

Minor Rules

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Hermeneutics: How to Read and Understand the Bible

Other Minor Rules

- I. Divide between proof texts and reference texts, lest you try to prove something you cannot.
 - A. A proof text proves a point of doctrine; a reference text only refers to that doctrine.
 1. Every text proves something; you must identify what it does or does not prove.
 2. Determining this difference requires the careful use of the rules already given.
 - B. For example, “God is love,” according to I John 4:16, which is quoted often and freely.
 1. These words prove that God is capable of love and does love, but not much else.
 2. These words do not prove for certain whom or what He loves or for how long.
 3. These words do not prove that He is only love or always loves or loves you.
 4. These words do not disprove that He hates, what He hates, or whom He hates.
 5. The words prove a little about the love of God, but the rest is proven elsewhere.
 - C. For example, Acts 2:41 does not prove the 3000 became church members by baptism.
 1. It proves that all those who gladly heard Peter, some number, were all baptized.
 2. It proves that about 3000 joined the Jerusalem church that very day.
 3. It does not prove baptism was the means of membership or simultaneous with it.
 4. It does not disprove that 5000 were baptized, with 2000 leaving for other places.
 5. It does not disprove that 3,120 actually joined the Jerusalem church that day.
 - D. Does II Corinthians 9:7 prove tithing? If it does not prove tithing, what does it prove?
 - E. Does Proverbs 23:31 prove you cannot look at red wine? What does it prove?
- II. Avoid interpretations with only one textual witness, lest you wander into heresy by a one verse.
- III. It is wise to remember the Bible rule that two or three witnesses give safety from error!
- IV. The Mormons could have been saved, but they leaped into darkness with I Cor 15:29.
- V. If anyone argues there is only one witness for the Trinity (I John 5:7), give him a few more (Gen 1:26; Isaiah 48:16; Luke 3:22; John 1:29-34; 14:26; Acts 2:33; II Cor 13:14). A discreet man will recognize that not all of these are proof texts!
- VI. Observe the progression of God’s revelation, as more knowledge and truth are given in time.
- VII. Abraham only knew our Creator as God Almighty, but Moses as Jehovah (Exodus 6:3).
- VIII. Many prophets and righteous men only saw Jesus darkly (Mat 13:17,35; I Pet 1:10-12).
- IX. Paul understood many things that had been kept hidden from the beginning (Ep 3:1-12).

- X. Therefore, we Gentiles follow Paul, as he followed Christ (Romans 11:13; I Cor 11:2).
- XI. Scripture is learned gradually by process, do not expect to leap to the level of expert overnight.
- XII. Both disciples and ministers progress in stages of learning (Matt 28:18-20; II Tim 2:15).
- XIII. Several of the first rules require extensive Bible knowledge, which takes much reading.
- XIV. Bible knowledge is a building process from simple to more advanced things (Is 28:9).
- XV. The goal is growth, but the recipe is much milk before meat (I Peter 2:2; Heb 5:12-14).
- XVI. Choose the simplest solution among alternatives, rather than enjoying the esoteric and complex.
- XVII. False teachers often use complexity (I Cor 1:19-21; 3:18-20; Col 2:8; I Tim 6:20-21).
- XVIII. Simplicity is a general rule (Prov 8:9; 14:6; II Cor 2:17; 3:12; 4:2; 11:3; Heb 13:9).

← Rule #12

Obstacles →