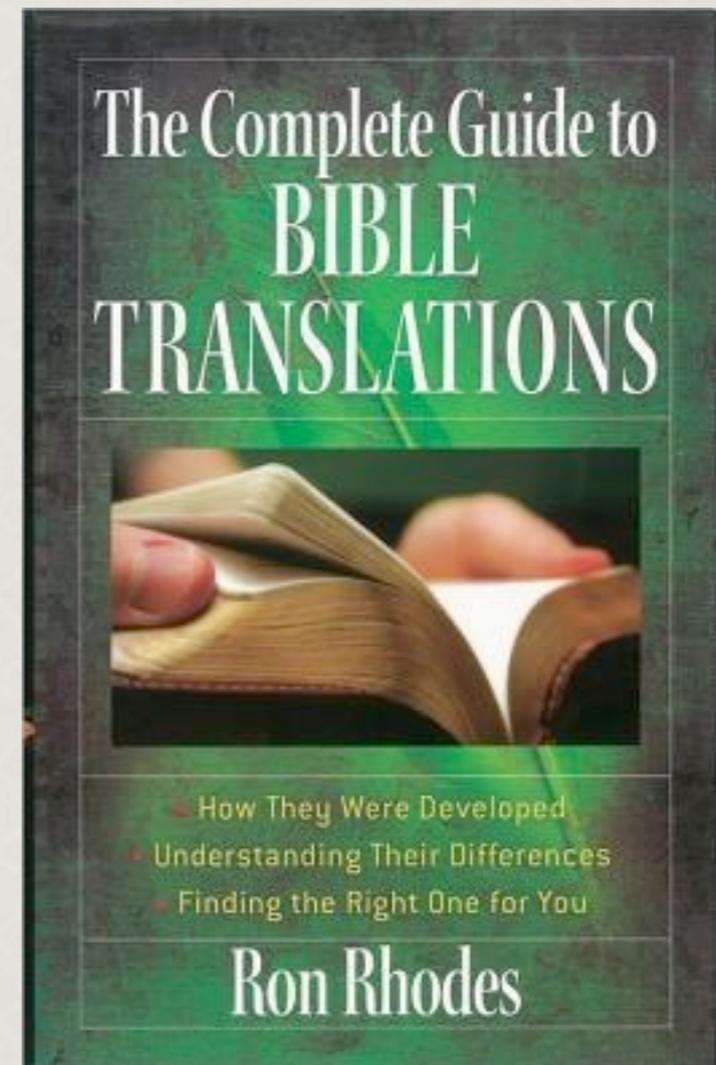


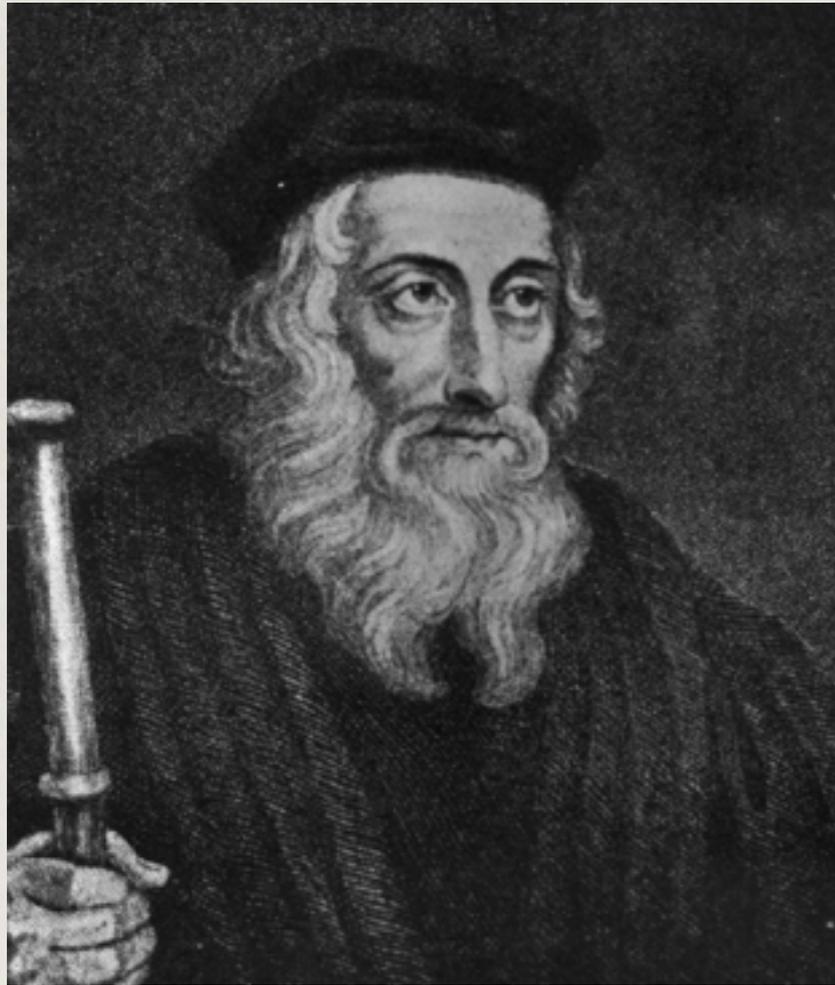
Bible Translations and Interpretation

Bible Translations

- A Guide to Bible Translations
- A Survey of Bible Translation

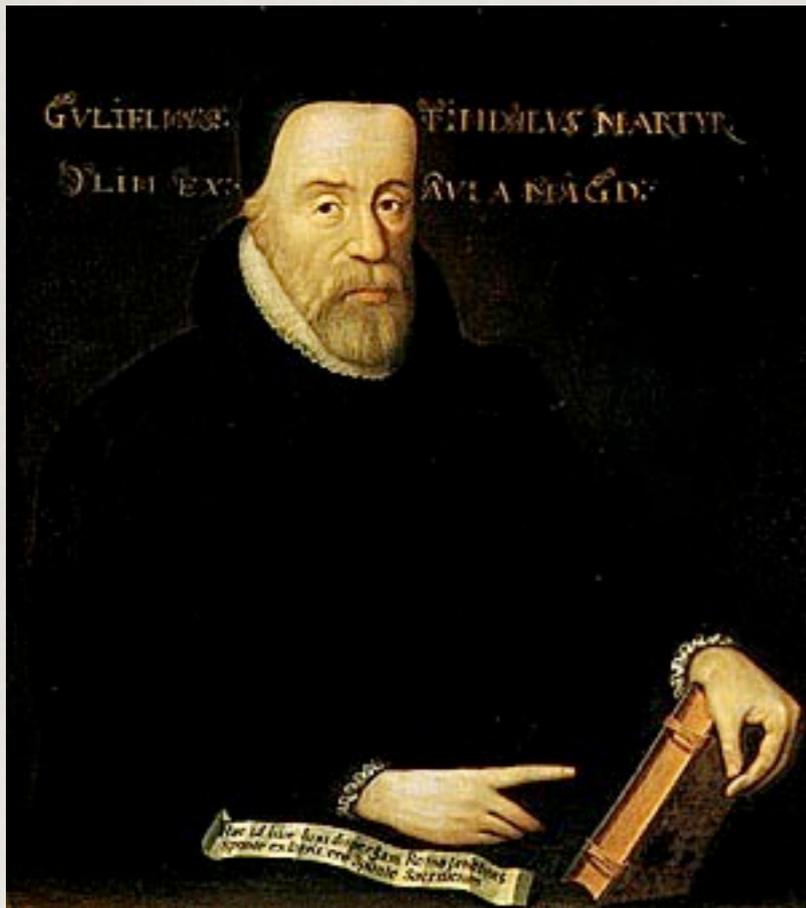


John Wycliffe



- Born mid-1320s, lecturer at Oxford University.
- Wanted the average English-speaking layman to have access to the Word of God.
- Translated from Latin, does not have definite article.

William Tyndale



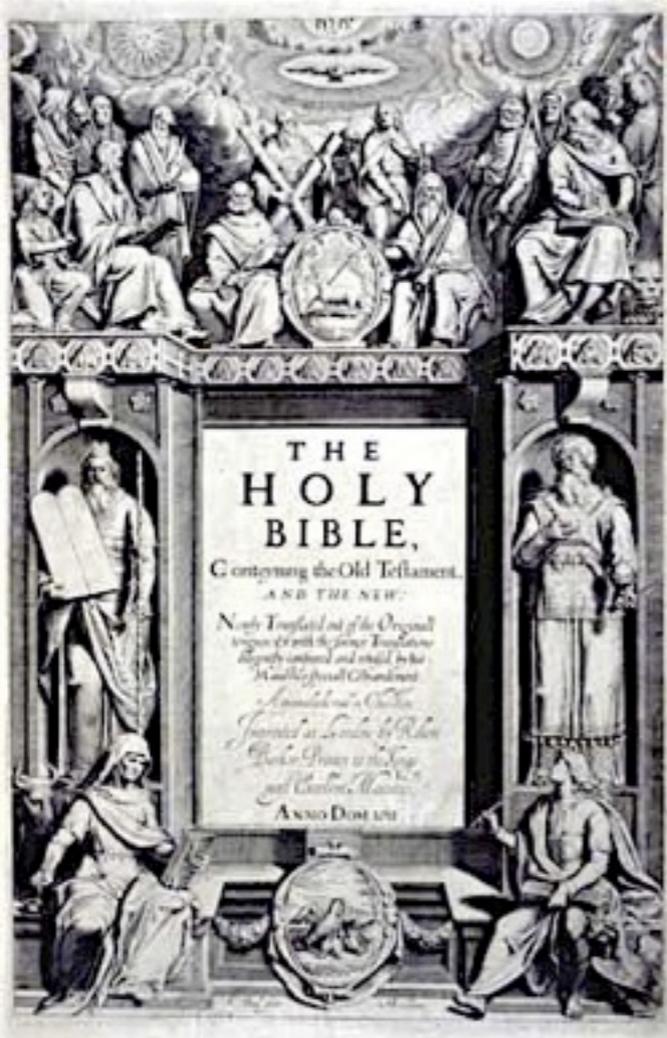
- Lived 1492-1536, taught at Cambridge University.
- Translated from the original Greek texts.
- Critics falsely claimed he changed the Bible as he translated it.

Martin Luther



- Lived 1483-1546.
- Translated Bible not into High German but the vernacular German used by the common folk.
- “Express the meaning freely in the best German he knows.”

King James Bible



- Eventually replaced the Geneva Bible but translation was influenced by it.
- Authorized by King James I.
- There were 54 translators in six groups who all followed the 15 rules for translation.

Difficulty of Translation

- Translation is more than a word for word substitution (noun for noun, verb for verb).
- It also involved interpretation of the Bible's meaning into another language.
- Often there is no one-to-one parallel in words.
- Historical barrier (original and translator).

Formal Equivalence

- Formal equivalence - advocates as literal rendering of the original text as possible.
- Formal - rendering is form-for-form or word-for-word.
- Means if there is a long sentence in Greek, there will be a long sentence in English.
- If Greek uses an infinitive, so will the English.

Formal Equivalence

- Examples: New American Standard, English Standard Version, King James Version.
- Pro: accurate representation of the original text, can be trusted not to mix too much commentary with the text, very little interpretation of the text.
- Con: sometimes hard to people to understand.

Literal Translation

“For God did so love the world, that His Son--the only begotten--He gave, that every one who is believing in him may not perish, but may have life age-during.”

John 3:16

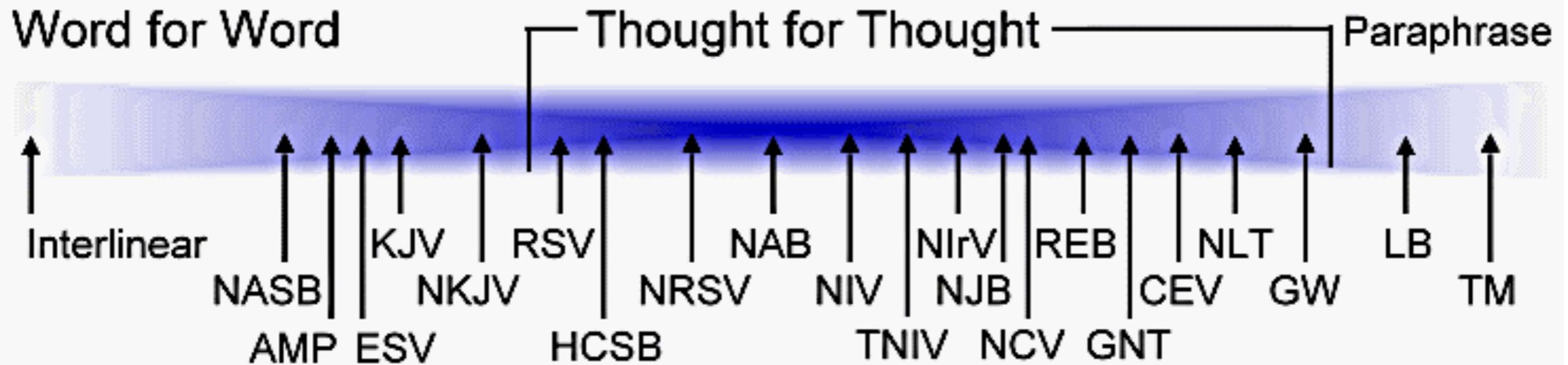
Dynamic Equivalence

- Dynamic equivalence - encourages a more readable translation that does not provide an exact rendering of the text.
- Described as the “closest natural equivalent to the source-language message.”
- Pro: greater understanding, reading aloud
- Con: makes interpretive decisions for the reader and adds commentary

Other Bible Versions

- Middle of the Road:
 - Word-for-word and thought-for-thought.
 - Examples: New International Version, Holman Christian Standard Version, NET Bible.
- Paraphrases:
 - The Living Bible, The Message

English Bible Translation Comparison



NASB - New American Standard (11.5)
 AMP - Amplified Bible (11)
 ESV - English Standard Version (8)
 KJV - King James Version (13)
 NKJV - New King James Version (9.5)
 RSV - Revised Standard Version (11)
 HCSB - Holman Christian Standard (8)
 NRSV - New Revised Standard (10.5)
 NAB - New American Bible (7)
 NIV - New International Version (8)
 TNIV - Today's NIV (7.5)

NIV - New International reader's (3)
 NJB - New Jerusalem Bible (7.5)
 NCV - New Century Version (3.5)
 REB - Revised English Bible (7)
 GNT - Good News Translation (6)
 CEV - Contemporary English (5.5)
 NLT - New Living Translation (6.5)
 GW - God's Word (4.5)
 LB - Living Bible (8.5)
 TM - The Message (4.5)

Survey of Bible Translations

King James Version

- King James Version is a word-for-word translation that was first published in 1611.
- The goal was to produce a better translation than any other in existence that could be understood by the common people.
- Put together by 54 translators following 15 rules for the translation.

King James Version

- Benefits: unsurpassed in poetic beauty.
- Many famous phrases come from the KJV.
- Cautions: changes in word meaning: “gay.”
- Late manuscripts - scholars did not have the earlier manuscripts we have today
- Less understanding of Greek and Hebrew.

New American Standard

- The New American Standard Bible is a word-for-word translation produced by the Lockman Foundation.
- Involved 58 then-anonymous translators from a variety of denominational backgrounds.
- Guided by a four-fold aim (true, grammatically correct, understandable, give Jesus proper place).

New American Standard

Benefits: excellent for detailed Bible study.

Easy to follow - each verse starts on a new line, OT quotes in capital letters.

Cautions: not as easy to read and understand as some dynamic equivalent translations.

Some say it is hard to follow the flow of thought.

English Standard

- Published in 2001 by Crossway Bibles, and is a word-for-word translation.
- A meeting called by James Dobson about gender-neutral language and Crossway gaining permission to use the RSV as a basis for a new translation.
- Evangelical scholars (14 members, review board of 60 scholars) developed the translation.

English Standard

- Benefits: excellent word-for-word translation, highly accurate and very readable.
- Textual footnotes include alternative translations, explanation of terms.
- Cautions: some believe the translation still needs improvement in scholarship and style.

New International

- The New International Version falls somewhere between thought-for-thought and word-for-word translation.
- The NIV now outsells every other translation including the King James Version.
- Translated by 100 evangelical scholars - included 20 different denominations.

New International

- Benefits: it is an extremely readable translation with good clarity and decent literary quality.
- Cautions: it has been a target for criticism from many quarters about readability (no memorable passages), shortened sentences, and dropped conjunctions (for, but, therefore).

New Living Translation

- The New Living Translation is a meaning-driven translation, uses vocabulary used by the average person.
- It is a major revision of the Living Bible.
- The original was translated by Kenneth Taylor, the revision by a committee of 87 evangelical scholars from various denominations.

New Living Translation

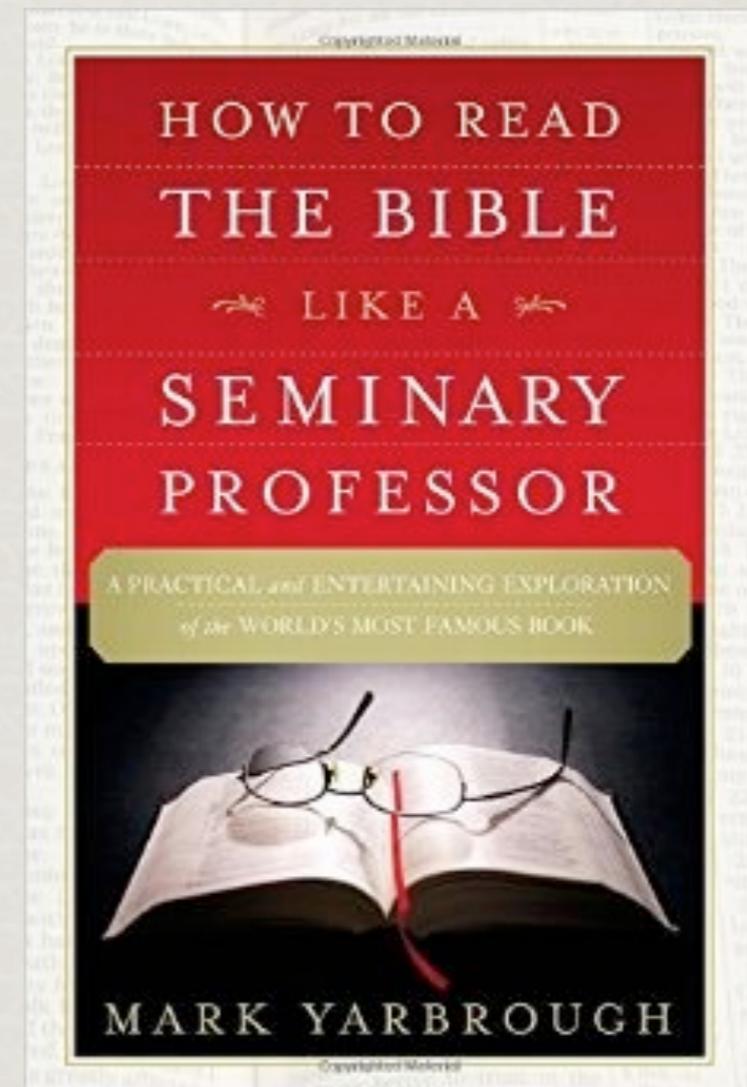
- Benefits: makes the Bible understandable and easy to read, improved accuracy over the original Living Bible.
- It is a good translation for readers for whom English is a second language.
- Cautions: it is not as accurate as a word-for-word translation, not as suitable for a detailed Bible study.

Biblical Interpretation

A decorative horizontal flourish with a central diamond shape and symmetrical scrollwork on either side, positioned between the two lines of the title.

Biblical Interpretation

- Step One: Know It
 - Old Testament (5-12-5-5-12)
 - New Testament (4-1-21-1)
- Step Two: Work It
- Step Three: Live It



Biblical Interpretation

- Observation - words and phrases in the Bible.
- Reading - Bible has more than 1,100 chapters.
- Interpretation - understand the parameters of each type of literature in the Bible.
- History and culture - ancient Near East is different.
- Literature - various types of literature.

Assumptions of Interpretation

Inspiration - Translation

- We begin with assumption of the inspiration, transmission and translation of the Bible.
 - 2 Timothy 3:16 - Bible is God-breathed
 - 2 Peter 1:21 - men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit
 - Acts 4:25 - you spoke by the Holy Spirit

No Contradictions

- God's revelation will not have contradictions.
- If we find apparent contradictions, we should find reasonable answers for them:
 - Different accounts not contradictory (Judas)
 - Divergent accounts (Peter's denial)
 - Misunderstanding biblical languages (Moses)

No Contradictions

- In the Latin Vulgate, Jerome mistranslated the Hebrew term that we now know means “ray of light” as “horn.”
- Michelangelo therefore chiseled horns on his sculpture of Moses.
- This was a translation problem.



Common Sense

- Helpful principle: “When the literal sense makes good sense, seek no other sense lest it result in nonsense.”
- The Bible obviously uses various figures of speech.
- Jesus told parables and used metaphors (He is the vine, the door, and the light of the world).

Common Sense

- Second principle: “When the literal sense does not make good sense, we should seek some other sense lest it lead to nonsense.”
- We should reject a literal sense when it contradicts the moral law, physical law, or supernatural law.

Common Sense

- When Jesus says in Matthew 5:30 to cut off your hand, it violates moral law.
- When Jesus talks about those who swallow a camel in Matthew 23:24, that violates a physical law.
- When we read in Jonah 3:10 that God repented or changed His mind, we know that violates a supernatural law (Numbers 23:19).

Rules of Biblical Interpretation

Rule of Definition

- What does the word mean?
- Define your terms and then keep to the terms you have defined.
- Using a Hebrew/English or Greek/English lexicon will help you understand nuances.

Rule of Usage

- The OT was written for the Jews, so the words and idioms must have been intelligible to them. We should interpret them that way.
- The NT was written in a Greco-Roman culture, and we should interpret the words and phrases according to the standard usage of that period in time.

Rule of Context

- The meaning must be gathered from the context.
- “Jesus is Lord, and context is king.”
- “A verse taken out of context is a pretext for a proof-text.”
- 1 Peter 3:18 - not about universal salvation
- 1 Corinthians 8:5 - does not teach we are gods

Rule of Background

- We should have some awareness of the life and society of the times in which the Scriptures were written.
- The spiritual principles are timeless, yet they are conveyed within a culture and society that we need to understand in order to fully understand the spiritual principles.

Rule of Logic

- Interpretation involves logical reasoning.
- The Bible is to be interpreted as we would any other volume of literature.
- We should use logic (and common sense) to weed out improper interpretations.
- Unbiblical interpretations are usually a violation of logic and evidence.

Rule of Precedent

- We should not violate the known usage of a word and invent another if there is no precedent for doing so.
- An interpreter is like a judge who is to use precedent to judge a case.
- Acts 17 - Bereans examined the Scriptures to determine if what Paul taught was true.

Rule of Unity

- The parts of Scripture must be interpreted with reference to the whole.
- An interpretation must be consistent with the rest of Scripture.
- Scripture interprets Scripture - the Bible's self-interpretation provides clues.

Resources

