is equally as bad, treat it as a hidden mystery which cannot be known.

Oh my dear reader, make it your chief study. Try it well, and you will find it to be all I have said. Yes, like the Queen of Sheba, you will say the half was not told you. The divinity taught in our schools is always founded on some sectarian creed. It may do to take a blank mind and impress it with this kind, but it will always end in bigotry. A free mind will never be satisfied with the views of others.

Were I a teacher of youth in divinity, I would first learn their capacity and mind. If these were good, I would make them study the Bible for themselves, and send them out free to do the world good. But if they had no mind, I would stamp them with another’s mind, write bigot on their forehead, and send them out as slaves.

Module 001: Principles of Interpretation

From Miller's Works. Volume I, Views Of The Prophecies And Prophetic Chronology, Selected From Manuscripts Of William Miller; With A Memoir Of His Life. Edited By Joshua V. Himes, 1842, pages 20–24.