"Herman Who?!"

Manifesting God's Word

Manifesting God's Word

- It is not enough to simply read the Bible, but we must labor to understand it
  - 2Tim. 2:15 - "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
  - 2Peter 3:18 - "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."
- Part of gaining that understanding is to read the text and make sense of it
  - Even at the basic level of understanding, interpretation is involved

Manifesting God's Word

- Hermeneutics is a big word to explain the process of interpreting a text
  - Interpretation must be predicated on rules or not at all
  - These guidelines are not explicitly spelled out in the Bible, but demonstrate how people in the Bible interpreted the Bible

Literal Interpretation

- The first guideline of interpretation is to interpret the text literally unless there is some compelling reason to do otherwise

- Accepting the text at face value is the most basic way to understand it
  - John 11:35 - "Jesus wept"
  - Gen. 1:1 - "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Literal Interpretation

- Figurative language: metaphor, simile, parable, hyperbole, metonymy, synecdoche, or other ways, when the text uses figurative language, we must interpret it accordingly

Literal Interpretation

- Matt. 16:26 - "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (hyperbole)

- John 15:5 - "I am the vine, you are the branches." (metaphor)

- Matt. 13:3-8 - Parable of the sower

- 1Cor. 11:26 - "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup" (metonymy)

Literal Interpretation

- Context requirements: if the context demands a non-literal reading, we should not read literally
  - Dan. 7 - The beasts are not literal and refer to something else
  - Rev. 9:17 - Fire-breathing horses are representative

Literal Interpretation

- Absurd or Contradictory Readings
  - If a reading would be absurd literally, or would contradict another passage if taken literally, we need to make our understanding of the text consistent
  - Matt. 12:29 - It is absurd for Jesus to be advocating binding strong men and plundering their houses; He is not giving a literal instruction for us to follow
  - Isa. 1:10-18 - God commanded sacrifices, we know not to interpret His anger as against the worship itself, but the hypocrisy and inconsistency of those involved

The Sum Of The Bible Is Truth

- Psalm 119:160 - "The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever."
  - Every part must harmonize with every other part
  - When all parts are combined, the whole truth is discerned

The Sum Of The Bible Is Truth

- Predestination
  - Eph. 1
  - Rom. 2:11; 1Tim. 2:4; 2Peter 3:8
- Baptism
  - John 3:16
  - Acts 2:38; 1Peter 3:21; Rom. 6:16-23
- Focusing on a part to the exclusion of the whole leads to an erring perspective of what God approves

Let The Bible Interpret The Bible

- Allow the Bible to interpret itself whenever possible. There is no need to re-interpret what God has interpreted for you
  - Matt. 13 - The parable of sower; Jesus interprets it for us

Consider The Context

- May be the most important principle of understanding the scriptures
  - Acts 19:28 - "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"
    - Does this mean that we should think Diana is great?
  - The gift of the Holy Spirit - John 14:16-18
    - Is it for us or the twelve?
    - John 13; Acts 2

Consider The Context

- Context is critical to proper interpretation; chapters and verses can distract Bible students
  - The Bible was never written in verses; they were added by interpreters 1450 years after the Bible was written
  - The Bible was written in the forms of letters, essays, official documents, historical treatises, and sermons. Read and study it that way. Only poetry and proverbs were written in verse form

Manifesting God's Word

- We must interpret literally whenever possible

- Recognize that the sum of God's Word is truth

- Let the Bible interpret the Bible

- Always consider the context

- These are the guidelines people in the Bible used to understand the scriptures