

Principles for a Confident Understanding of the Bible

1. **REVELATION:** God has communicated His truth verbally to man, accomodating His thoughts to human language and cultural-historical contexts through special revelation.
2. **INSPIRATION:** Scripture is "God breathed", as writers "borne along" by the Holy Spirit wrote it. (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20,21) Inspiration extends to the words and grammar as well as to the context. The original manuscripts were free from error in doctrine, science, history, etc.
3. **PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE:** To reveal the whole counsel of God - what we are to believe concerning God and what duty He requires of us; God's will and His glory; Man's salvation, faith and life; all centered on the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. **CLARITY:** The Bible is its own best interpreter, and sufficient by itself to reveal God's word to men. There is one meaning per passage (though there may be many applications) and meaning is determined by the rules of language, vocabulary, grammar, context and style. Meaning should be literal (the plain sense) unless clearly shown otherwise.
5. **HISTORIC REVELATION:** God has revealed Himself in the contexts of history - in the history of the Jewish people and in the lives and ministry of His Son and the prophets and apostles. These were actual people and events, not merely legends or myths. The historical and cultural background of a passage needs to be considered.
6. **PROGRESSIVE REVELATION:** God has revealed His will in successive stages, each founded upon and further illuminating the previous stages. The major doctrines of Scripture are there from the beginning (Gen 1-11) but not understood in their fullness until the coming of Christ and the completion of the New Testament. This is a progressive unfolding, not an evolution of doctrine.
7. **THE UNITY OF SCRIPTURE:** The Bible has an organic unity - it is centered on Jesus Christ and the work of redemption; its doctrinal teaching agrees from beginning to end, the various parts of Scripture being mutually dependent and interpreting each other in accordance with the analogy of faith. The clear interprets the unclear.
8. **THE DIVERSITY OF SCRIPTURE:** God has revealed Himself in Scriptures written by a variety of writers (each in his own style) over a period of 1,500 years, in a variety of languages and in a variety of genres: epistles, historical narrative, didactic writings and discourses; prophecy, poetry, parables. The Older Testament contains the promise, the Newer the fulfillment. The Older looks forward to Christ and prepares for His coming, the Newer looks back to His completed sacrifice as an atonement for sin and forward to His return.
9. **ILLUMINATION OF THE SPIRIT:** A heart of faith in dwelt and illumined by the Holy Spirit is necessary for the saving understanding of God's word.