

some of the common sense rules people normally use to understand other books and are unconsciously applied in daily conversations.

Listen to God as if He is anyone else communicating to you. Try to understand the singular thought being transmitted and do not try to take it more than one particular way.

Since God chose to use human languages, He must be understood according to the rules of interpretation of those languages.

God's Word should be understood literally, unless it demands to be understood otherwise.

Go from the simple things to understand, like narrative history, to the harder things, like poetry and figurative language.

The function and meaning of a word depends on its association with other words and how it is used, usually determined by a lexicon (Greek dictionary).

The correct definition of a word substituted for the word itself will not change the original meaning.

Writers do not say the same thing exactly alike so don't expect the Gospels to be exactly alike, especially since each is written for a different purpose.

If two true statements seem to contradict, there must be some unknown fact that will harmonize them once it is known. Assume that God does not contradict Himself since He can only speak the truth.

A statement with assertion excludes only that to which it is opposed. The Truth setting one free only opposes the falsehood setting one free. It does not oppose other things that also set one free, like the Son of God.

Again, always let God explain Himself, just as you also would like that same privilege.

9. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Bible is an amazing work that displays the mind of God. As proof that it is the work of the Creator, it contains certain elements not found in any work of man:

Prophecy. The ability to predict the future is unprecedented in the Scriptures. Many prophecies look hundreds (even thousands) of years into the future. One needs, however, to be guided by the Scriptures, as to the time of their fulfillment.

*wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the **untaught** and unstable **distort**, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, **to their own destruction**.*

4. OVERVIEW & ORGANIZATION

2 Timothy 2:15 -- *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, **handling accurately the word of truth**.*

Like any book, one needs to read first to get an overview before settling down to an intensive study. One needs to get a knowledge of what is simple and what is complex; what is literal and what is figurative; what is historical narrative and what is prophecy, law, or poetry. One especially needs to know what applies to him and what does not. Just because Noah built an Ark does not mean all Christians should. Some things apply to women only and some to men only. Some Faiths believe one is still under the Mosaic Law and that believers must abide by the Ten Commandments and the Old Covenant. Yet, no one really practices animal sacrifices anymore, and if you are non-Jewish, you never were really under the Law of Moses. It helps to handle the Word of God accurately.

Galatians 3:24-25 -- *Therefore **the Law has become our tutor** to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, **we are no longer under a tutor**.*

Galatians 5:4 -- *You have been severed from Christ, **you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace**.*

5. LET THE BIBLE EXPLAIN ITSELF

Reading the Bible to get an overview helps in other ways. One, is that you will know if a certain interpretation of Scripture cannot be right, because it contradicts something you have already read in another passage. Also, you will be studying things in their context and will avoid drawing out meanings that the author never intended. For instance, a lot of people would be better able to understand the book of Revelation if they had read its beginning and end, where it states that the prophecies in it will shortly come to pass. After all, it was written for the benefit of the churches of Asia 2000 years ago (Revelation 1:1,3; 22:6-7).

The principle is that any author should be allowed to explain himself. John wrote his gospel to prove that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God (John 20:31). Luke put together his gospel and the

