

Basic Hermeneutical Principles

- 1) Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture.
- 2) Texts of Scripture must be interpreted in context (both immediate & broad contexts).
- 3) No text of Scripture (properly interpreted in its context) will contradict another text of Scripture. When contradictions seem to exist, it is the task of the interpreter to explain the seeming contradiction. He must never seek to do so by ignoring or denying any part of the truth that is revealed in Scripture.
- 4) We must derive normative theological doctrine from didactic passages that deal with a particular doctrine explicitly.
 - A. We must never use implicit teaching to contradict explicit teaching.
 - B. We must never use implications from hortatory or historical passages to contradict explicit teachings from didactic or doctrinal passages.
- 5) We must avoid the temptation to impose systematic theological definitions on biblical terms. In addition, we need to rid ourselves of the notion that biblical writers concerned themselves with providing solutions for theological questions that did not arise until much later in Church history. (E.g., at times, we may be guilty of giving the impression that Paul's chief concern was to defend Calvinism against the onslaught of five point Arminianism). Though we must seek to apply biblical truth to current controversies, we must not assume that there can be a perfect match between these controversies and those the biblical writers faced.
- 6) We must not assume that biblical writers used terms uniformly.
- 7) We must realize the variety of perspectives from which the biblical writers approached the explication of God's truth. We may understand what a passage means only when we approach it from the author's perspective.