

RULES OF HERMENEUTICS

1. Start at the beginning of the Bible and end at the end.
 - This sets forth certain principles, such as the 7-day restoration account in Genesis, which establishes the septenary structure of Scripture. This sets up the concept that all of Scripture (and consequently the structure of time as we know it) moves toward a 7th day rest.
 - Genesis 1:2b-2:3 is the foundation of God's revelation to man.

2. Employ proper use of exegesis.
 - The text cannot mean something different today than what the original author intended it to mean (this is from a strictly literal sense of reading and understanding the text).
 - We need to know (when possible) the identity of the author of each book of the Bible and know who his intended audience was and why the book was written.

3. Scripture must interpret Scripture and is its own best commentary.
 - Man's commentary is secondary.
 - One does not need to go to seminary school to understand God's Word

4. Every word of Scripture is inspired by God and therefore every word has meaning.
 - Nothing written in Scripture is happenstance or unimportant.
 - It is not okay to use a "functional equivalent" approach when translating or understanding Scripture (this is the "broad stroke" approach). Each word was originally written in a specific order, in a specific way, for a reason...
 - *However*, we rely on translators to give us our current English version of the scriptures and *translators make mistakes*. So, we need to use additional word study tools to dig into the Scriptures.

- One of the best ways to understand the meaning of various words is to find where else they are used in Scripture and use the context of their overall usage to determine their meaning.
5. There are multiple layers of meaning to God's Word:
- Not only the historical, textual meaning (the letter of the law) but also deeper spiritual truths (the spirit of the law).
 - There are primary and secondary (and many times more) applications to God's Word.
 - The "milk vs. meat" idea is an example of this
6. Scripture is highly typical in nature.
- "God structured His revelation to man after a fashion in which not only true, correct history is presented but this history is highly typical in nature. God, within His sovereign control of all matters, brought things to pass after such a fashion (within the history of the earth, angels, and man) that He could, at a later time, have these events to draw upon in order to teach His people the deep things surrounding Himself, His plans, and His purposes. And this would be accomplished mainly through types and corresponding antitypes." – Arlen Chitwood
7. The Bible is ONE book with a main storyline—it has a beginning, an end, and a plethora of characters in-between.
- Each book of the Bible fits together to form the central plot, but individually each book develops or teaches certain points regarding the whole.
 - The main word picture (plot) of the Bible is about the person and work of Jesus Christ.
8. Scripture uses both literal and figurative language.
- The literal rendering should be supposed first.
 - Figurative language is usually expressed as such and the meaning is always explained somewhere in Scripture.

9. A useful tool in understanding the spiritual truth of a word or passage is to look at the context in which it is first used—this is the “Law of First-Mention” principle.
- This is simply believing that God sets a pattern of usage perfectly at the beginning, and since He is perfect in everything, He cannot and does not deviate from perfection. Hence, the first establishes all else.