

Literal Bible Hermeneutic Rules

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What are the rules for a literal hermeneutic of the bible?

A literal hermeneutic of the Bible is an approach to interpreting the Scriptures that seeks to understand the text according to its most straightforward or literal meaning. Adherents of this approach believe that the Bible should be understood in its most plain and direct sense, without allegorical or symbolic interpretations, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. Here are some key principles and rules often associated with a literal hermeneutic:

1. **Context is key:** Always consider the immediate context (verses surrounding the passage) and the broader context (the book, author's intent, historical and cultural context) to correctly interpret a passage.
2. **Historical and cultural background:** Understand the historical and cultural setting in which the text was written. Knowledge of the customs, traditions, and practices of the time can aid in understanding the intended meaning.
3. **Language and grammar:** Pay close attention to the original languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek) and their grammar to grasp the nuances and meanings of specific words and phrases.
4. **Literal meaning of words:** Seek to understand words and phrases in their usual and customary sense unless there are clear reasons to interpret them symbolically or metaphorically.
5. **Consistency with other Scriptures:** Interpret one passage in light of the rest of the Bible. The Bible is seen as a cohesive whole, and its teachings should not contradict each other.
6. **Non-contradiction:** Assume that the Bible is free from internal contradictions, and any apparent discrepancies should be reconciled through careful study and understanding.
7. **Use of figures of speech:** Recognize that the Bible contains figures of speech, such as metaphors, similes, and hyperbole, but do not default to interpreting everything figuratively.
8. **Literal interpretation of historical events:** Consider historical events, such as the creation account or the Exodus, as factual and historical unless there are compelling reasons to interpret them symbolically.
9. **Prophecy and fulfillment:** Regarding prophetic passages, look for literal fulfillment where possible, unless the context or other Scriptures suggest a symbolic or spiritual fulfillment.
10. **Authorial intent:** Seek to understand the original author's intended meaning for the original audience before making contemporary applications.
11. **Application to today:** While the interpretation is literal, the application may be made to contemporary contexts with care to avoid distorting the original meaning.

It's important to note that different Christian denominations and scholars may have varying degrees of emphasis on a literal hermeneutic, and some passages in the Bible may require more nuanced approaches, considering literary genre, symbolism, or historical context. As with any hermeneutic approach, humility, prayer, and reliance on the guidance of the Holy Spirit are considered essential in interpreting the Bible accurately.