

HERMENEUTICS

I. A Fundamental Principle

A. The Fundamental Scripture: **II Timothy 2:15; Proverbs 25:2.**

B. Definitions

1. The Term "Hermeneutics"

Even though the term does not appear in the Bible, related words do appear which permit us to understand the meaning and purpose of hermeneutics.

2. Hermeneutics is the science of interpretation, especially the branch of theology that deals with the principles of exegesis (that is, of the analysis of a passage in the Bible). In this case, to interpret is to discover the meaning of an author's words and phrases and explain them to other people.

3. Biblical Hermeneutics is the science and art of Biblical interpretation:

a. a science since the principles of interpretation are derived and classified.

b. an art since one has to apply those principles and that has to do with the ability of the interpreter.

C. The Word of God in Human Terms

1. Inspiration

God has revealed Himself in a trustworthy manner in the Scriptures.

2. Definition

It is the divine process through which the Holy Spirit actively supervised the process of the writing of the Scriptures so that they would be kept from error when they were written the first time. This work of the Spirit extends to each word as well as the whole, therefore the Scriptures are absolutely authoritative in every area that they speak of.

3. Theories of Inspiration

a. The Dictation Theory

This theory proposes that the writers wrote down what was dictated by God, somewhat like how a secretary writes a memo that his boss dictates. That each word that is found in the Scriptures was dictated to the human author by God.

b. The Divine-Human Cooperation in Inspiration

God, in a mysterious way, supervised the writing process of the Holy Scriptures, therefore, He neither predominated nor annulled the writers in their own way of thinking and writing, but rather in His sovereignty He kept that, in such a way that even in the thoughts and style (choice of words) of the authors He saw to it that they transmitted what God wanted. Therefore, we have different styles, different vocabulary, etc.

c. The Function of Language

- All words (sequence of signs), whether written or spoken, are symbolic. Interpretation, in its most basic level, is to connect the corresponding concept to the word-symbol.
- In general language is constructed in such a way that a symbol (word) represents a concept, idea, or thing. If every symbol (word) could mean many things, communication would be impossible.
- To grasp the correct correspondence between a symbol (word, sequence of signs) and a concept (idea, thing) requires an understanding of the language within the context of history and culture.
- What the author has in mind to transmit (whether by written or spoken words) can only be received by the audience if that audience is capable of making the same correspondence between the symbols (words) of the author and his concepts, just as the author himself has done.
- So the meaning of the author is transported in the symbols (words, sequence of signs) that he (or she) chose to use.

- The authors of the Scripture did not use a special set of symbols or sequence of signs when they wrote the Bible. They used the common language of their days.

d. Sense vs. Meaning

D. Interpretation

1. The Mysterious Divine-Human Cooperation in Interpretation

- The Human Side
- The Divine Side

The Holy Spirit and the Work of Inspiration



E. The Fundamental Principle

The Bible should be interpreted by using the same methods used to interpret all literature.

II. Previous Requirements

A. Why We Study the Bible

- To be equipped for every good work
- To know our Father and His Son
- To teach others

B. The Student

- Has to be born again — **John 3:1-12; I Corinthians 2:11**
- Has to love and have a hunger for the Word of God — **Psalm 119:47; Jeremiah 15:16**
- Has to have an attitude of:
 - Respect for the Word — **Psalm 119:6; Ephesians 4:14.***
 - Faith — **Hebrews 11:6.**
 - Obedience — **II Timothy 3:7.***
 - Dependance on the Holy Spirit — **I Corinthians 2:7-16; II Peter 3:16.***
- Has to be honest — **II Corinthians 4:2.***

C. Obstacles when Studying the Scriptures

One has to overcome four textual gaps to know what God wanted to say in his words. Furthermore, we must overcome a personal obstacle.

- The historic gap — Studying the politic, economic, and religious environment helps.
- The cultural gap — Their culture was different from ours. That is why we have to study the natural and social way of life that people had.
- The linguistic gap — The Bible was written in three languages: Ancient Hebrew, Ancient Chaldean, and Koine Greek. We close this gap by studying the vocabulary, grammar, and style of these languages and books.

* Indicates examples of the wrong attitudes, etc.

4. The geographic gap — We must study the places, the land, plants, and animals of those days.
5. Our “Doctrinal Glasses”

D. Preparation

1. Prayer
2. Humility — **I Peter 5:5**

E. The Three Stages of Study

- Observation
- Interpretation
- Application

III. OBSERVATION

A. Tools

1. The Holy Spirit
2. Our Brain
3. Our Heart
4. Our Bible
5. A Notebook
6. A Dictionary of Our Language
7. A Bible Concordance
8. A Dictionary of the Original Languages
9. A Bible Atlas
10. A Bible Commentary

B. Steps of Observation

1. Learn About Background Information
2. Several Techniques of Observation
 - a. Repeat readings
 - b. Ask questions
 - c. Notice repeated words or ideas
 - d. Observe narration techniques
 - e. Make a graph, diagram, or table
 - f. Look for specific applications
 - g. Write a paraphrase

IV. INTERPRETATION

Interpretation Principle

- The Context Group
- The Divine Program Group
- The Figurative Language Group

THE CONTEXT GROUP

The Context Principle

A. A Part of the Context Group

B. Definition:— The interpretation of any verse is determined by considering its context.

1. Context = the interweaving = the connection of thought that runs through a portion or all of a scripture.

2. In the Scripture, it is the connection of thought that runs through:
 - a. The whole Bible.
 - b. One of the Testaments.
 - c. One book of the Bible.
 - d. A particular passage.
 3. Scripture interprets Scripture.
 4. The whole must be interpreted with the knowledge of its parts, and each part must be interpreted in light of the whole.
- C. Restrictions
1. Always keep the context in mind.
 2. Never take a verse out of its frame.
 3. Always permit the clear sayings of the Bible to interpret the dark sayings.

The First Mention Principle

- A. Definition:— The principle by which the interpretation of any verse is made clearer by considering the first time that its theme appears in the Scripture, or the principle through which God indicates, during the first mention of a theme, the truth which that theme is related to in God's mind.
- B. Development
1. The First Mention is:
 - a. A key that opens the door to the complete truth.
 - b. A gateway to the path of truth.
 - c. A guide to discover the truth in its progressive development.
 - d. The first link in a long chain of revelation.
 - e. A seed that has within itself the complete truth of what shall be developed in other passages mentioned.
 2. The First Mention can be applied in the following areas:
 - a. Principles: **Genesis 3:21** — Substitution Sacrifices (The first mention should be considered, not only the first time that the word is used, but also the first time that the theme is demonstrated).
 - b. Events: **Genesis 1:1** Creation.
 - c. Symbols: **Genesis 6:3** – The Number 120. [*Genesis 1 – No. 6 = Man*]
 - d. People: **Genesis 14:18** – Melchizedek. [*Genesis 29:35 – Judah = Praise*]
 - e. Places: **Genesis 10:10** – Babylon.
 - f. Prophecy: **Genesis 3:15** – The Messiah.
 3. If you can not find a major doctrine in Genesis, or in the Pentateuch, it is probable that it is not a correct doctrine.
- C. Restrictions
1. We have to locate the first mention correctly.
 2. The first mention must not be violated by future verses.
 3. We must use this principle with other principles.

The Progressive Mention Principle

- A. Definition:— The interpretation of any verse is made clearer by considering the progressive mentions of its theme in the Scripture. Or, God causes the revelation of any truth given to be clearer each time as it proceeds to its consummation.
- B. Development

1. **Isaiah 28:13** – gives the thought.
2. **Hebrews 1:1** – “In many separate revelations [each of which set forth a portion of the Truth] and in different ways God spoke...” (Amplified Bible, Classic Edition).
3. This has to do with all the areas of the First Mention Principle.

C. Restrictions

1. Since the truth is progressively developed, there is no single verse that has all the truth about a given theme.
2. One must be careful regarding what one links together.

The Complete Mention Principle

A. Definition:— The interpretation of any verse is determined by considering the complete mention of its theme in the scripture.

B. Development

1. The entire truth can only be seen when all the pieces are joined together.
2. The Progressive Mention Principle is an extension of the First Mention Principle and the Complete Mention Principle.
3. This Complete Mention Principle is the essential end of the First Mention Principle and also the Progressive Mention Principle.
4. a. “first the blade” (**Mark 4:28**) — First Mention.
 b. “then the ear” (**Mark 4:28**) — Progressive Mention.
 c. “after that the full corn in the ear” (**Mark 4:28**) — Complete Mention.

C. Restrictions

1. All the pertinent verses have to be considered when formulating a doctrine.
2. No reference may be used to contradict another, but rather just to restrict it.
3. One must be careful to not group facets of themes that God wants to keep a distinction between. For example, the “glory of God” can refer to:
 - a. God’s being.
 - b. Expressions of God’s character.
 - c. A manifestation of God’s presence.
 - d. Blessing and judgment regarding the world and God’s people.

The Comparative Mention Principle

A. Definition:— A given verse (or group of verses) can be interpreted by comparing it and/or contrasting it to another verse (or group of verses).

B. Development

1. “Compare” means to join things to examine their relation especially in order to ascertain their agreement or disagreement, their similarities or distinctions.
2. “Contrast” means to join things which are notably very different from each other, even though they come from the same category or class, to cause their differences to be observed to an even greater extent.
3. Therefore, joining scriptures that deal with a certain area of a theme to clarify the interpretation of each one by comparing or contrasting.
4. Scripture is used to interpret Scripture. — **I Corinthians 2:13**.
5. Used in:
 - a. Principles — **Deuteronomy 23** — Blessing and cursing.
 - b. Events — **Luke 17** — Noah and our days.

- c. Symbols — **II Corinthians 3:1-18** — Tables of stone and the tables of the heart.
- d. People — **Genesis 18, 19** — Abraham y Lot.
- e. Places — **Hebrews 12** — Mount Sinai and Mount Zion.
- f. Prophecy — **Genesis 15-18** with **Romans 5-8**.
- g. Parables — **Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23** with **Mark 4:26-29** and **Luke 8:4-15**.

C. Restrictions

1. Passages can only be compared when they have to do with the same theme.
2. Do not compare them if you come to conclusions that conflict with other clear passages in the scripture.
3. When comparing passages, first determine the meaning of the clearer passages, and then proceed to the darker ones in light of those.

The Synthetic Principle

A. Definition:— It is the principle according to which God supervises the literary structure in the Bible in such a way that it is constructed with introversion, alternation, or a combination of the two.

B. Development

1. Alternation (alternative members of an outline)

a. ABAB or ABCD, ABCD.

b. Examples

1) The book of Jonah

A) The commission — **1:1-2**

A) The commission — **3:12**.

B) Disobedience — **1:3**

B) Obedience — **3:3-4**.

C) Consequence — **1:4-17**

C) Consequences — **3:5-10**.

D) Prayer — **2:1-9**

D) Prayer — **4:1-3**.

E) Deliverance — **2:10**

E) Correction — **4:4-11**.

2) **John 3:20-21**

A) Everyone that doeth evil hateth the light.

B) Neither cometh to the Light.

C) Lest his deeds be reprov'd.

A) He that doeth truth.

B) Cometh to the light.

C) That his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.

2. Introversion

a. This one has an outline in the form of ABCB or ABC CBA.

b. Examples:

1) **Isaiah 6:10**

A) Make the heart of this people fat.

B) Ears.

C) Eyes.

C) Eyes.

B) Ears.

A) Heart.

2) **Luke 1:68-79**

A) The visitation — **v. 68**.

- B) The salvation – v. 69.
- C) The prophets – v. 70.
- D) The enemies – v. 71.
- E) The covenant – v. 72.
- D) The enemies – v. 74–75.

- C) The prophet – v. 76.
- B) The salvation – v. 77.
- A) The visitation – v. 78–79.

DIVINE PROGRAM GROUP

The Covenant Principle

- A. Definition:— The interpretation of a verse, or group of verses, is determined by considering the covenant that it is related to.
- B. Development
 - 1. Definition of covenant:— an association, arrangement, agreement, or contract between men, or between God and man. They are ratified by gifts, witnesses, vows, eating together, pillars of stone, the death of a victim, etc. If it is between God and man, it is worded by God and presented to man. Man can either accept or reject it, but he can not change it.
 - 2. There are two kinds of covenants:
 - a. Conditional — the fulfillment depends on if man fulfills certain conditions. It says, “If ... then ...” (**Exodus 19:5**).
 - b. Unconditional — God commits Himself to fulfill the promises despite man’s actions. He says, “I will...”. [**Ezekiel 36:24–25**]
 - 3. General Information:
 - a. God is a God who fulfills his covenants. — **Psalm 111:9, Hebrews 6:12–17**.
 - b. When God makes a covenant He binds Himself (by a vow, or by the power of a law, or by the death of a victim, etc.) to fulfill a promise to men.
 - c. The elements of a covenant:
 - 1) Words — or, the promise of the covenant.
 - 2) Blood.
 - 3) Seal or sign of the covenant.
 - d. The covenants do not have to do with today. They speak about a certain aspect of God in our lives. God builds one upon another.
 - 6. An Outline of the Covenants
 - a. The covenant of Eden — **Genesis 1:26–30; 2:15–17**.
 - 1) Conditional — **Genesis 2:15–17**.
 - 2) Life in the blood — **Leviticus 17:11–14**.
 - 3) The seal — the tree of life. **Genesis 2:8–17; 3:22–24**. Restored in Christ — **Revelation 2:7; 22:2, 14**.
 - b. The covenant of Adam — **Genesis 3:1–24**.
 - 1) Unconditional — it contains a curse and a promise.
 - 2) Blood was shed — **Genesis 3:21**.
 - 3) The seal — coats of skins — **Genesis 3:21 (John 1:29; Romans 4)**.

- c. The covenant of Noah — **Genesis 8:20–9:17**.
 - 1) Unconditional.
 - 2) The blood of the offerings — **Genesis 8:20–21**.
 - 3) The seal — the rainbow — **Genesis 9:13–17**.
- d. The covenant of Abraham — **Genesis 12:1–3; 15; 17; 22**.
 - 1) Unconditional — **Genesis 15**.
 - 2) The blood of the covenant — **Genesis 15**.
 - 3) The seal — circumcision — **Genesis 17:9; Romans 4:11; Acts 7:8**.
- e. The covenant of Moses — **Exodus 20–40**.
 - 1) Conditional — **Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 28:58–59**.
 - 2) Blood through the sacrifices — **Exodus 24:3–8; Hebrews 9:18–20; Leviticus 1–7**.
 - 3) The seal — the day of rest (the Sabbath) — **Exodus 31:12–18**.
- g. The covenant of David — **II Samuel 7:4–29; Psalm 89:3–4, 21, 23, 35–37**.
 - 1) Unconditional — **II Samuel 7:14**.
 - 2) Blood — **II Samuel 6:17–18; 7:1–3**.
 - 3) The seal — the sun and the moon — **Psalm 89:27–37**.
 - 4) See **Isaiah 55:1–3** — If we choose correctly, and we are willing to cut the flesh, God will make a covenant with us and our descendants regarding the throne.
- h. The new covenant — **Matthew 26:26–29; Hebrews 8:9; Jeremiah 31:31–34**.
 - 1) Unconditional.
 - 2) Christ's blood is the blood of the covenant — **Matthew 26:26; John 19:34–35; Hebrews 9**.
 - 3) The seal: The Holy Spirit baptism — **II Corinthians 1:21–22; Ephesians 1:13–14; Colossians 2:10–12**.

C. Restrictions

1. In order to use this principle, one must understand if it is referring to a covenant and to which one.
2. We have to consider all the covenants from the point of view of the new covenant.

The Election Principle

- A. Definition:— The interpretation of any verse or group of verses is determined by considering its relation to the election involved in God's purposes.
- B. Development
 1. Election is choosing, or giving preference to, certain people or nations which have to do with God's purposes regarding time or eternity.
 2. The election regarding time: God chooses nations or particular people to fulfill his purposes in relation to time.
 3. The election regarding eternity: This refers to destiny in relation to the eternity of each moral being who has a free will to choose.
 4. The Election is:
 - a. A sovereign act of God.
 - b. Totally depends on grace, apart from human merit – **Romans 9:11; 11:5–6**.
 - c. Applicable only to those who are in Christ (its based on His sacrifice).
 - d. Firmly based upon God's presence — **I Peter 1:1–2**.
 5. God puts aside and rejects the first ones establish the second ones by the election:
 - a. The first Adam and the second Adam.

- b. Cain and Abel.
 - c. Ishmael, Isaac.
 - d. Esau, Jacob.
 - e. First birth, second birth.
 - f. Heaven and earth, the new heaven and earth.
6. So, election is a sovereign act of God, by grace, through which He chose in Jesus Christ all those whom He foreknew, that is, those whom He knew would accept Him.

C. Restrictions

- 1. Does this passage talk about election?
- 2. Is it an election regarding time or eternity?
- 3. This principle must be used together with the covenants.
- 4. We have to keep the doctrine of election in balance.

The Ethnic Division Principle

A. Definition:— The interpretation of any verse of the Scripture is determined by considering the ethnic divisions that God ordained. The word of truth is divided correctly in relation to the three classes that it deals with: Jews, Gentiles, and the Church.

B. Development

- 1. An ethnic group is seen as a community of people who share the same descent, and participate of the same culture.
- 2. **I Corinthians 10:32** of the three Scriptural divisions:
 - a. The Jews who come from Abraham.
 - b. The Gentiles who descended from Adam.
 - c. The church who descended from the second Adam, Christ.
- 3. General Information
 - a. From Adam to **Genesis 11** there is only one race and one language.
 - b. From Babel, nations arise.
 - c. The Old Testament deals with the Jews and Gentiles.
 - d. The New Testament presents the Church.
 - e. The Jews
 - 1) Chosen — **Deuteronomy 4:6–8; 4:34; Genesis 12:2–3; Genesis 17:1–7.**
 - 2) The reasons they were chosen:
 - a) to bless all nations — **Genesis 9:27; 12:2–3; 17:4–7; 18:18; 22:16–18.**
 - b) to receive the word of God — **Romans 3:2.**
 - c) to receive God's blessings — **Romans 9:4–5.**
 - 3) The nation became a divided kingdom.
 - f. The Gentiles
 - 1) Their condition — **Ephesians 2:11–12.**
 - 2) Their spiritual condition — **Ephesians 4:18.**
 - 3) But God is no respecter of persons. He does not have “favorites.” — **Acts 10:34.**
Therefore **Genesis 22:18** and **Galatians 3:8.**
 - g. The church (*ekklesia* which means “called out”)
 - 1) Israel, the church in the desert — **Acts 7:38.**

- 2) In points 1 through 3 we see the universal church. The local church is also seen in the Scriptures.
- 3) The church is composed of Jews and Gentiles — **Ephesians 2:15–16** and **Galatians 3:28; 6:15**.
- 4) The nation of God — **Revelation 5:9; I Peter 2:9**.

C. Restrictions

1. Does the passage deal with one of the ethnic divisions?
 - a. Is it written to the whole house of Israel?
 - b. Is it written to the Northern Kingdom?
 - c. Is it written to the Southern Kingdom?
 - d. Is it written to the Gentile nations?
 - e. Is it written to the Church?
2. Who said this?
 - a. **Genesis 3:4**.
 - b. **Job 42:7**.
3. To whom was it said?
 - a. Be careful with the prophets.
 - b. A general rule: The key to find the church in the prophets of the Old Testament is seen in the prophecies that have to do with the entry of the Gentiles to the blessings of the Messiah through the new covenant in Christ.*
 - c. “Gentiles” is used in two ways in the Scripture:
 - 1) The pagan nations around Israel, etc. — **Jeremiah 46:1**.
 - 2) Those who from among all nations would come to Christ — **Romanos 15:8–12**.
4. “Israel” is used in the Scripture:
 - a. Jacob — **Genesis 49:1–2**.
 - b. The twelve tribes — **Exodus 19:3**.
 - c. The ten tribes of the North — **I Kings 12:21**.
 - d. The two tribes of the South — **Ezra 6:21**.
 - e. The Church — **Galatians 6:16; Romans 9:6**.

The Chronometric Principle

A. Definition:— The interpretation of a verse or passage is determined by considering its chronometric frame.

B. Development

1. Chronometric speaks of measuring time.
2. This principle is built upon the use of the words “age,” “times,” “seasons,” etc.
3. God has divided and arranged time in a series of successive ages, times, and seasons.
 - a. Past Ages
 - 1) The eternal ages past — **Psalm 90:2**.
 - 2) The age of the creation — **Genesis 1:1; Colossians 1:16–17**.
 - 3) The recreation — **Genesis 1:1–3; Isaiah 45:18**.
 - 4) The age of the patriarchs – **Genesis 1–11**.
 - a) It deals with promise.
 - b) From Adam to Abraham.

* NOTE: This (point “3b”) does not eliminate the possibility that Jerusalem, etc. can be a type of the church. See the Typical Principle.

- c) Especially — **Genesis 5, 10–11.**
- 5) The age of the chosen nation.
 - a) From Isaac to Christ.
 - b) See **Hebrews 11:17; John 3:16** for the two only begotten ones.
- b. Present Ages
 - 1) The age of the Messiah.
 - 2) See **Luke 16:8; Galatians 1:4; Acts 7:17; Hebrews 9:26.**
 - 3) They came to an end — **Matthew 28:20.**
- c. The future ages
 - 1) The coming age — see **Mark 10:30; Luke 20:34–36; Ephesians 1:21; Hebrews 6:5.**
 - 2) The eternal future ages.
 - a) **Ephesians 2:7.**
 - b) **Ephesians 3:21.**
 - c) **I Timothy 1:17.**
 - d) **II Timothy 4:18.**
 - e) **Revelation 5:13–14.**
 - f) **Revelation 14:11.**
 - g) **Revelation 20:10.**

C. Restrictions

1. Does the passage have any element of time?
2. We have to discern the tenses of the verbs correctly
 - a. We have to consider the original text.
 - b. We always have to trust in the Spirit of revelation.
3. What age does the passage refer to?
4. We cannot transfer something that pertains to one age to another. For example, animal sacrifices ceased with Christ.
5. Other shorter periods of time are used and called “times,” “seasons,” “days,” “weeks,” “months,” “years,” “the day of the Lord,” “the years of jubilee,” “the Sabbaths of rest,” “the last days,” “the time of the end.”

The Principle of the Unfulfillment of the Promise

A. Definition:— The interpretation of a verse or passage of Scripture is made easier by considering certain unfulfillments of the promise.

B. Development

1. The unfulfillment of a promise could result for two reasons:
 - a. Due to the unbelief of the person or people who have received the promise.
 - b. Because the time of its fulfillment has not come yet. That is, many times there is a lapse in time between the promise given and its fulfillment. Therefore there is an apparent lack of fulfillment of the promise because the prophet saw separate events as if they were one single event.
2. The unfulfillment of the promise because of unbelief
 - a. Regarding entering the promised land.
 - 1) The promise: **Genesis 15:13–21; Exodus 3:15–17.**
 - 2) The problem: **Numbers 13, 14; Hebrews 3, 4** — Unbelief.
 - 3) The unfulfillment : **Numbers 14:26–38** — forty years in the desert.

- b. It seems as though there only is a lack of fulfillment when the requirements of the promise are not fulfilled.
- 3. The unfulfillment of the promise due to a lapse in time (see **I Peter 1:10-12**).
 - a. **Genesis 1:1-2**.
 - b. **Isaiah 61:1-2** and **Luke 6:16-21**.
 - c. **Micah 5:1-2**.
 - d. **Malachi 3:1-2** and **4:1**.

C. Restrictions

- 1. Does the passage have to do with a lack of fulfillment?
- 2. We have to discern the true nature of the unfulfillment, its causes, and also its limits correctly.
- 3. This principle has a limited application, and must be used with other principles.

The Figurative Language Group

The Christ-centered Principle

A. Definition:— One must interpret Scripture related to its center, Christ.

B. Development

- 1. Christ is the central person in the Bible.
 - a. **Hebrews 10:7**.
 - b. **John 5:39**.
 - c. **Luke 24:27**.
 - d. **Luke 24:44**.
 - e. **Acts 10:43**.
 - f. **John 1:45**.
 - g. See also **John 1:1; 1:14; 5:146-47; Matthew 5:17-18; Acts 3:18**.
- 2. Christ can be seen in each book in several ways. For example:
 - a. Genesis, as the Creator — **Colossians 1:16**.
 - b. Exodus, as the Lamb of the Passover — **I Corinthians 5:7**.
 - c. Leviticus, as the High Priest — **Hebrews 7:26**.
 - d. Numbers, as the Serpent of Brass — **John 3:14**.
 - e. Deuteronomy, as the Rock — **I Corinthians 10:4**.
 - f. Joshua, as the Captain of Our Salvation — **Hebrews 2:10**, etc.

C. Restrictions

- 1. The purpose of the Scripture is to lead us to Christ the Living Word.
- 2. This principle can only be used when the Scripture speaks of Christ:
 - a. Characteristically.
 - 1) Using Types.
 - 2) Using Symbols.
 - b. Prophetically.
 - c. Historically (for example: the gospels).
 - d. Doctrinally (for example: the epistles).
- 3. Not all the verses of the Bible can be applied to Christ.
- 4. The passage or verse does not apply to Christ if the resulting interpretation violates the actual and literal

sense of the Scripture.

5. The interpretation of the Scripture of the O.T. has to be gotten in light of the clear revelation of Christ in the N.T. The clear historic and doctrinal aspects should help us to interpret the darker characteristic and prophetic aspects that are found in the O.T.

The Moral Principle

- A. Definition:— The interpretation of a verse or passage is determined by discerning the moral that it has.
- B. Development
 1. Definition of a moral
 - a. “The practical lesson taught by any story or incident; the significance or the meaning.”
 - b. “(plural) principles and practice as far as what should be done, what shouldn’t be done, and duties; ethics; general conduct or behavior.”
 2. **II Timothy 3:16–17** shows us that the Scripture has a moral. We can classify the Scriptures in five areas for this purpose:
 - a. History — Saul, **I Chronicles 10:13–14**.
 - b. Poetry — **Ecclesiastes 12:13–14** gives us the moral of the book.
 - c. Prophecy — **Jeremiah 6:8**, we can gather principles from the word of God.
 - d. Proverbs — **Proverbs 1:1–6** shows us that we can learn from Proverbs, and furthermore, this reference shows what one can learn from them.
 - e. Parables — **Matthew 13:10–13; Mark 4:1–2**: The moral of a parable is the key to interpret it.
- C. Restrictions
 1. This principle can be applied to the majority of Scripture.
 2. First one must understand the literal meaning of the passage. This includes the following:
 - a. The facts of an event and their meaning.
 - b. The symbols and other rhetorical figures.
 3. A moral can have many facets that can be expressed in several ways.

The Symbolic Principle

- A. Definition:— The interpretation of a verse or passage which has symbolical elements can be determined correctly interpreting the symbols involved.
- B. Development
 1. Symbol — “joined” — an object used to represent something abstract: an emblem; to use one thing to mean another, and this depends on the common characteristics of things.
 2. There are seven categories:
 - a. Objects — **Hosea 7:8**.
 - b. Creatures — **Isaiah 40:31**.
 - c. Actions — **Psalms 141:1–2**.
 - d. Numbers — **Revelation 13:18**.
 - e. Names — **I Samuel 25:25**.
 - f. Colors — **Isaiah 1:18**.
 - g. Directions — **Jeremiah 1:14**.
- C. Restrictions
 1. What was it that God wanted to be symbolic?
 - a. If the words do not have a literal meaning, then they have a symbolic meaning — **Revelation 12:1–4**.

- b. If the passage does have a literal meaning, then there is only symbolic meaning if the Scripture says so — like the example in **John 1:14** referring to the Tabernacle.
- 2. Three elements of symbolism:
 - a. The meaning of a symbol is based on the literal nature and characteristics of what is being used as a symbol.
 - b. A symbol represents something different from itself.
 - c. The link is formed by the common characteristics of the two.
- 3. Symbols can have a progressive development.
- 4. Generally, the Bible interprets its own symbols.
- 5. You must check the original
- 6. One single symbol can be used to represent more than one thing. For example a lion.
- 7. Use the general and scriptural meaning in a given verse, unless there is a clear indication that you should not do so.
- 8. If a symbol is not interpreted by the Word, you must investigate the context well to figure out the thought or idea being exposed. You also must compare other references and consider the nature of the symbol being used.

The Numeric Principle

- A. Definition:— The interpretation of a verse or passage which contains numbers is made easier by recognizing the symbolic meaning of the numbers involved [*(or viceversa)*].
- B. Development
 - 1. **Daniel 8:13** — “The Wonderful One Who Numbers” — see **Job 14:16; Psalm 90:12; 147:4 Daniel 5:26; Matthew 10:30.**
 - 2. Sometimes He refers directly to a number, and other times He implies a number through the amount of things, etc. [*There are named numbers and implied numbers*]
 - 3. God is the God of order.
- C. Restrictions
 - 1. First, recognize the numbers involved, DO NOT CHANGE the number of cubits, etc. to modern measurements.
 - 2. The first mention of a number in the Scripture generally expresses its spiritual meaning.
 - 3. God is rational and logical, and generally He maintains the same meaning or meanings for a number throughout the Scriptures.
 - 4. The spiritual meaning of a number is not always shown clearly; perhaps it is hidden or covered. In this case you can ascertain its meaning by comparing the passage with others that use the same number.
 - 5. Generally there are two aspects to the meanings of numbers like:
 - a. Good and evil.
 - b. That which is true and that which is falsified.
 - c. God and Satan.
 - 6. Numbers 1 through 13 are basic. The multiples of these numbers generally have the same meaning, the truth represented by them is just intensified.
 - 7. Use this principle with others.
 - 8. Use it with discretion and balance.
- D. Examples
 - 1. One — **Genesis 1:9** is the first mention where God gathered the waters together in one single place. This number speaks of unity as seen also in **John 17:21–22.**

2. Two — testimony or witness as in **Deuteronomy 17:6; John 8:17–18; Matthew 18:16; Revelation 11:2–4**. Also division or separation — **Exodus 8:23; 31:18; Matthew 7**.
3. Three — The Trinity or divinity — **I John 5:6–7**.
The perfect testimony — **Deuteronomy 17:6; Matthew 12:40**.
4. Four — All the earth, or universal — **Genesis 1**, the material creation was finished on the fourth day. — **Ezekiel 37:9**.
5. Five — grace and judgment — **Leviticus 1–5; Ephesians 4:11**.
6. Six — the number of man and also of death.
7. Seven — the number of the covenant, perfection and completion.
8. Eight — Resurrection life and a new beginning.
9. Nine — fullness, finality, fruitfulness.
10. Ten — law, order, government, restoration — **Exodus 34:28; Daniel 2 (10 horns)**.
Trial — **Numbers 14:22**.
11. Eleven — rebellion that causes separation — **II Kings 23:36–24:1, 3; II Kings 24:18–20; Genesis 37:9–11**.
12. Twelve — divine government.
13. Thirteen — rebellion and backsliding.
14. Fourteen — the number of the Passover and a perfect testimony (2x7); **Exodus 12** and **Galatians 2:1–2**.
15. Twenty — maturity.
16. Thirty — divine order, consecration of the priest.
17. Forty — universal trial.
18. Fifty — Pentecost, freedom, jubilee.
19. Sixty — humanity or a generation.
20. Seventy — The number before an increase, or that represents a multitude.
21. One Hundred — fullness.
22. One Hundred Twenty — the end of all flesh, the beginning of life in the Spirit.
23. Two Hundred — the reward of the faithful servant, and also the way of the flesh.
24. Three Hundred — to walk with God, and also the faithful remnant.
25. Six Hundred and Sixty-six — the number of the antichrist.

The Principle of Typology

- A. Definition:— The interpretation of a verse or passage which contains typical elements can be determined only by a correct interpretation of the type or types involved.
- B Development
 1. A “type” is an emblem or symbol; that which has symbolic meaning.
Theologically, the word “type” applies mainly to those prophetic prefigurations of the people and things from the O.T. that have to do with the new dispensation (that is, with the New Testament).
 2. A type is an illustration ordained by God, or is a scriptural truth.
 3. “Tupos” — “the mark of a blow; a figure formed by a hit or an impression; the impression of a seal, the mark of a mold, a figure, an image, a form, an equivalent model; a model, a pattern, a figure that demonstrates something beforehand.”
 4. A type is “a figure or a representation of something that is to come; a figure that foresees another, a prophetic symbol.”
 5. A type is a special kind of symbol.
 - a. Symbol — a representation; one thing that represents another.

- b. Type — a prophetic representation; something that foreshows or prefigures another thing.
- c. Symbols can represent the past, the present, and the future, and they do not have a time reference.
- d. A type is essentially a prefiguration of something future to its own epoch and has within itself a reference to time.
- e. Examples
 - 1) The Rock in **Psalm 18:2** — Symbol.
 - 2) The Candlesticks in **Revelation 1:20** — Symbol.
 - 3) The Lamb in **John 1:29** — Symbol.
 - 4) The rainbow in **Genesis 9:13-16** — Symbol.
 - 5) The olives in **Zachariah 4:3** — Symbols.
 - 6) Adam in **Romans 5:14** — Type.
 - 7) They sacrifices of the animals in **Leviticus 1-5** — Types.
 - 8) The Tabernacle of Moses in **Exodus 25-40** — Type.
- 6. The reason to study types — **Colossians 2:17**. Types are pictures or objective lessons through which God taught His people about His grace, etc.
- 7. “Tupos” is translated from the following words in the N.T.: “the place” (of the nails) — **John 20:25**; “figure” — **Hebrews 8:5**; “model” — **Acts 7:44**; “terms” — **Acts 23:25**; “form” — **Romans 6:17**; “examples” — **I Corinthians 10:11** (note this reference especially).
- 8. Classification of types
 - a. People — **Romans 5:21-22** — Adam.
 - b. Offices — **Hebrews 5:4-5** — Aaron’s priesthood.
 - c. Institutions — **Hebrews 8:1-5** — The Tabernacle.
 - d. Events — **I Corinthians 10:1-11** (see **v. 6, 11**) — The children of Israel in their journey.

C. Restrictions

- 1. What did God want to use in the quality of the type?
- 2. Keep everything within its context, using the principles of context.
- 3. Be careful with symbols and what they represent.
- 4. Find out what the main point of similarity is between a type and its fulfillment, and then expose the complete correspondence between the two by making a more complete analogy.
- 5. It must be based upon a literal meaning.
- 6. A type should prefigure something that is essentially different from itself.
- 7. The link is the most complete analogy that can be made.
- 8. The Bible gives us keys for types.
- 9. Some types are understood, that is, they are only insinuated.
- 10. Types can have more than one single facet of interpretation.
- 11. God ordained the types that are prophetic.
- 12. Types only serve as illustrations of doctrine.
- 13. Types are not perfect or exact.
- 14. We should not force types to combine with our doctrine.

The Principle of Parables

- A. Definition:— This is the principle through which any parable is interpreted by discerning its moral and by interpreting its elements.
- B. Development
1. A parable is a short and simple story from which a lesson or moral is received; an earthly tale or story with a heavenly meaning; a fictitious story, but one that corresponds to reality, which is designed to illustrate some spiritual truth through comparison.”
 2. The Hebrew word is “mashal” — parable, proverb. Example: [Numbers 23:7](#); [Deuteronomy 28:37](#).
 3. The Greek word is “parable” — comparison ([Mark 4:30](#)), figure ([Hebrews 9:9](#); [11:1](#)), parable ([Matthew 13](#)), proverb ([Luke 4:23](#)).
 4. Jesus used parables to:
 - a. reveal the truth to those who were open and hungry — [Matthew 13:9-12, 16, 19](#).
 - b. hide the truth from those who were closed and hardened — [Matthew 13:13-15](#).
 5. Jesus took his parables from:
 - a. The Creation — seeds, wheat, fish, leaven, etc.
 - b. human relations — father and son, servant and master, etc.
 6. Parables can be grouped as such:
 - a. Those named and those unnamed — Example: [Matthew 13:31](#) and [Luke 15:8-9](#).
 - b. The short ones and the extensive ones.
 - 1) The short ones have 2-5 pairs of details that can be compared. One pair is called a simile.
 - 2) Extensive ones — [Matthew 13:1-8](#); [Luke 15:11-31](#).
- C. Restrictions
1. Make sure that the passage that you are reading is a parable.
 2. A parable is a comparison between the natural sphere and the spiritual sphere. The parable only has one major focal point of comparison, but you must compare each part of it.
 3. Each parable is given to hide or reveal a fundamental truth in the spiritual sphere. In order to capture the complete idea, we have to recognize the meaning of each part.
 4. Often the key of interpretation is seen in the context. The moral principle and the symbolic principle also have to be used.
 5. The ways, customs, and material culture should be studied.
 6. Parables illustrate doctrines. Doctrine should never be founded upon parables.
 7. Parables are not allegories.

The Allegoric Principle

- A. Definition:— This is the principle through which an allegory is interpreted by discerning its lessons and interpreting its elements.
- B. Development
1. An allegory is a story in which the people, things, and occurrences have another meaning as in a fable, or parable; allegories are used to teach and explain the presentation of ideas through such stories; a symbolic narration or description.”
 2. [Galatians 4:24](#) — Allegoreo (gr.) — “to allegorize”; to speak allegorically or figuratively; to speak, not according to the main meaning of the word, but rather in order that the shared, or spoken, facts may be used to illustrate principles. To speak in such a way that a different meaning is expressed than what the words themselves express.”
 3. Therefore, “an allegory is a rhetorical figure used to communicate truth through expressing something using

another image. It is an insinuated comparison which is sustained by numerous corresponding details; a composition figuring one subject disguised by another subject.”

4. An allegory and a parable.
 - a. A parable is an extensive simile.
 - b. An allegory is an extensive metaphor (one thing likened to another thing).
 - c. A simile also compares one thing with another, but generally with words such as: “like,” “as,” etc. Therefore there is clear evidence that one is making a comparison. **I Peter 2:1.**
5. Examples:
 - a. O.T. **Psalm 80:8-15** — The vine of Egypt.
 - b. N.T. **Matthew 5:13** — The salt of the earth.
 - c. **Galatians 4:21-31** — This is a rare case of allegorization.

C. Restrictions

1. Is the passage an allegory?
2. Identify the major points of comparison.
3. To understand the whole, you must understand the parts.
4. You must understand the context, the symbols, and the lesson.
5. Just like a parable, one must study the ways, customs, and the material culture of the epoch.
6. One should not base doctrines solely on allegories.
7. An allegory and allegorization are not the same thing.
 - a. An allegory is a good way to teach and illustrate the truth through association.
 - b. An allegorization is to arbitrarily assign a meaning to the Scripture that the original author did not mean to say.

D. Example: **Matthew 5:13** — “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.”

1. The salt Ye are — the disciples of Christ
2. Of the Earth The world, humanity
3. Lost his savour lost his influence
4. Wherewith shall it be salted? It’s hard to regain that influence
5. It is thenceforth good for nothing There’s no benefit for the Kingdom
6. But to be cast out Excommunicated
7. and to be trodden under foot of men Despised by unbelievers

The Double Reference Principle

A. Definition:— It is a passage that mainly applies to a person, or event, which is at hand and is used later on, by God, in relation to Christ, or in relation to the matters of His Kingdom. Perhaps the human authors did not have this in mind, but the Holy Spirit knew it.

B. Development

1. Some prophecies have more than just one fulfillment.
2. **Hosea 11:1** and **Matthew 2:14-15** show us that this passage refers to Israel and to Christ.
3. **II Samuel 7:12-16** refers to Solomon and to Christ.
4. **Deuteronomy 18:15-19** can refer to Joshua and to Christ.