

## Let the Bible Speak for its Self

**Matt 23:13** *But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. .*

I remember reading in the Watchtower website a warning to their leaders which said “we have studied this much, and it is very well documented by our investigations that any Jehovah’s Witness that studies only the Bible without consulting our literature will leave our group within 14 months.” What an admission! In a final analysis, God will speak through his Word if one will let him. Then the first principle is not to impose our own prejudices and preconceived concepts, but let the Scripture instruct you, and to not be manipulated by your ideas (nor those of others).

### We accept the Obvious

In general, the Bible says what it says. If we would only observe the most obvious meaning of each passage, normally we will understand everything. **If the literal sense makes sense, look for no other sense.** I talk with Catholics that are ignorant of Exo 20:4 that prohibits the use of images in our worship of God. How is it possible to twist one of the 10 commandments in order to make it the opposite of what it obviously says? Equally they twist **Matt 23:9** *And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.*” Jesus made it a point of not giving anybody authority over one’s self except your biological father, and Jesus represented this by three titles “*Rabbi*” (23:7), “*teacher*” (23:8) or “*father*” (23:9). (They teach the opposite of this obvious teaching of Christ, calling their priests “father”.) Nothing more than reading this passage and you cannot accept the practice and teaching of the Catholic Church. Moreover we should establish and defend the doctrine of the clarity of Scripture. See my tract [BS09 Clarity of Scripture](#). In other words, God made the Scripture so that we can understand it, and the obvious understanding is our preference. **The main problem with Scripture is not understanding them because**

**they are obscure, but in accepting and obeying what they clearly say.** We always put more weight and priority on clear passages than obscure ones. When two passages speak of the same thing, one clearly and another not so clearly, we study the clear one to see what it says first, and after we understand that, then we look at the not so clear one in the light of what we have already learned. For example, Pentecostals interpret speaking in tongues as a supernatural experience where a person loses control of themselves and speak in a “divine tongue”, not human, under the control of the Holy Spirit. But no passage is as clear or important as **Acts 2**, and there Luke clearly lists the human tongues involved, (**Acts 2:6-11**). These human tongues were what the Holy Spirit used on the day of Pentecost. The second most important tongues passage is **1Cor 14**, and here Paul clarifies for the Corinthians that no experience of speaking in tongues is of God if there is not understanding (**14:15-16**), that it is not of God if you lose control of yourself (**14:30-32**), or if there is any kind of confusion (**14:33**), or if women are involved in speaking (normal language or in tongues), or if they are preaching/teaching in a service (**14:34-35**). If we establish these points from understanding the clear and obvious, and THEN study the obscure, we won’t enter into contradictions, and we grasp the truth of Scripture.

### Respect the Historical Context, and also the Grammar.

God gave us the Scripture in a historical and grammatical context, and it should dictate to us the meaning as to how we are to understand it. In other words, we should put priority on how people understand these words in their context and day. Moreover we need a good understanding of geography and the culture of the day in any given passage before we can correctly understand it. The grammar of the passage in its original language is what rules the meaning for us.

**2Pet 3:9** *The Lord is... is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.***

**1Tim 4:10** *...because we trust in the living God, **who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. .***

Calvinists do gymnastics in order to tell us that “*all men*” here doesn’t mean “*all*”, but rather it means only a few. They ignore the vocabulary point that “*all*” means all. Equally they insist that the will of God always is done no matter what, and then they try to tell us that it is impossible what God really meant here that he desires that none should perish, because if he would have wanted this, all would be saved irrespective of faith. They play with the will of God, making a divine permissive will and then a perfect will of God. On the one hand they say that man is incapable of deciding something alone, and on the other hand they say that God is forcing men to sin and go to hell no matter what their individual will is. The human will does not enter into consideration for them, and to them God has already condemned the majority of human to hell without a choice on their part. If you have to do theological gymnastics in order to defend your position, it is not biblical most probably.

We cannot impose our feelings and opinions on the Scriptures, but we must see them as the original recipients saw and understood them. The exception to this rule is when the literal interpretation “*doesn’t make good sense*”, as in **Rev 6:12** “*and the moon became as blood.*” The idea here is that the word “*as*” means “*like blood*”. It did not literally turn into blood, but as men see the moon, it was dark red. **Even the very same context gives us indications when we should not interpret a passage completely literally.** The literal interpretation doesn’t make the best sense, but a figurative one does. We should also reject multiple interpretations of the same passage. It is very rare when somebody uses a double meaning in real life (that is called an allegory). The majority of Scripture does not admit two meanings. When it does, the two meanings are usually one present and one future, or one past and one present. These are parallels, and when the Bible uses standard literature constructions we should also realize it, and interpret accordingly.

## The Divine Power in Words

God inspired the Bible with a divine power that extends all the way to guarantee to us that the very words are what God wanted them to be. When we speak of understanding the Bible, God has made all Scripture to say what God wanted them to say. There is no error, there is no mistake; and there is no contradiction. **2Tim 3:16** *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:* The Inspiration of God's Word causes us to trust in Scripture. Also logic does not take authority over Scripture, but Scripture over logic. That is not to say that Scripture is illogical, but rather that there is no valid excuse when one does not understand a passage or interpretation, and so they reject it. If the Bible affirms something or denounces something as false we have to accept it even though our understanding is incomplete. Scriptures do not contradict logic, but they are beyond what our minds are, so it is beyond OUR REASONING ABILITIES! We are limited by wisdom can one understand. Our lack of wisdom is what hinders us from understanding Scripture, and it is no excuse in not believing God. It is just as much a lack of knowledge and lack of understanding God's way.

## There are no Contradictions in the Bible

**John 10:35** *...and the scripture cannot be broken;*

One very useful principle is that Scripture is inspired of God, so there are no contradictions in God's message to us. There is a divine harmony between the passages of Scripture, so that no one passage contradicts some teaching or doctrine in another passage. We have to subject every interpretation in its historic context, so that we understand the passage that seems like a contradiction. This unbreakable principle is used to assure that we do not misinterpret a passage. If your interpretation is going to contradict another clear passage, then your interpretation is wrong, and your understanding is wrong. You need to seek other interpretations to harmonize Scripture with Scripture.

## We Respect the Variety of the Bible

God uses different forms of literature when he communicates his message, and there are many different forms between narratives, poems, histories, and teaching passages. We cannot seek doctrine and standards in history passages, because this was not their purpose. We cannot insist that God repeats with special revelation what he did with Moses in the mount when God gave us a summary didactic passage of the 10 commandments. In other words God is not going to give us 10 commandments in a mount, when he has already done that with Moses. Or Elisha confronting the false prophets, or Jesus doing miracles. Because when a biblical person does something that is not to say that everybody today can do the same thing.

## We Respect Divine Priorities

Above all, the Scriptures are a communication for us to be saved, and to guide us in the way of God. All our interpretations have to exalt the person and mission of Jesus Christ, as the most important thing. This focus of all Scripture is that we walk in God's will, as expressed in Scripture.

Our interpretation should subject us to God's will. First of all, we invert our faith only in Jesus and his work in the cross to be saved. After that we seek to obey God's will with our whole heart.

## Seeking the Truth to Obey It

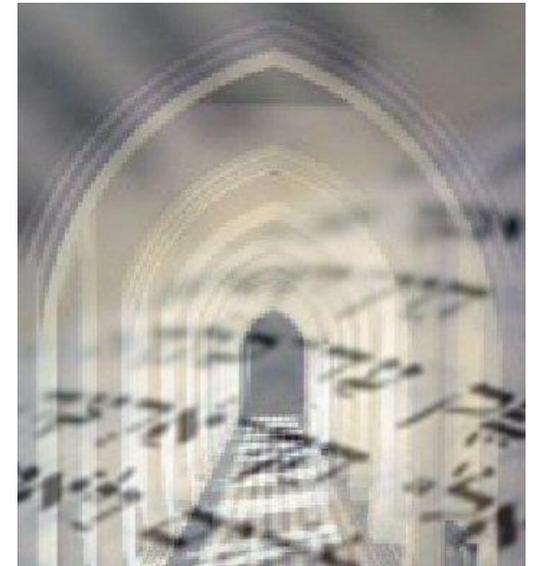
**John 7:17** *If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*

God does not like "gossips." If you study the Bible "as a tourist," just to know what God's will is, but not to obey it, then God will not reveal his truth to you beyond an initial testing amount. To understand Scripture, you need to make a commit to obey whatever you find there, and show obedience as God reveals each new thing.

# Principles of Interpretation of Holy Scripture

By David Cox

[bs01] v1 ©2009 www.coxtracts.com  
This tract may be reproduced for free distribution



There are principles from God that guide us as to how we are to interpret the Bible. We have to observe these so that we can understand Scripture as God wants. Cults and groups with unbiblical doctrines and practices always try to twist these principles for their viewpoints, but we must insist in observing them, and they will guide us to the truth of God. Hermeneutics (principles of interpretation) are what give structure and form to the Word of God, understanding and clarity of communication, so that we truly understand well the Word of God.