

# 9 MOST IMPORTANT RULES OF INTERPRETATION

In priority order

Mistakes at the top of this list  
have greater negative impact on accuracy  
than mistakes at the bottom.

## 1) Non-contradiction

There are no contradictions in Scripture. Questions sometimes arise when comparing OT & NT, or Mosaic & Church doctrine, or different Dispensations, or forgetting that Jesus' words are all in the context of Mosaic Law not Church precepts.

## 2) Context

Ask yourself if the surrounding each verses clearly state the particular context. Two paragraphs on each side of the verses in question, i.e. Church matters, or OT Law, or doctrinal matters, etc.

## 3) Compare Scripture with Scripture

Rarely is any important teaching mentioned in only one place. Example: there are 37 ingredients in the Abrahamic Covenant: 9 different chapters, spoken to Abr, Isaac, and Jacob, spoken to Abraham in 7 different places each time adding a new element or two.

## 4) Literal/grammatical/historical

All 3 aspects are important. The Bible is to be read primarily as literal **not allegorical or “spiritualizing.”** Normal grammar rules. Expect all events occur exactly as written in specific geographical locations.

## 5) Only one interpretation

What did God have in mind as He wrote it? Sometime there are several applications for you or me, but only one meaning. It is not accurate to ask, “What does this verse **mean to you?**” It is probably okey to ask, “How can you apply this verse to the situation you face this week?”

## 6) Same author

There are several weights used to express the term “talent.” 9 different OT books, 2 different NT books. Several different things “weighed.” Consider: country, culture, year, & materials. Other vocab covers different meanings of words, saved, wicked, forgiveness, repent. Some apply different ways when speaking to believers or unbelievers. Usage covers thousands of years.

## 7) Clear verses & unclear verses

Use clear verses to explain unclear verses. If it's fuzzy, go find a clear verse.

## 8) T.B.D.S. - The Bible Doesn't Say

You and I are able to ask more questions than God has decided to answer. Don't make up answers to all your questions. Sometime we have to say, “TBDS, but it's just my opinion that the answer might be. . .”

## 9) Bible words often have narrow meanings

Be careful you aren't using “American” definitions.

Example: repent in Bible means “change you mind” - American dictionary means “change your lifestyle” and/or “be sorry” Big difference.

i.e. change your mind = Stop depending on good works, start depending on Jesus' death in your place.

For a more complete list of 20 rules of interpretation

see: [20 Principles of Bible Study \(hermeneutics\)](http://www.PhilMyersBlog.com)

[www.PhilMyersBlog.com](http://www.PhilMyersBlog.com)

(arranged alphabetically or chronologically)

[www.PhilMyersBlog.com](http://www.PhilMyersBlog.com)