

# Theological Principles

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## Hermeneutical Rules

from Integrative Theology by Lewis and Demarest pp. 30-31

1. The meaning of a biblical statement is the ordinary, or normal meaning of the statement in terms of its context and the author's purpose
2. The meaning of a biblical statement fits the historical and cultural setting and the writer and the first readers. Their frame of reference cannot be ignored and replaced by one foreign to them.
3. The meaning of a sentence is the one most coherent with the writer's own context....A word should not be interpreted apart from its sentence, the basic unit of the writer's thought. Then the sentence should be understood in its paragraph and the paragraph in its place in the progress of thought in the book. Each book of the Bible needs to be understood in relation to the other books in its Testament. And the two Testaments need to be related to each other.
4. The meaning of any single biblical statement is not contradictory to any teaching of other Scriptures on the subject. God's Word presumably does not affirm and deny the same thing at the same time in the same respect. So a verse should be taken in accord with the broader theological context....Scripture interprets Scripture.
5. The intended meaning is the one, literal, historical, grammatical, contextual meaning, not a 'deeper' or 'secret' meaning. Although the applications of a passage are many, the meaning in context is one.
6. Extensive passages on a subject take priority for theological purposes over brief allusions. We are more likely to misinterpret a single sentence than a whole series of statements on a topic in a paragraph.
7. Doctrinal passages have initially a greater importance than historical narratives that may report ideas and practices not normative for others.
8. What is central in Scriptural teaching should be central in our theologies and ministries....to give preeminence to any other teaching, however good, is to distort the central message of special revelation to which the Holy Spirit witnesses.

Theological Questions  
from New Testament Exegesis by Gordon Fee p. 150

1. To what theological doctrines does the passage add light?
2. What are its theological concerns?
3. Might the passage raise any questions or difficulties about some major issue or stance that needs an explanation?
4. How major or minor are the theological issues on which the passage touches?
5. Where does the passage seem to fit within the full system of truth contained in Christian theology?
6. How is the passage to be harmonized with the greater theological whole?
7. Are its theological concerns more or less explicit (or implicit)?
8. How can you use the passage to help make your congregation more theologically consistent or, at least, more theologically alert?

Three Important Questions  
from Applying the Bible by Jack Kuhatschek pp. 57-61

1. Does the author state a general principle?
2. Why was this specific command or instruction given?
3. Does the broader context reveal a general principle?

KBH Principles  
from Introduction to Biblical Interpretation by Klein,  
Blomberg and Hubbard pp. 462-465

1. Valid theologizing must follow the sound exegesis of the appropriate Biblical texts
2. Theology must be based on the Bible's total teaching, not on selected or isolated texts
3. Legitimate theology respects and articulates the Bible's own emphases
4. Must state theological points in ways that explain and illuminate their significance for the life and ministry of the Church today
5. Theology must be centered in Scripture, not tradition
6. Theology cannot ignore tradition or culture

Kaiser's principles  
from An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics by Kaiser and  
Silva pp. 202-206

1. The main burden of Doctrinal teaching must rest on the chair passages
  - i.e. Main important passages- key passage on any topic, "certain key chapters of Scripture that contain major treatments of various issues," the place where this topic is the central theme of the passage, not incidental
  - e.g. Gen 1-2                      Creation
  - Isa 40                      Incomparability of God
  - Isa 53                      Nature of atonement
  - I Cor 15                    Resurrection
  - 2 Cor 5:1-10            Intermediate state
  - Phil. 2:1-11              Nature of incarnation
2. Exegesis is prior to any system of theology
3. Doctrines must not go beyond Scriptural evidence
4. Analogy of Scripture must take priority over the analogy of faith
  - History goes in one direction
  - Take progressive revelation seriously
  - Beware of reading the NT back into the OT
5. Only What is directly taught in Scripture is binding on the conscience
6. No doctrine should be based on a single passage of Scripture, a parable, an allegory, a type, a sensus plenior, or an uncertain textual reading
7. Theological Interpretation must recognize its responsibility to the church