

# Hermeneutics 101: Decoding the Bible for Meaningful Interpretation #hermeneutics #bibleschool

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[0:00] Tonight's topic is hermeneutics. Basically it means interpreting the Bible. It's a study of interpreting the Bible. In Nehemiah 8 verse 8, Nehemiah read in the book and the law distinctly and gave the sense and caused them to understand the reading.

So it's basically reading the Word of God, understanding the meaning of it. And so this word hermeneutics comes from the Greek word hermeneuo, which means to interpret or explain. So for example, we see that in John 1.38, we see that it says, Then Jesus turned and saw them following and saith unto them, What seek ye? He saith unto them, Rabbi, which is to say, being interpreted, Master, where dwellest thou?

So this word being interpreted is that word hermeneuo. So it is the Greek word that is used numbers of times in the Greek New Testament, which means interpreting.

So hermeneutics is essentially using that core word and is that more theological term for interpreting the Bible. So biblical hermeneutics means a study of interpreting the Bible.

[1:12] And hermeneutics is really both a science and an art. It is a science because it's guided by principles or rules within a system. And it is an art because the application of the rules is by skill.

So here's a quote here. Interpreting the Bible is one of the most important issues facing Christians today. It lies behind what we believe, how we live, how we get on together and what we have to offer to the world.

So obviously, it's really important, isn't it, for Bible readers to understand what they're reading, to get something out of it. The purpose of hermeneutics is to know how to interpret, to know what it means to understand and apply it.

So 2 Timothy 2.15, it talks about that the man of God should not be ashamed, should be a workman not ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

And so that's what we want to unpack the word, unfold it and understand it, interpret it, put it into practice. So that's our aim really, through hermeneutics is really to understand what does the author mean, the author being the Holy Spirit.

[2:18] And we depend on him for the illumination of the sacred page. So it's his book, he's the author of it. The human writers just penned it. As you read there, 2 Peter 1, verse 21, it says, For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

So the human writers were just penning what was God's authorship. So we want to know what does the author mean by his word? So we must depend on him. I know it's been said that the Bible is the only book you read where the author is always present with you.

Because really he's the author, isn't he? The Lord, and he's always with us to help us understand his word and to illuminate the sacred page. So we can discover God's truth and God's will.

And when you think about it, as someone's explained here, if you had a pair of glasses and they had red tinted glasses, red tinted lenses, and you looked at your New Testament, if you had a red letter New Testament, and you had those red lenses on your glasses, then you wouldn't be able to read the red letters in the Bible.

Because the tinting on the lens would take away that red writing. And it can be the same when you're reading the Bible, that sometimes our kind of preconceptions, our worldview can obscure what we're trying to read.

[3:39] Because we're not reading it with the full understanding that we need to have. So sometimes our worldview can get in the way, our past experiences, our intellectual abilities, our personality, and our degree of fellowship with God.

So those kind of lenses that we wear can sometimes hinder. So we want to get the right lenses on, don't we? So it's important that we recognize that we're all different. We've all got unique perspectives and removing those obstacles that can get in the way of understanding the truth. And to really, as the psalmist cries out here in Psalm 119 verse 18, Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

So with the hermeneutics, there's a couple of related terms, exegesis and exposition. So exegesis is another kind of complex theological word that means about determining the meaning of the biblical text in its historical and literary context.

So it's diving into the word, it's kind of unpacking word by word, exegeting, like understanding word by word, what do those words mean?

[ 4 : 53 ] And then it follows on that the exposition is then declaring that in preaching or teaching, yet expositing the word, communicating the meaning.

So just some key principles about hermeneutics. Of course, we must take the right approach to God's holy word. And we appropriate God's word by faith, don't we? The truth of God's word. So Hebrews 4 verse 2, it says how the word that was preached did not profit them because it was not mixed with faith. So it's very important that the word of God is mixed with faith.

When we understand God's word, we understand from a faith perspective, don't we? That we appropriate the truth of the word of God by faith. And so we uphold that the Bible is the only authoritative voice of God to man.

And that's the key principles there. And of course, we must depend on the Holy Spirit as well. As it reads there, John 16, 13, it tells us, How be it when he, the spirit of truth has come, he will guide you into all truth.

[ 5 : 56 ] For he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak. And he will show you things to come. The Holy Spirit helped the human writers to record the word of God.

The Holy Spirit moved on them and carried them along to write those words. And for us today, he's the interpreter and the illuminator of his word. And here's another quote, The exercise of a prayerful and teachable spirit is among the most important principles of biblical interpretation.

So we want to come to the word of God prayerfully, spiritually, understanding it, being teachable, having that seeking God as we open the pages. And of course, using the correct Bible, of course, the King James Bible is the most reliable.

The most reliable and authoritative translation that we have. And removing all bias that we might have towards the word of God. And following the normal usage of the language.

So, and that the last paragraph there, The most important law of biblical hermeneutics is that the Bible should be interpreted literally. So we're going to look at that literal Bible interpretation.

[ 7 : 04 ] Some people approach the Bible and spiritualise it or make it all about their perceptions or feelings or emotions. The Bible says what it means and it means what it says. And here's a quote here.

When the plain sense of scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense. So, you know, we take it with that plain understanding of the meaning of it. So it tells us also, as well as approaching it literally, another crucial law is that we view the passage or verse interpreting it historically, grammatically and contextually.

So there's that interpretation. We look at the history, the historical interpretation about the culture, the background, the situation of the text. We look at the grammatical interpretation, look at the rules of grammar and the nuances of the Hebrew and Greek.

And then we look at it contextually too, contextual interpretation so that we always take the verse and passage into consideration. So section four there, we see problems of misinterpretation and maltreatment.

That's what gets a lot of cults into trouble. You know, the charismatic movement, wacko kind of cult groups that misinterpret the Bible or maltreat it. We need to interpret personal experience in the light of scripture, not scripture in the light of personal experience.

[ 8 : 24 ] Some people say, oh, you can't deny my experience. I've had this, that happened to me. Well, if it doesn't accord with the Bible, then our experience is certainly not the guide to the truth.

The word of God is, and we've got to filter everything by that. And of course, saving faith and the Holy Spirit are necessary for us to understand and properly interpret the scripture. The primary

purpose of the Bible is to change lives, not increase our knowledge.

So it's got that spiritual angle. Some of the things to avoid, you've got a whole list there. Personal bias. That's one thing to avoid. Avoiding personal bias, but rather just going through the word, searching the scriptures to see if these things are so.

Not having a cultural bias as well. Sometimes we can come from an Anglo-Saxon bias or whatever culture you're from. But just to try to take it as rare. A psychological disposition or personal interpretation.

Some people are all carried along by their emotions. They read into the Bible things that really are not there, that some false teachers might put across to them. And some people are more suspect to following after such feeling-centered kind of approach to the Bible, which is, again, not wise.

[ 9 : 37 ] Human philosophy can be a problem where we're just following after a philosophical approach. Resting the scriptures, really twisting the scriptures.

Tradition, that can be a problem. Watering down the Bible. So not taking it authoritatively. And really deliberate deception too. We know, of course, in the Mormons and such religions, they follow really quite deceptive teachings.

And then there's the problem of extreme literalism, where you're following the letter of the law, but you're ignoring the spirit of the law. Adding new revelations. Latter-day prophecies.

Joseph Smith tried to. And Ellen White in the seven days. So these are all dangerous things that we should avoid. And adding or subtracting to the Word of God, like happening in the garden.

That's important that we don't add or subtract to what God's Word says. Here's some Bible helps we can use along the journey. Of course, it's always good to have different resources you can use to help you as you study the Word of God.

[ 10 : 42 ] So commentaries can be useful. Again, you've got to be picking the bones out or being selective what commentary you might use. A concordance. So you can get a crudence, a strong's, a young's.

Strong's is good because you can get information about the Greek and Hebrew words. Having a Bible atlas or a book on manners and customs. They can be helpful.

Other Bible helps are vines, which is to do with the Greek and Hebrew word meanings, like a lexicon. As is theius. And an interlinear Greek-English New Testament.

I'd recommend the berry one because it's based on the Textus Receptus. So where you've got the Greek and the English, and you can see literally the word meanings. All of these things, nowadays you can access a lot of it online, which is really a lot easier than trying to go buying a physical book. There's one there, the Blue Letter Bible online. I haven't used that myself, but that was one suggested. And having a Bible dictionary is good. And also ESO is one where you can get a program, you can put it on your computer, and you can go through, and it's got all of these things we talked about.

[ 11 : 52 ] Commentaries, dictionaries, helps, and word meanings. You can use that on your computer, and I know there's other programs out there too. So it's always good to think about what helps can I use.

And if you want more direct info, I can show you some. We'll share more about that later. Tonight we're looking really at the literal method, alright? The literal method of looking at the Scripture, taking into consideration the context, the grammatical uses of words, the historical setting.

So we want to really take it as that authority that it is, and trying to understand what are the meanings of the words. And when God breathed on the writers of Scripture, they literally produced the Word of God completely and accurately.

So we believe in the doctrine of verbal, plenary inspiration. So in other words, every word is given by God, and authoritatively so.

We can trust every word. And God's chosen each word for its specific meaning. So the literal method, basically it lets Scripture interpret Scripture. In other words, if the literal sense makes sense, seek no other sense.

[ 13 : 00 ] If not, we can allow for figures of speech. So for example, Luke 22, verse 19, it talks about, this is my body, which is given for you. Of course, it was more figuratively.

It wasn't that he was actually giving us his physical body or his blood in the elements of the communion. So they're more figures of speech.

So when an inanimate object is used to describe a living being, consider it figurative. And when an expression is out of character with the thing described, consider it figuratively.

So of course, we take it literally, but there are figurative meanings too. So we are to rightly divide the Word of Truth, the Word of God, and rightly handle it, skillfully teach it.

So next up, we've got a whole load of different principles that you can use when you're looking at the Word of God. Some key principles that can guide you. So some key principles to guide us is the, firstly, the principle of inspiration.

[14:00] So we take the Word of God as authoritative. It's been supernaturally given by God. It's given to us with that divine authenticity and truthfulness.

And of course, that's the essential foundation for all of our teaching, our faith and practice. The principle of inspiration. Next one is the principle of plain language.

As we talked about, some of these things are kind of repeating somewhat. We take the Word of God, the words of Scripture, at their plain, normal, everyday meaning, unless otherwise indicated.

So we see in the Word of God there, it talks about, The common people heard Him gladly, Mark 12, 37. So there's that sense where, it should be clear enough that the plain average person should be able to understand the essential message of the Bible.

The principle of plain language. The next one is the principle of context. In other words, the meaning of the verse or subject is illumined by its setting. We get that understanding of it because of the setting of it, where it's found.

[15:04] So we look at it in the light of its context. And we're going to unpack that a bit more after. Number four there, we've got the principle of dispensations. The fact that God's purposes regarding man, there's been different dispensations over time.

Different ways that God deals with man and administers His truth to man. We'll talk about that at another time. But there is a problem of hyper-dispensationalism where some people go too far with it.

So we've got to take it within that context too. So dispensations. The principle of agreement. In other words, there's a perfect harmony in Scripture. There's not one aspect of Scripture which conflicts with another.

Confusion is foreign to God. We know that God is not the author of confusion. And so His utterances are complementary and harmonistic. So it all fits together like a jigsaw as the principle of agreement.

So even though the Bible's been written over a huge expanse of time, over different continents, over different authors, it's still one message. It's got that harmony, that agreement. And another principle is that Christ is at the centre.

[16:18] Christ should be preeminent, Colossians 1. And then we see the principle of covenant. Again, that there's been different dealings of God with men. Different agreements that God has made between man and God.

Number eight, the principle of type. Truth is often presented through the illustrative method of an object or living thing. So a type. It's a pattern or image of something else.

So some of the things that are in the Old Testament, such as the tabernacle and the temple, and all the different objects and furnishings, they all mean something.

There's something that they signify. So we might cover that off, God willing, if this continues, that we have maybe a session on typology. And can unpack some of that detail.

Number nine there, the principle of ethnic divisions. The Bible divides people into three great classifications. And he talks about the Jews, the Gentiles and the Church of God.

[17:16] 1 Corinthians 10.32. So basically there's three divisions of mankind. It's the Jews, the Gentiles and the Church of God. Of course, in the Church of God there are Jews and Gentiles.

But there's that sense where sometimes God addresses one or more of those groups. So you've got to think about what group is he talking to. Number 10, the principle of illustration.

So for every particular truth taught in the Bible, there's an episode, incident, narrative, happening or form in the Bible which illustrates it. Illustrations of truth or doctrines are right through the Bible.

We do not build the doctrine on the illustration, but we use the illustration to throw light and amplify. Another principle, number 11, is the principle of first mention.

The idea here is that the first occurrence of a word, expression, utterance, topic, subject, theme or doctrine holds the key to its subsequent meaning right through Scripture.

[18:13] When you see something the first time in your Bible, it's good to take note of that because it can set the scene for all the other occurrences of it. I was looking, there's a big long list of them. I've got a big page of them, first references.

I know there's the first mention of diet, for example, or all kinds of obscure things that the Bible talks about the first mention of. It's very interesting. So that's another thing you can explore for homework there, the principle of first mention.

Number 12, the principle of progressive mention. The revelation of a particular truth becomes progressively clear as each succeeding mention of is followed and grasped.

Each mention leads to more and more flowing on from that. So, for example, the doctrine of atonement begins in Genesis, because it's only in very skeleton form, and then gradually we can see it's Christ.

Christ is the atonement. We can see that the full revelation of it. So there's progressively mention and get more and more detail. Then there's the principle of full mention, number 13 there.

[19:16] So throughout the Scriptures, there are passages and even verses which are concentrations of God's mind on a subject. So, for example, the classic one, John 3, 16.

Salvation is in John 3, 16. You've got the full mention there. You've got really the full essential truth about salvation is in John 3, 16. Then you've got 14, the principle of application.

So Scripture is meant to be related and applied to human situations. It's designed for application. You know, what does it say in James? We should be doers of the word, doesn't it? So it's got that sense where there's a practical application in our life.

And there is one correct interpretation of Scripture in many applications. So it's not like the Bible is saying lots and lots of things, but there's different applications that we can make from it.

The principle of multi-meaning. So there can be many meanings or layers of truth in one verse, each moving out from and relating to the other. That one verse can speak of more than one event or thing at the same time.

[20:19] So Isaiah 14, we see that it talks about this prediction of the Persian Empire that would be overthrown. So that was fulfilled 170 years later. It's also a profile of Satan's overthrow, both past and ultimate.

And also it's a prophecy ultimately of the end time supremacy bid, which will be overthrown. So there's multiple applications, multiple meanings there. That one verse can have different significance.

Number 16, the principle of the fear of the Lord. So when we come to the word of God, we come to it as a student, don't we? As a humble student in awe of God and his ways.

And we want to have the fear of the Lord as we open his word. In Psalm 25, 14, it talks about those who fear the Lord. That, yeah, the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him and he will show them his covenant.

Psalm 25, 14. And there's one writer here who said, The Bible, like the great God himself, is not to be approached with chatter and clatter and bustle, but with contrite spirit, bruised heart and prostrate form.

[21:25] And it talks about those that tremble at his word, doesn't it? The word of God. Section seven now, it talks about some gaps that we face when it comes to the word of God. Firstly, really, there's the ancient book factor.

We're dealing with a book that's thousands of years old and it's an ancient book. And so naturally there's some obscurity. It's somewhat difficult to understand some elements of it.

And we see the first five Old Testament books were written by Moses around 1400 BC. The last book, Revelation, was written by John around 90 AD.

So some of the books were written about three and a half thousand years ago. The last one about 1900 years ago. So there's lots of gaps naturally because it's such an old book.

And so here's how someone's described some five different gaps here. There's the time gap or chronological. So of course there's those thousands of years that we separated from the biblical events.

[22:24] There's that time gap. And as time passes, culture changes, points of view changes, language changes. Then you've got the space or geographical gap. Of course we live a great distance from where these Bible events took place.

There's the fact that it's a different country, different landscape. We've got the customs or cultural gap. How we think and live and do things is quite different from the way people lived in Bible times. Then you've got the language or linguistic gap. So our way of speaking and writing differs from the way people in the Bible spoke and wrote. Of course we seldom speak in parables or proverbs, but a lot of the Bible is in that form.

So that language is different. And another gap is the supernatural or spiritual gap. That God is infinite. You know, he's hard to comprehend the awesome almighty God, isn't it?

And the fact that he's performing these miracles and the prophecies of the future. There's that spiritual supernatural element. And because God is the author, the divine author of the book, the Bible, it's totally unique.

[ 23 : 34 ] This is a unique book. So we don't look at it like we would an average regular book. The Bible is not simply a book with man's thoughts about God, though it includes them. It's also about God's thoughts about God and man.

So the Bible reports what God did and communicates what he is and what he desires. So when it comes to the Bible, try to avoid all those gaps that we talked about. Just trying to get a hold of what's the author's intent.

What does it mean? The theological truth. What are the timeless truths that he's teaching? What are the principles for today? And contextualise that. So next up there, it talks about preparation. And for us to comprehend the Bible, we need spiritual preparation. So of course, to be born again, as we got pictured here, to be born again, of course, you can't really understand the Bible. As an unsaved person, it talks about people that don't know the Lord as spiritually blind. We can't understand it without really being saved. And having that spiritual preparation, having that reverence for the word.

[ 24 : 40 ] Treat it reverently. Treat it with that awe of God. Also have a prayerful attitude as we come to it. Pray as we read it, that we ask God to help us to capture the truth of it.

Be willing to obey and put it into action in our lives. And depend on the Holy Spirit, his guidance. So really, the illumination of scripture can only come from the Spirit of God.

Now, 1 Corinthians 2 verse 12 talks about how these things are spiritually discerned. Next up, we've got here a list of qualifications of an interpreter. Of course, faith.

We need to come with faith as we come to his word. A love for the truth. Having an honesty, having a humility. A bit of common sense wouldn't go astray. Willingness to listen and study.

Spiritual purity. And willing to listen to God. So here's how someone's put it, which I think is quite a good little description of it.

[ 25 : 40 ] How we should read the Bible prayerfully, reverently, collectively, humbly. So, in other words, when we come to it humbly, that we don't come trying to force our view onto it.

Which is kind of, there's a technical word, eisegesis, trying to make it say something that we believe. But rather, exegesis, we get the truth out of what it says.

That's the correct way to look at the word. To study it. To actually, exegesis, we get out of it. Ex, I think, is the mean to get it out of. Not trying to put it into it or read into it, which is the opposite.

See, some cults try to read into the Bible what it says. But we actually take what it says and that teaches us what to believe. That's exegesis. So having that humility, being teachable.

And then, of course, reading it obediently, carefully, Christologically too. Having that eye to, as someone has put it, as Christ in all the scriptures, the sense that the Lord Jesus is right through the whole book, from cover to cover.

[ 26 : 41 ] Right from the garden that we see the Lord Jesus there. So read it Christologically as well. Section 8 there talks about types of literature. So biblical hermeneutics is interpreting it in the context of what kind of literature it is.

For example, a psalm, we interpret differently than a prophecy. A proverb, we understand and apply differently from the law. And all these other different types of literature too.

So the use of words changes and how they understand them. So you've got a whole long list there of the kind of writings that are in the Bible. Of course, some of the writings of the Bible are history.

It's actually telling us historical records of what happened. Some of it's narrative. Some of it's parables. Teaching abstract truths out of these parables.

Some of it's prophetic. That it's actually revelation of things yet to come. Some of it's poetic. Usually the Hebrew style of poetry is basically sets of phrases that compare, contrast, and complete a

thought.

[ 27 : 46 ] So like through Proverbs, it's got that interplay of different elements. Like over and over again, it's got this kind of pattern in there. Poetic. And then some of the scriptures teaching.

Telling people about God's truth and how we should live. And of course, as we talked about, proverbial as well. So again, it's just having that mind that, yeah, there's different types of literature in the Bible itself.

Because really it's 66 books and there's a whole range of different kinds of writings within those 66 books. Section 9 there says, Make Christ central in all interpretations.

Like I was saying before, that really Christ is the supreme subject of the scriptures. He's really the subject of it. He's the teacher of it, isn't he? He's the prophesied Messiah, the God of Abraham, the creator.

In the New Testament, he's the subject with the gospels being the account of his life, the epistles being the proclaimed faith in him. And Revelation talks about his second coming.

[ 28 : 48 ] So the whole Bible really from cover to cover, it's about the Lord Jesus, isn't it? He's central. And so there's a quote there, Search the scriptures for in them you have eternal life and they are they which testify of me.

So right through the Bible, the Lord Jesus is telling us, search the scriptures. They are they which testify of me. Now section 10, we're going to talk a little bit more about context. Really when we're looking at the Bible and we go to a particular verse or section, we want to interrogate it.

So who wrote it? To whom was it addressed? What does the passage say? Are there any words or phrases that we need to examine? What's the immediate context?

What's the broader context in the chapter and the book? What are the related passages and verses? What's the historical and cultural background? What do I conclude about the passage?

Do my conclusions agree or disagree with related areas of scripture? Because you've got to kind of compare scripture with scripture. There might be more truth or more light shown from other scripture.

[ 29 : 55 ] What have I learned? What must I apply to my life? So that's a good kind of helpful summary there. The context of a text or verse refers to its setting within the larger portion of scripture.

So what happened before? What happens after? The paragraph, the chapter, the book. And of course the situation is about the text too. So here's an example in 1 Corinthians 15, 32.

It reads, Let us eat, drink for tomorrow we die. Now if you look at that verse you might think, well Paul's telling you to live a carefree life and life kind of with abandon. But really he's teaching the opposite.

If you look at the context, he's talking about instructing the Corinthians that there is life after death, that we're going to be judged and held accountable. He was rebuking them that if there was no resurrection of the dead, then there was no reason to live a righteous life.

And he's rebuking them for the way that they're living. So you can't just take that little section that says, eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we should die. You've got to take the whole context of it.

[ 31 : 00 ] And sometimes like cults make that mistake where they kind of get a proof text or a, really it's a pretext, you know, they kind of cut pieces out and misapply them.

Many false teachings and beliefs can be traced to ignoring the context of the passage. Cincere men can make mistakes. Others times false teachers, they have no fear of God, deliberately deceive their followers.

So a good rule is a text without a context is only a pretext. Or some say, if you take the text out of the context, you're just left with a con. You know, basically you should take it as, as the setting that it's in.

So to fully understand it because Bible texts are closely connected to what is before them, what follows them and really the whole book as well. And then in the light of what other books say about that subject.

So when you're looking at a text again, as similar to what we read before, who is speaking, the Bible may quote someone who's saying something wrong. Knowing the speaker may also help you to interpret what he's saying.

[ 32 : 05 ] So, of course, the Bible does quote the devil for one thing. And of course, some of the quotes in Job, like for example, Eliphaz, the Lord says about Eliphaz there in Job 42, you have not

spoken of me, the thing that is right.

So sometimes what's actually quoted is someone saying the wrong thing, because the Bible truthfully says what the devil says, of course, what the devil says, we know is a lie. He's the father of lies.

So you've got to look who is speaking. And then we think about who is being addressed as well. So here's a bit of a summary of all these things. Who is being addressed? Notice the words, who they're addressed to.

That matters, of course, too. What's the occasion? And see if there's related phrases, either within the verse or close by, that define and explain the difficult statements.

And consider the general purpose of the book, too. So, for example, John 20, 31, you know, the Gospel of John is written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

[ 33 : 14 ] So that's the purpose of the book. John tells us the purpose of the Gospel of John. This is written so that you believe. It calls us to faith. So as we've seen, the context is the setting. And there's a whole lot of context here, too.

Just this kind of elaborates a bit more about this truth about context. The context is the setting, the venue, the time, the occasion, the place, the circumstance, a whole host of contexts, like cultural contexts.

What's the culture here? What's going on? Some of the people of God were in pagan lands. They were before pagan kings. Look at the cultural context.

Look at the geographical context. Look at the immediate context of the verse. The broad context, like where that verse sits within the book and the chapter.

The parallel context. There's a book you can get called the Harmony of the Gospels. And you can get like the Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in columns in the book. And it's called a Harmony of the Gospels.

[ 34 : 15 ] And you can see they lay it all out historically, like as it follows sequentially. And so you can cross reference where Mark and Luke might be talking about the same event. And you can see how they've recorded it.

And you can get more light on it. So it's quite a handy thing. The Harmony of the Gospels. You can get that online, too. It's quite a useful way. If you want to look at one of the verses or some of the teachings in the Gospels, you can look at a harmony.

So a parallel context. Historical context, as well. So you look at the history. And so to help that, you can have Bible handbooks. And there's different resources that talk about archaeology, finding some archaeology, Bible atlases and such things, to the historical context.

And then the analogical context, really where there's something similar in another part of Scripture. So Scripture does not contradict itself. So it's finding out, really, where there's another passage that gives you a bit more light on it.

It gives you more of an analogy. And then again, there's the dispensational context, too. God works somewhat differently. Still, salvation's still the same through the whole book.

[ 35 : 27 ] But some of God's dealings with men changed over time. All right, next section, number 11, there's the principle of self-consistency. So again, there's no contradictions in Scripture.

Any discrepancies are only apparent and not real. So where it might seem to be a contradiction, it's more about our interpretation.

You've got to get the interpretation right and not make assumptions based on your lack of understanding. And so the Word of God tells us that God cannot lie. You see that there?

Titus 1, verse 2. That God cannot lie. Where there's apparent contradictions, it's more about we need some explanation and unpack it more.

Section 12 there talks about recognising the progress of revelation and the dispensation. So again, while God's purpose for man has never changed, his strategy in accomplishing that has.

[ 36 : 25 ] So that's why there's different covenants or programs between different men and God. And under which program was this written? It's something you've got to think about. So of course, when God was dealing with Noah, it's different from how God was dealing with Moses.

Different how he was dealing with Abraham. Different how he was dealing with Adam and Eve. As much as there were similar themes, there was a different dealing, different thing. So there's the kind of progressive revelation too, where God's revelation of himself kind of unfolded over time, progressively and gradually.

And even in the New Testament times, Christ was telling his disciples, I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. That's John 16, 12.

So even when he was with his disciples, he says there's still some things that you cannot bear them now. And it was only after the writing of the last New Testament book, Revelation, or the Apocalypse, that there's this clear warning.

If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in the book. So he's saying there that the canon was closed. The 66 books were finished and accepted by the church and taken as authorised.

[ 37 : 41 ] And so there wasn't any more books to add to the Bible after Revelation, after that final book. Over the page there. So several truths should be understood about progressive revelation.

God did not reveal everything to man at once. For example, Abraham did not have God's complete revelation. Of course, at that time in history, there was much of the Bible yet to be written. So Abraham didn't know some of the details of what God was actually promising him.

In time through Moses, God revealed more truth. And the descendants of Abraham became a nation. And they were given the law. So Abraham did not have the law. So Abraham did not have the law. Because God had chosen to reveal it later in time, when the nation was formed and needed the law.

So again, it's like this progressive revelation. That when you read certain parts of the scripture, that some of that detail is yet to be kind of revealed.

As much as we know that, of course, the Lord Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. God does not change. He's immutable, which means he does not change.

[ 38 : 47 ] God is not constantly changing his mind about truth. It's just that he didn't reveal the whole lot of it until later on in the story. As beyond Abraham, more came to light.

So another important truth in understanding progressive revelation is that God did not necessarily repeat truth given earlier. When he gave new revelation. So when God revealed truth to man, it was eternal truth, which stands forever.

God gave it and instructed man to accept it and live by it. When God gave new revelation, it was to add it to former truths he had given. When the new revelation was given, the Lord did not always repeat truth given earlier.

All truths revealed in the Old Testament were not necessarily repeated in the New Testament. As an example, consider the Old Testament tabernacle. So you've got the shadows, the types that were later revealed and made clear what they meant.

So the blood sprinkled on the mercy seat was a picture of the atoning work of Christ. In the shedding of his blood on the cross for the sins of the world. And so as it reads there in Hebrews 10 verse 4, it says, For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

[ 40 : 02 ] So of course those acts of sacrifice, of animal sacrifice, was really a picture of the ultimate sacrifice. The animal sacrifices did not take away sins.

It pictured Christ coming. In New Testament times, the apostles were showing the full extent of the truth. When they saw Christ crucified and risen from the grave. So now we can look back, we've got the whole story we can look back on.

Section 13, it reads on, Grant one essential interpretation to each passage. So when the words of Scripture were penned, they had only one meaning. We should search for that one meaning.

To accept multiple interpretations for one Scripture causes confusion. So Scripture itself does not allow for multiple interpretations of a verse. Note that we're talking about interpretation, not application.

So a passage can have several applications, but in its historical and grammatical setting, it can only have one interpretation. So God promised the nation of Israel would inherit the area of land from the river in Egypt in the south, to the Euphrates in the north.

[ 41 : 07 ] It's incorrect to interpret this verse in any other way, but that God promised this land to Abraham's descendant. It does not mean God gave it to the church or anyone else. So you've got to take it as rare.

Of course the Euphrates river does not mean the Persian Gulf or any other body of water. It only has one meaning. And that meaning must govern your interpretation. Another principle there, 14, simplicity.

So the simplest explanation of the verse is the likeliest. So Mormons take this verse, this obscure verse about baptism for the dead, and they make it some doctrine that they practice now. They baptise people instead of their loved ones who've died, thinking that somehow going to affect something to the person who's died. And it's quite a ridiculous idea.

So they get all that just from one obscure verse and make it an ordinance, which is not what it means. They're totally misunderstanding that verse. So section 15, avoid compromise.

[ 42 : 10 ] God's word is perfect and without error. It's inerrant and infallible. When God created the earth by speaking it into existence out of nothing, then that is the word of God on the matter.

If science disagrees, then science is wrong. Of course we know science is constantly reverting and changing and flip-flopping anyway. But you can't really try to harmonise the teaching of evolution with the Bible, as some theologians have tried to do, because they're effectively denying the word of God.

God said he spoke the universe into existence. It did not evolve over long periods of time as evolution postulates. Another principle there, 16, never base a doctrine on only one passage of scripture.

So every matter must be established by a testimony of two or three witnesses. So there's various scriptures that say such a thing as we've got there. 2 Corinthians 13, 1, Matthew 18, 16, Deuteronomy 19, 15.

So again, it's like we talked about how the Mormons take one obscure verse and make it say something that's not actually teaching. Section 17 there, common sense.

[ 43 : 19 ] It says what it means and it means what it says. Right, this is the literal method again. It's really the only real biblical method because the best interpreter is God himself.

So let the scripture interpret scripture. If there's a verse you're struggling with, look for cross references and tie it in with those. See what the other verses might correlate and give you more light on it.

So the Bible interprets itself. Next section, 18, figurative language. So we talked a lot about the literal principle, the literal interpretation of the Word of God.

We've also got to realise the truth is that, of course, there is figurative language. So where, for example, the Lord talks about fishers of men. It's not meaning that we actually get a fishing line or a net and try to capture people like that.

It is obviously using it as figurative. It's really the principle of being a soul winner, reaching people, not necessarily being a fisher, literally a fisher of men.

[ 44 : 20 ] And so figurative language, it always teaches literal truth. So again, the Lord's not teaching to take your boats and nets out into the water and try to catch men as they would have caught fish.

It's more about teaching the principle of going toiling, of reaching out, casting the net, as it were, more spiritually, more that you can reach others for Christ.

Section 19 sort of unpacks a little bit more about some common figures of speech. So there are some kind of technical terms here similarly. So as it talks about, as cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.

So it's like, obviously, good news is compared to cold water. Metaphors as well. So you've got here talking about Joseph. So it's a comparison without the words like or as.

So it doesn't say Joseph is like a fruitful bough. It says the Lord is a fruitful bough. It says the Lord is my rock and my fortress. Of course, we know that God is not literally a rock, but it's more of a principle that he is that as a metaphor.

[ 45 : 26 ] It's signifying that he's strong and mighty, a stronghold for us. And then another principle there is personification. Where it talks about there, for example, Psalm 114 talks about the sea saw and fled, that Jordan was driven back, the mountains skipped like rams, the little hills like lambs.

And of course, again, it's just a personification. It's sort of comparing these things to more what a person would do. Of course, we know mountains don't skip around like rams.

It's just more about the picture form of what they're trying to say. Another thing there is metonymy.

As it talks about, thou preparest the table before me in the presence of mine enemies.

The oil flowing down, the cup running over. It's more about what it's picturing again. And likewise, there, Romans 3 verse 30, talking about those who have the circumcision by faith and the uncircumcision.

It's that kind of language there again. Then you've got hyperbole, which is an exaggeration. So for example, when our Lord says, you blind guides, you strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.

[ 46 : 38 ] Of course, again, it's picture form again. It's that sense of hyperbole. It's like an exaggeration, like a rich man going through an eye of a needle. You know, it's like that exaggeration as if it were possible to swallow a camel.

It's an exaggeration. In other words, really trying to emphasise it, trying to get it together across there. Section 20, here's a list of some further principles. So again, these are all kind of, some are a bit repeated of what we've covered before.

This is kind of another summary kind of list of principles. So one principle there is, of course, the Bible is without error. Here's a list of them there. In error, it's got no error. It's authoritative. It's powerful. It's sufficient. So the Bible is without error. It's our only trustworthy guide for faith in life. And so we uphold the supremacy of the Bible.

Here's a list of things that we hold the Bible over. It's over tradition. It's over human philosophy. It's over human reason and so-called knowledge as well.

[ 47 : 40 ] So the Bible is supreme really, isn't it? And the principle too there is that the Bible is its own best interpreter. So the cross reference principle, scripture interprets scripture.

Context is king. So it's really, like it's really a fundamental point that you take the context. So the Bible interprets itself. And you've got then the historical context as well, the immediate context. The scriptural context. So get a concordance out. Look for other places in the Bible where there's similar passages, similar mentions, and then it can give you a picture of what that verse is saying. And another truth is that clear passages must interpret the less clear. So you might get a Bible verse that's a little hard to follow. There's other cross references that might make that clearer for you.

So clear passages can interpret the less clear. Like someone's put here, the wrong question to ask is what does it mean to me? Rather ask what does the author trying to tell me?

[ 48 : 35 ] You know, some people, they have a Bible study and they say, oh, what does that mean to you? Well, anyway, it doesn't really matter what it means to you. What matters is what does he mean to us? You know, what is he trying to tell us from the word of God?

Because the authority rests not with me, but with the author. That's what we want, isn't it? That we get his leading on it. And so we got there that his word is truth.

We see no, no scriptures of any private interpretation. We want to get what God's word is on God's word. Principle three, again, it's repeating again. Some of these things are a bit repeated, but that the entire Bible is centered around Christ.

So before he came, it's foretelling, foreshadowing. And then in the light of his coming, we can see his teaching. And then in the light of his yet coming again, we see more truth there too.

It's all about the Lord Jesus. He's the center of the word of God. Principle four is that the message of the Bible is redemptive. As much as there's helpful information on all kinds of things, the purpose is to teach us about the Lord, about trusting in him, about eternal life, about faith.

[ 49 : 42 ] And of course, we see that there in 2 Timothy 3, 15. It's able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus. It's about salvation.

And again, John 20, written that you might believe, that you might have faith. And again, principle five, the Bible is progressive like we talked about. The message of the Bible is historical as well. That he's spoken through the prophets. And in the last days, he's spoken to us by his son. So it's like that revelation. And the message of the Bible is historical.

So we see historical things that he did with the children of Israel. He worked with real people in real places through history. So it's historically accurate.

And archaeology shows us that. We see in Luke 1, Luke was very prescriptive about what he wrote, talking about eyewitnesses.

[ 50 : 41 ] He's talking about the authority that he had to write the record of the gospel. Principle seven, the message of the Bible is understandable. So its purpose is to reveal, not to hide.

It's not got some mystery, secret codes, or you can go overboard on that. But really, the message is understandable. God's not written it to be some kind of superstitiously complex book.

It's actually got a clear message. It can be understood, clearly understood. And yet, principle eight is that some biblical truths are beyond our understanding. Even the greatest Bible teachers have some question marks about this or that.

Because we know that his ways are higher than our ways. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. As it reads there in Isaiah 55. Principle nine is the message of the Bible is life changing. So the Bible is primarily given not to inform us so much, but to transform us. And we've got to have that thought. Now what is God wanting for my life? And we go to the word for that, don't we? [ 51 : 49 ] And then just lastly, the message of the Bible is personal. So it's God's message to you. And of course, the key message is he will have all men to be saved, to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

And he's long suffering to us. We're not willing that any should perish, though that all should come to repentance. So the Bible is God's message to us. And really we could wrap it up with that last paragraph there.

What am I to believe? What am I to do? What am I to learn about relationships? What is the good news for me? How can I put it into action in my life? Leave some comments or let us know you've been watching.

And I appreciate your feedback.