

# Principles of Biblical Interpretation

The following areas of study and inquiry should be taken in studying passages in the Bible:

## General Questions Before First Reading

- a. What seems to be the most interesting thing about this passage to you?
- b. Are there any words, historical detail or ideas in it on which you have questions?
- c. To whom was this first written?
- d. What is the writer trying to do, or what point is the writer trying to make to the people who first read this?
- e. What were the writer's feelings when this passage was written?
- f. Does any of this passage speak to needs today?

## Study Methodology

2. Book as a whole
  - a. time, purpose, author, life situation
3. Place of the section (*pericope* is a section in the synoptic gospels) in the book
  - a. structural place, importance of topic, general sequence and structure of section
4. The Pericope Itself
  - a. Important **Words** (concordances, lexicons, grammars, dictionaries,)
  - b. Important **Phrases** (grammars, use elsewhere)
  - c. Important **Sentences** and **Paragraph thrusts**
5. The New Testament **Literary Context**
  - a. Old Testament Context
  - b. Synoptic (Parallel) Gospels
  - c. John
  - d. Redaction Criticism (themes and personal interests of authors)
  - e. Paul
6. **Historical** Context
  - a. Previous historical significance
  - b. The early church
  - c. Church "fathers"
  - d. Church history
7. **Theological** Context
  - a. Emphasis of the writer
  - b. Other perspectives (Biblical authors, extra-Biblical authors)
8. **Comparisons** with other Scholars
9. **Conclusions**
  - a. Emphasis function in original setting for first readers
  - b. Major emphasis emerging
  - c. Possible relevance to today's needs