

## **Guidelines To Interpretation**

How can... fuller meanings be determined? What guidelines exist to limit fanciful excesses? The guidelines are located within the text and the biblical canon. The fuller meanings must be consistent with the canonical message. Some guidelines help to develop a contemporary model. These include the following:

1. Approach the text with right presuppositions, which we have previously identified as biblical faith, accepting the Bible as fully truthful and authoritative.
2. Recognize that the historical and literal meaning of the Bible is the primary meaning but not the limit of meaning.
3. Acknowledge the possibility of deeper meanings in the prophetic-apostolic witness.
4. Affirm the human authorship of the text and its divine origin.
5. Regard the biblical text as the place where meaning is concentrated more than primarily in the author's mind.
6. Understand that a text rests in its canonical context; thus, Scripture serves as the best commentary on Scripture.
7. Expect the Holy Spirit's illumination to assist in interpretation.
8. Expect the Bible to speak to the reader's contemporary concerns.
9. Interpret the Bible in light of the centrality of Jesus Christ.

(David S. Dockery, Kenneth A. Matthews, Robert B. Sloan, *Foundations for Biblical Interpretation: A Complete Library of Tools and Resources*, Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999 [1994], 50-51; Excerpt from Chapter III, Study and Interpretation of the Bible)