

INTERPRETING PRINCIPLES FOR SCRIPTURE AND THE BOOK OF REVELATION

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- **Rev. 1:1.** The Book of Revelation begins with God’s declaration for plain transformational information.
- Googled the phrase, “understanding the book of Revelation,” and weep. We leave our google search confused and conflicted rather than with the promise that God wants to plainly show us things which were soon to take place.
- Both Gal.1:7 and 2Pet.3:16 make it clear that the distortion of God’s message is not uncommon.

Six Guidelines for Rightly Interpreting Scripture

Main Message	Discern God’s primary intention for the text—his main message?
Clearest Citation	Recognize God seeks to clarify not confuse. Where does God most clearly say his main message? Let his clear scripture interpret what seems to be obscure scripture.
Whole Wisdom	Get God’s whole message on a matter→ God’s revelation is progressive—a little at a time.
Style Situation	Observe God’s style of language for the message being presented. Particular words are chosen for a purpose.
Assembly Accountability	Use God’s church for accountability and understanding. Who in God’s church needs to hear and evaluate our interpretation?
Transforming Truth	Seek God’s transformation over information. How would God want to change us with this text?

1. **Main Message:** Discern God’s Primary Intention for the text.
 - God doesn’t speak into a vacuum but has a divine purpose for every message (**2Pet.1:20, 21**).
 - God’s Word is never idle or babble. All of it has come forth from God with an intended purpose and that intended purpose cannot be accomplished unless we receive its intended meaning (2Tim.3:16,17; Rom.15:4).
 - **The example of Rev. 6:9-11:**
2. **Clearest Citation:** Recognize God seeks to clarify not confuse his message to us.
 - Scripture interprets scripture and does so accurately because God never changes, he is the same yesterday and forever (**Heb. 13:8**).
 - **The example of Rev. 6:9-11:**
 - Christ never said we should be reading history, watching television or praying for dreams to get a correct interpretation of his Word. We must be reading the Word of God to get an understanding of the Word of God (see Matt.12:3, 5; 19:4; 21:16, 42; **22:31**).
3. **Whole Wisdom:** Get God’s whole message on a matter, not settling for parts and pieces.
 - We need all the pieces of God’s revealed will on a matter to understand it accurately.

- The word “world” is used more than a dozen ways—there are **a world of meanings**.
 - Many people have sadly confused the word “earth” in the book of Revelation with referring to the “whole world” when the context refers to a particular “land,” the Promised Land and land of the Jews.
 - **Rev. 1:7** has been translated, “All the tribes of the earth,” yet “earth” is a reference to the land of the Jews more than a reference to the entire globe or whole earth.
 - “land of Judah/Israel” (Matt. 2:6, 20, 21);
 - “land of Naphtali” (Matt. 4:15);
 - “the land of Judea” (John 3:22);
 - “land of the Jews” (Acts 10:39).
 - In **Rev.6:4, 10**, “earth” refers to “land” of Israel where the martyred saints were killed.
 - In **6:8** the literal understanding of “**a fourth of the whole earth**” is easy to imagine and understand when we see it is referring to a fourth of the land of Israel.
4. **Style Situation:** Observe God’s Style of language for the message being presented.
- We should assume God is going to use language that makes plain and obvious sense to his original audience. God does not try to hide meaning, he reveals it (**See Rev.1:1**).
 - **Rev.1:7** presents some style issues like the imagery of clouds and every eye seeing.
5. **Assembly Accountability:** Use God’s Church for accountability and understanding.
- We all have different gifts that have been granted for the “common good” (1 Cor. 12:7).
 - Remember that one of the characteristics of scripture distorters was that of being “untaught and unstable” (**2Pet.3:16**).
6. **Transforming Truth:** Seek God’s Transformation over information.
- Scripture is designed to train us in righteousness (**2Tim.3:16, 17**) so, we must be humbly willing to be transformed by scripture rather than merely informed by it.
 - In **Ephesians 4:14** we are exhorted to no longer be like children tossed around by every wind of doctrine, unsettled and unstable in our ways.