

Rightly Dividing

A Simple Guide to Biblical Hermeneutics

Sunday School | Greg Brooks

1. What Is Hermeneutics?

Hermeneutics is the science and art of interpreting the Bible: understanding its original meaning and applying it faithfully today. **Hermeneutics** gives the rules; **exegesis** draws the meaning out of a specific passage.

Purpose: Guard against misusing Scripture, ignoring context, or reading personal opinions into the text.

2. Four Principles for Understanding Scripture

Read in context. Consider the surrounding verses, the whole book, and the message of Scripture.

Consider grammar and history. Examine the language, historical setting, culture, and original audience. Read in the plain sense, recognizing intended symbols and figures of speech.

Recognize the type of writing. Narrative, poetry, prophecy, and letters should be read according to their literary style.

Let Scripture interpret Scripture. Use clear passages to help explain difficult ones. The Bible does not contradict itself.

3. Example: The Church at Laodicea | Revelation 3:14-16

Context: This is the last of seven messages to churches in Revelation 2-3. Laodicea was prosperous, but its church mistook material wealth for spiritual health (3:17-18).

Christ's authority: As the Amen and the faithful and true witness, Jesus gives the truthful assessment. His title concerning creation affirms His primacy and authority, rather than making Him a created being.

Hot, cold, and lukewarm: The exact historical background of the water imagery is debated. The clear warning is against complacent, ineffective discipleship. Avoid assuming that Christ prefers unbelief or that the passage is merely about emotional enthusiasm.

Meaning: Wealth and religious identity cannot replace dependence on Christ. Our works reveal our spiritual condition; they do not earn salvation.

4. Apply the Passage

Examine your life by Christ's judgment. Reject self-reliance, repent of complacency, and pursue a faithful, useful witness. Apply the warning to yourself before using it to label others.

Further Study | Greg's Resource Links

Christian Leaders Institute

<https://www.christianleadersinstitute.org/bib-420-free-online-hermeneutics-and-exegesis-course/>

Study.Bible

<https://study.bible/courseInfo/40>

Moody Enrich

<https://enrich.moody.edu/courses/biblical-study-methods-and-hermeneutics>