

## **RULES OF INTERPRETATION. William Miller**

IN studying the Bible, I have found the following rules to be of great service to myself, and now give them to the public by special request. Every rule should be well studied, in connection with the scripture references, if the Bible student would be at all benefited by them.

### **RULE I.**

Every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented in the Bible.

PROOF

Matt.v.18.

### **RULE II.**

All scripture is necessary, and may be understood by a diligent application and study.

PROOF

2Tim.iii.15,16,17.

### **RULE III.**

Nothing revealed in the scripture can or will be hid from those who ask in faith, not wavering.

PROOF

Deut.xxix.29. Matt.x.26,27. 1Cor.ii.10. Phil.iii.15. Isa.xiv.11. Matt.xxi.22. John xiv.13,14. xv.7. James i.5,6. 1John v.13,14,15.

### **RULE IV.**

To understand doctrine, bring all the scriptures together on the subject you wish to know; then let every word have its proper influence, and if you can form your theory without a contradiction, you cannot be in an error.

PROOF

Isa.xxviii.7-29. xxxv.8. Prov.xix.27. Luke xxiv.27,44,45. Rom.xvi.26. James v.19. 2Pet.i.19,29.

### **RULE V.**

Scripture must be its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound it to me, and he should guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed or wisdom is my rule, not the Bible.

PROOFS

Ps.xix.7,8,9,10,11. cxix.97,98,99,100,101,102,103,104,105. Matt.xxiii.8,9,10. 1Cor.ii.12,13,14,15,16. Eze.xxxiv.18,19. Luke xi.52. Mal.ii.7,8.

### **RULE VI.**

God has revealed things to come, by visions, in figures and parables, and in this way the same things are oftentimes revealed again and again, by different visions, or in different figures, and parables. If you wish to understand them, you must combine them all in one.

PROOFS

Ps.lxxxix.19. Hos.xii.10. Hab.ii.2. Acts ii.17. 1Cor.x.6. Heb.ix.9,24. Ps.lxxviii.2. Matt.xiii.13,34. Gen.xli.1-32. Dan.ii. vii. and viii. Acts x.9-16.

### **RULE VII.**

Visions are always mentioned as such.

PROOFS

2Cor.xii.1.

### **RULE VIII.**

Figures always have a figurative meaning, and are used much in prophecy, to represent future things, times and events; such as mountains, meaning governments; beasts, meaning kingdoms.

Waters, meaning people.

Lamp, meaning Word of God.

Day, meaning year.

**PROOFS**

Dan.ii.35,44. vii.8,17. Rev.xvii.1,15. Ps.cxix.105. Ezek.iv.6.

**RULE IX.**

Parables are used as comparisons to illustrate subjects, and must be explained in the same way as figures by the subject and Bible. Mark iv.13.

**RULE X.**

Figures sometimes have two or more different significations, as day is used in a figurative sense to represent three different periods of time.

**PROOFS**

Ecc.vii.14.

1. Indefinite.

2. Definite, a day for a year.

3. Day for a thousand years.

If you put on the right construction it will harmonize with the Bible and make good sense, otherwise it will not.

**PROOFS**

Ezek.iv.6. 2Pet.iii.8.

**RULE XI.**

How to know when a word is used figuratively. If it makes good sense as it stands, and does no violence to the simple laws of nature, then it must be understood literally, if not, figuratively.

**PROOFS**

Rev.xii.1,2. xvii.3-7.

**RULE XII.**

To learn the true meaning of figures, trace your figurative word through your Bible, and where you find it explained, put it on your figure, and if it makes good sense you need look no further, if not, look again.

**RULE XIII.**

To know whether we have the true historical event for the fulfilment of a prophecy. If you find every word of the prophecy (after the figures are understood) is literally fulfilled, then you may know that your history is the true event. But if one word lacks a fulfilment, then you must look for another event, or wait its future development. For God takes care that history and prophecy doth agree, so that the true believing children of God may never be ashamed.

**PROOFS**

Ps.xxii.5. Isa.xlv.17,18,19. 1Pet.ii.6. Rev.xvii.17. Acts iii.18.

**RULE XIV.**

The most important rule of all is, that you must have faith. It must be a faith that requires a sacrifice, and, if tried, would give up the dearest object on earth, the world and all its desires, character, living, occupation, friends, home, comforts, and worldly honors. If any of these should hinder our believing any part of God's word, it would show our faith to be vain. Nor can we ever believe so long as one of these motives lies lurking in our hearts. We must believe that God will never forfeit his word. And we can have confidence that he that takes notice of the sparrow, and numbers the hairs of our head, will guard the translation of his own word, and throw a barrier around it, and prevent those who sincerely trust in God, and put implicit confidence in his word, from erring far from the truth, though they may not understand Hebrew or Greek.\*