

The Three Pillars of Bible Interpretation

The Correct Interpretation of the Bible

Built on a solid philosophical, spiritual, theological, and hermeneutical foundation, integrating the appropriate disciplines of grammar, history, and theology will lead to greater and greater levels of correct understanding of the Bible

Grammatical Interpretation

- Literary genre classification
- Meaning of separate words
- Meaning of words in their connection
- Figurative use of words
- Interpretation of the thought

Historical Interpretation

- Personal characteristics of author or speaker
- Social circumstances of the author
- Circumstances peculiar to the writings

Theological Interpretation

- The Bible as a unity
- The fuller sense of scripture
- The symbolic and typical interpretation of scripture
- The implied sense of scripture

3. Starting points: a) a right standing and walk in Christ, b) a proper conception of the Bible, c) applying the grammatical-historical method (any other approach undermines objectivity), and d) performing exegesis before application.

2. Hermeneutical spiral: Changeable aspects of the interpreter's pre-understanding can be adjusted by interacting with the truths of the text and adjudication between conflicting interpretations can proceed by reference to unchangeable first principles.

1. First Principles: The self-evident reality of the external world and the undeniable first principles of logic, truth, and language provide a point of contact between the writer and the reader which allows objectivity in interpretation and a correct understanding of the biblical text.

Sources: Louis Berkhof *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*; Thomas Howe *The Jesus Quest* chapters 13 and 14