

CONCLUSION page 65

Each of these **seven guidelines for biblical interpretation** from the Conclusion is drawn from our **Reformed confessional heritage** and has been adopted by the church for use in dealing with controversial issues. They are very similar to the principles of interpretation used in other mainstream denominations. I list them again to reinforce their unity of purpose and approach:

1. Recognize that Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, is the center of Scripture. The redemptive activity of God is central to the entire Scripture. The Old Testament themes of the covenant and the messiah testify to this activity. In the center of the New Testament is Jesus Christ: the Word made flesh, the fulfillment of Israel's messianic hope, and the promise of the kingdom. It is to Christ that the church witnesses. When interpreting Scripture, keeping Christ in the center aids in evaluating the significance of the problems and controversies that always persist in the vigorous, historical life of the church.
2. Let the focus be on the plain text of Scripture, to the grammatical and historical context, rather than to allegory or subjective fantasy.
3. Depend on the guidance of the Holy Spirit in interpreting and applying God's message.
4. Be guided by the doctrinal consensus of the church, which is the rule of faith.
5. Let all interpretations be in accord with the rule of love, the twofold commandment to love God and to love our neighbor.
6. Remember that interpretation of the Bible requires earnest study in order to establish the best text and to interpret the influence of the historical and cultural context in which the divine message has come.
7. Seek to interpret a particular passage of the Bible in light of all the Bible.

Interpreting the Bible according to these guidelines from our Reformed heritage provides a more accurate understanding of Scripture that brings us into a closer relationship to God and one another.