

PRINCIPLES OF BIBLE STUDY #10 **LITERAL UNDERSTANDING**

Ezekiel 20:45-49

In Ezekiel's day, there were people who thought that his mention of fire was nothing but a _____. These types of people exist today and they are greatly _____.

PRINCIPLE OF LITERAL UNDERSTANDING: Always take a passage **literally** until it is impossible to do so, or if Scripture _____ indicates the passage is symbolic.

- Very few passages in the Bible are _____ - and what symbols exist are always clearly defined in the immediate context or elsewhere in the Bible.

The danger of NOT taking something literally when it SHOULD be taken literally:

- **cf. Luke 16:19-31**
 - Many a "preacher" has told his congregation that this is nothing but a _____. However, the word "parable" does not occur in the entire chapter and Jesus Christ did not use proper _____ in any of His parables.
 - The danger in NOT taking the fire in Luke 16 to be literal is to believe that there is no _____.
 - This is what the Jehovah's Witnesses believe.

GOLDEN RULE OF BIBLE INTERPRETATION:

"When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense;"

-Dr. David L. Cooper

- Symbolism is clearly indicated and defined in the Bible as in the following examples.

SYMBOLISM DEFINED - EXAMPLE #1

cf. Luke 8:4-15

- Notice that we are told in v. 4 that the Lord spake a _____
 - v. 5 - a sower and his seed
 - v. 5 - the way side
 - v. 6 - a rock
 - v. 7 - thorns
 - v. 8 - good ground

The preceding SYMBOLS are DEFINED in verses 19-23

- v. 11 - The seed is _____
- v. 12 - Seed sown by the way side are they that _____, but then the devil comes along and takes the word out of their _____
- v. 13 - Seed sown on the rock are they with _____ and receive the word with _____, but have no root and fall away in time of temptation
- v. 14 - Seed sown among thorns are they which hear, but then the cares, riches, and _____ of this life prevail
- v. 15 - Seed sown on the good ground are they which _____ the word, _____ it, and bring forth _____ with patience.

SYMBOLISM DEFINED - EXAMPLE #2

cf. Revelation 1:12-19

What do the seven golden candlesticks in v. 12 represent?

What do the seven stars in v. 16 represent?

You MUST read verse 20 in order for the SYMBOLS to be defined!

SEVEN STARS = _____

SEVEN GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS = _____

SYMBOLISM DEFINED - EXAMPLE #3

cf. Revelation 17:1-18

What does the WOMAN in verses 3, 4, 6, 7, and 9 represent?

What do the SEVEN HEADS in v. 7 represent? _____

What do the TEN HORNS in v. 7 represent? _____

The DANGER in failing to take the Bible LITERALLY:

- Thinking that the days of Genesis 1 are NOT actual 24-hour days and instead are _____!
- Thinking that the 1000 years in Revelation 20 (mentioned SIX times!) is not really 1000 years or has already been _____!
- Thinking that the 2 witnesses in Revelation 11 are indicative of two _____ and not men!