

Principles of Biblical Interpretation

1. The Bible is inspired by God who inspired the people who wrote it, not the words. The Bible was not dictated by God, but human writers wrote the thoughts given them by the Holy Spirit in their own words. Everything that is human is imperfect.
2. Since the language was not directed by God, it is important not to assume merely human meanings behind the words. Lexicons and dictionaries, helpful though they are, are not adequate to explain the meaning of words that involve God and His ways.
3. No one passage of Scripture contains the entire truth about God; the Bible must be read as a whole and passage compared with passage to find the truth. Key passages, that is, passages that help define or describe the meanings of words, enable the reader to unlock difficult portions of the Bible to harmonize them with the broad, principled statements the Bible makes about God.
4. Jesus is the fullest, most complete revelation of the Father's character. Any interpretation of Scripture that contradicts this revelation is faulty.
5. It is Satan who has misrepresented God as arbitrary, unforgiving, vengeful, and severe. Any interpretation of a passage of Scripture that makes God appear as this way gives credence to Satan's lies about Him.
6. All contexts—literary, social, relational—should be considered when interpreting a passage or a word in the Bible. These provide meaning that a simple, lexical approach does not.
7. When discussing divorce, Jesus pointed out that Moses allowed divorce because of the stiffness of people's necks and their hardness of heart, but that in the beginning it was not so. The hermeneutic principle He uses here suggests that some portions of the Bible reflect God's ideal, perfect will while others reflect His permissive will adapted to the will of the people. It is important, then, always to keep in mind which passage belongs to which "voice."