

# **BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION**

## **PART 1**

### **THE INDUCTIVE METHOD**

# Biblical Interpretation

## Inductive (scientific) method

- Most life changing skill a Christian can master.
- Will ruin your enjoyment of 98% of anything you will hear in a church gathering or seminary in the U.S.
- Will get you fired from your position
- Goal – discover/eliminate your own presuppositions; allow the text to speak for itself (more difficult than most people realize).

## Biblical Interpretation Guidelines Hermeneutical Guidelines

1. OBSERVATION	MULTIPLE	Ask as many questions of the text as possible. Who is speaking/writing? Where are they? Who is the original audience? Where are they? What are the historic and cultural considerations? How would the original audience understand the message and intent? What controversies may have been going on that needed to be addressed? What other passages address similar issues that might shed light on the passage? Are there any congruent narratives elsewhere in scripture? What is the genre? What does the passage say? What does it not say? What historic, doctrinal, or prophetic transition comes before, after, or during this? What is the desired end-state of the human author? ... divine author? What commands are in the text? Are any commands abrogated by future events or circumstances? Identify and emphasize key words. Identify and emphasize key verbs in a different way. Are there any key words or ideas that show up repeatedly or frequently? Are there any words or ideas that appear in the given passage/book more than elsewhere in scripture?
2. INTERPRETATION	ONLY ONE CORRECT	The interpretation is comprised of the correct answers to all the observation questions. The focus is the intent of the original author to the original audience. The fact that the Holy Spirit is also present in the text illuminating believing readers across all centuries should result in meanings that are congruent with the original intent, not contrary to it. To check for correctness, see section on the CIT.
3. APPLICATION	POSSIBLY MULTIPLE	So what? What is the contemporary reader supposed to do and/or believe as a result of understanding the meaning of the passage? Calls to action must delineate between specific requirements versus cultural conventions to achieve a desired end. Consider ways that an original audience may employ different conventions to achieve a similar goal.

### Principles:

Move from General to Specific. CITs and visual charts are great ways to show the general scope of a book or section.

Prophecy is Patterns.

Things different are not the same.

If the plain sense makes sense, seek no other sense.

Perspicuity.

Conventions versus absolute requirements.

Non-contradiction.

Avoid Single-verse theology, or "private interpretation" – 2 Peter 1:21.

Avoid trust in men / credentials: Gen. 40:8; Dan. 7:19-22; Luke 24:25.

Identify and eliminate doctrinal biases & presuppositions. Confirmation Bias is often the catalyst behind many Bible-study efforts.

Repetition. Word frequency.

### Indicators of figurative speech:

There is a figurative indicator, such as a given interpretation for symbolic language or a comparison.

Known figures of speech are employed. Language cannot be taken literally (and has not been by any other biblical author).

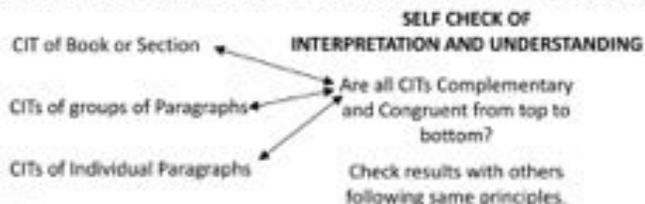
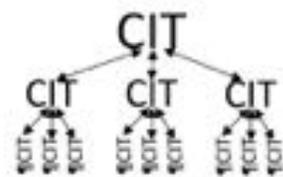
### Pitfalls:

**ANY SYSTEM OF INTERPRETATION WHICH FORCES VERSES TO CONTRADICT, OR CREATES A SYSTEM THAT FAILS TO MEET THE DEMANDS OF NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY, AS FOUND IN ACTS 15, ACTS 20, ROMANS 5-10, 1 TIMOTHY 3, EPHESIANS 2, COLOSSIANS 2, AND 1 THESSALONIANS IS NOT THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: IT IS "PRIVATE INTERPRETATION" (2 PETER 1:20, 3:16).**

1. ADDING TO THE SCRIPTURE (FOR EXAMPLE: TRADITIONS OF CHURCH FATHERS, APOCRYPHA, THE TALMUD, ETC.) EVE ADDS TO THE WORD OF GOD IN **GENESIS 3:3**.
2. SUBTRACTING FROM THE SCRIPTURE (FOR EXAMPLE: TAKING OUT OR MUTILATING ALL VERSES THAT OFFEND OR UPSET YOU OR YOUR RELATIVES. SEE **MARK 7:3, 7, 9, 13**)
3. REMOVING A VERSE FROM ITS CONTEXT (FOR EXAMPLE: PRETENDING THAT ACTS 15 IS THE "PLAN OF SALVATION" FOR GENTILES. LOOK AT **ACTS 2:1, 5, 14, 22, AND 38**)
4. TRYING TO INTERPRET A COMPLETE STATEMENT IN THE LIGHT OF AN INCOMPLETE STATEMENT (FOR EXAMPLE: TRYING TO MAKE PETER THE ROCK (**MATT. 16:18**) WHEN CHRIST CALLED HIM "SATAN" (**MATT. 16:23**))
5. FAILURE TO TAKE A PASSAGE LITERALLY WHEN IT IS LITERAL (SEE **MATTHEW 15:15-20**)
6. FAILURE TO TAKE A PASSAGE FIGURATIVELY WHEN IT IS (SEE **JOHN 6:54-56** AND NOTICE HOW JESUS HIMSELF TOLD YOU THE VERSES WERE NOT LITERAL, RIGHT IN THE SAME CONTEXT: **JOHN 6:37, 33**)
7. FAILURE TO GO BY THE LIGHT YOU SEE (**ROMANS 1:21-23**) AND PUT INTO PRACTICE (**JAMES 1:22**) WHAT GOD SHOWS YOU IN THE SCRIPTURE (**MARK 4:15-16**)

### Central Idea of the Text (CIT):

Divide the text into paragraphs. After key words are identified, reduce each paragraph down to a CIT: A 13-18-word sentence that correctly conveys the central idea of the text. Ultimately, a single central CIT should be produced for an entire book. There may be intermediate CITs for groups of paragraphs. Compare orbiting CITs with Central CITs. If they match and flow together well, this indicates that interpretation is likely correct. If comparisons show contrast of meaning, this indicates that an error may have been made in the interpretation process.



# OPEN SOURCE!!!

# The Inductive Method aka The Scientific Method

Not everyone from 300 B.C. to 1600 A.D. was willing to bow to the authority of Aristotle. Many of Aristotle's arguments were faulty, but where did he go wrong, and what was the right way to proceed? About 1600 A.D., it became apparent to several people - Galileo Galilei in Italy, Francis Bacon in England, Tycho Brahe in Denmark, and others - that there were no subtle logical errors in Aristotle's use of the deductive method. The problem was that the deductive method, while wildly successful in mathematics, did not fit well with scientific investigations of nature.

# The Inductive Method aka The Scientific Method

In order to use the deductive method, you need to start with axioms - simple true statements about the way the world works. Then you use these axioms to build your logical system of nature. If your axioms are true, everything that follows will be true, but Galileo and his contemporaries realized that the problem was that it was enormously difficult to determine "simple true statements about the way the world works". In fact, they realized that it should be the goal of science - not the starting place - to determine what the "simple true statements about the way the world works" really are!

## The Inductive Method aka The Scientific Method

Since 1600, the inductive method has been incredibly successful in investigating nature - surely far more successful than its originators could have imagined. The inductive method of investigation has become so entrenched in science that it is often referred to as the scientific method.

### Inductive vs. Deductive Method

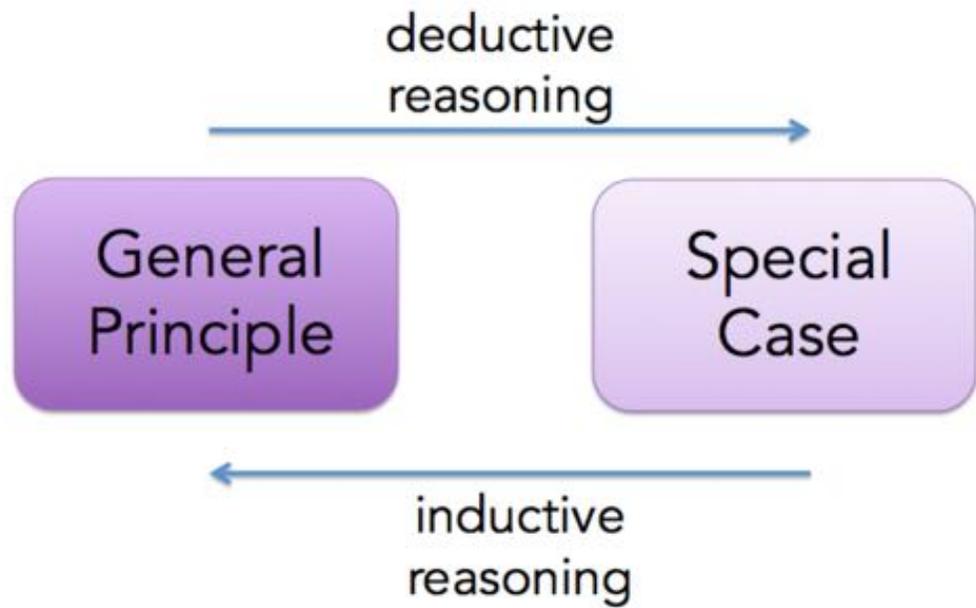
The inductive method (usually called the scientific method) is the deductive method "turned upside down". The deductive method starts with a few true statements (axioms) with the goal of proving many true statements (theorems) that logically follow from them. The inductive method starts with many observations of nature, with the goal of finding a few, powerful statements about how nature works (laws and theories).

In the deductive method, logic is the authority.

If a statement follows logically from the axioms of the system, it must be true. In the scientific method, observation of nature is the authority.

If an idea conflicts with what happens in nature, the idea must be changed or abandoned.

<http://www.batesville.k12.in.us/physics/phynet/aboutscience/Inductive.html>



Inductive method = good

Inductive reasoning = not so good

The inductive method can lead to sound axioms that enable solid grounds for deductive reasoning after enough observations are made.

Deductive reasoning: adults are generally bigger and stronger than children.

Inductive reasoning: I know one 5<sup>th</sup> grader who is 6'5", therefore children are taller than most adults.

## **Axiom:**

An **axiom** or **postulate** is a statement that is taken to be true, to serve as a premise or starting point for further reasoning and arguments. The word comes from the Greek *axíōma* (ἀξίωμα) 'that which is thought worthy or fit' or 'that which commends itself as evident.

Religious axioms are the enemy of valid discovery.

**Starting assumption when scientifically investigating nature:** reality is coherent and ultimately understandable.

**Starting assumptions when "scientifically" investigating scripture:**

- 1) scripture comes from God
- 2) scripture is true

Just like in science, the beliefs and discoveries of those who have gone before you can be helpful or they can be a huge hindrance. Nothing should be assumed about the virtue or value of the findings of those who have gone before us.

It is worth-while to see what they said, but only do so with the knowledge that they, like the scientists in the dark ages, had all sorts of beliefs and thoughts through which they interpreted the available evidence.

The biggest value in studying the past is to see how easy it is to make huge blunders and then double down on them out of pride.

Nothing about a person living five-hundred or a thousand years before you did makes him any more virtuous or valuable to God or God's people than you are. Just as technology makes huge practical advancements, it should be no surprise if theology develops in a similar fashion by refining the discovery process.

Calvinist Axiom Example:

From there perspective:

God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass...

Their axiom viewed from a inductive mind:

God is Sovereign (In a Hindu fatalism kind of way), therefore, he must exercise his sovereignty in a way that my finite mind demands a sovereign entity would have to do, based on my limited understanding of reality.

Inductive perspective:

God decreed the things that scripture specifically says he decreed.

I have no reason to believe that God decreed anything that scripture does not say he decreed.

# Isaiah 55:9 (KJV)

<sup>9</sup> For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

*The*

# EXTENT

*of the*

# ATONEMENT

A Historical and Critical Review



DAVID L. ALLEN

3:16

LTE



In addition to its nature, it is vital to recognize and distinguish between three major areas comprising the subject of the atonement: (1) intent, (2) extent, and (3) application. One cannot consider the extent question apart from the question of intent and application. The intent of the atonement, since it relates to the differing perspectives on election, answers the questions, **What was Christ's saving purpose in providing an atonement?** Did he equally or unequally desire the salvation of every man? And then, consequently, does his intent necessarily have a bearing upon the extent of his satisfaction?

The classic Arminian and non-Calvinist<sup>22</sup> view of the intent of the atonement is that Christ died for all

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