



...but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, ... (Ephesians 4:15)

Part 4 — GOD’S WORD, THE BIBLE

2 Peter 1:19-21 ... *knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*

Basic Bible background

1. The Bible was written in different lands over a period of 1,500 years by more than 40 authors from all walks of life. The Bible is unified because it was written by one Author. (2 Peter 1:19-21)
2. The Bible is the unfolding story of how God acted in human history to establish His Kingdom, to save mankind and glorify Himself. Jesus Christ is the Center of it all (John 5:39).
3. The Old Testament is the record of God’s relationship with people before and in the Law. The New Testament is the record of God’s relationship with people after Jesus’ Birth, Sacrifice and Resurrection. “The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed; the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.”
4. The Bible is a library of 66 books. They are not all categorized in chronological order but grouped according to type of writing.

A few things to be aware of when reading the Bible

1. The scientific method is the approach that there is a “cause and effect” to every miracle in the Bible.
2. We can be more committed to the religious/church beliefs taught us



in our childhood than we are to the actual teachings of the Bible.

3. A fear of paradox, seeming discrepancies and the tension of two apparent contradictions, may confuse us.
4. Selective literalism, obeying the commands or teachings we like and ignoring the ones we do not like, is a common practice.
5. We may be tempted to look for easy answers to complex problems, even at the expense of Truth.

Rule number 1: Learn to read Scripture in _____

1. Context (historical, cultural, etc.) is understood by the passages that precede and follow it.
2. God’s Word was expressed in the vocabulary and thought patterns of the people in Bible times and cultures. If they were going to hear God’s message, it could only have come through events and in the language they would have understood. Our problem is that we are removed from them in time and culture.
 - A. Therefore, Scripture can *never* mean what it did not first mean to the original hearers and readers.
3. Three important terms
 - A. Eisegesis - The incorrect practice of reading our own preconceived notions, biases, and understanding *into* Bible text.
 - B. Exegesis - Discovering the writer’s original and intended meaning.
 - C. Hermeneutics - Bringing contemporary relevance to ancient texts, the Bible’s meaning for today.
4. Generally, the Bible should be interpreted literally, exactly as it is written. Wherever possible, let Scripture interpret Scripture.
 - A. Interpret the Bible as a progressive revelation of God.
 - B. Bible interpretation is singular (one meaning), Bible application may be plural (several ways to apply it).
5. Above all, be charitable to those who may differ with your interpretation. Never allow yourself to think that you have “arrived.” And remember, in essentials: unity; in non-essentials: liberty; in all things: charity.