

# Lesson 4 Notes – 01/29/2008

## PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

### *From the PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION by Clinton Lockhart*

1. Rules and Axioms must be used with sound common sense and good judgment to be effective.
2. Rules cannot be composed to address every possible situation, and additional principles are probably yet to be discovered.
3. Just because this is a less than perfect science does not make it useless. In fact, knowledge and use of these principles will greatly improve accurate interpreting of the Scriptures and reveal the error of various faulty interpretations.
4. We begin with a presentation of 15 fundamental axioms.

### *Axioms*

1. Defined from *American Heritage Dictionary*, online edition
  - a. A self-evident or universally recognized truth.
  - b. An established rule, principle, or law.
  - c. A self-evident principle or one that is accepted as true without proof as the basis for argument; a postulate.
2. Examples of Axioms in other fields of study:
  - a. Mathematics - geometry, algebra, etc.
  - b. Declaration of Independence – “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”
3. Value of Axioms:
  - a. Provides an Over-arching, overall viewpoint
  - b. Guide
  - c. Clarify
  - d. To be used, applied and respected

### *The 15 Axioms of our Study*

AXIOM 1: The true object of speech is the impartation of thought.

AXIOM 2: The true object of interpretation is to apprehend the exact thought of the author.

AXIOM 3: Language is a reliable medium of communication.

AXIOM 4: Usage determines the meaning of words.

AXIOM 5: Two writers do not independently express thought alike.

AXIOM 6: Every writer is influenced by his environment.

AXIOM 7: An author’s purpose determines the character of his production.

AXIOM 8: Any writing is liable to modification in copying, translating, and the gradual change of a living language.

AXIOM 9: By one expression one thought is conveyed, and only one.

AXIOM 10: The function of a word depends on its association with other words.

AXIOM 11: A correct definition of a word substituted for the word itself will not modify the meaning of the text.

AXIOM 12: One of two contradictory statements must be false, unless corresponding terms have different meanings or applications.

AXIOM 13: Truth must accord with truth; and statements of truth apparently discrepant can be harmonized if the facts are known.

AXIOM 14: An assertion of truth necessarily excludes that to which it is essentially opposed, and no more.

AXIOM 15: Every communication of thought, human and divine, given in the language of men, is subject to the ordinary rules of interpretation.

Effective Bible Study

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Winter Term 2008, Sunset International Bible Institute

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