

## HISTORY OF THE SECOND ADVENT MESSAGE

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#### History of the Second Advent Message and Mission, Doctrine and People

*by Isaac C. Wellcome, Yarmouth, ME.: 1874. pp.44-46*

#### William Miller's Principles of Biblical Interpretation

*(Ordained Baptist Minister)*

"I determined to lay aside all my prepossessions, to thoroughly compare Scripture with Scripture, and to pursue its study in a regular and methodical manner. I commenced with Genesis, and read verse by verse, proceeding no faster than the meaning of the several passages should be so unfolded as to leave me free from embarrassment respecting any mysticisms or contradictions. Whenever I found anything obscure, my practice was to compare it with all collateral passages; and, by the help of Cruden, I examined all the texts of Scripture in which were found any of the prominent words contained in any obscure portion. Then, by letting every word have its proper bearing on the subject of the text, if my view of it harmonized with every collateral passage in the Bible, it ceased to be a difficulty. In this way I pursued the study of the Bible, in my first perusal of it, for about two years, and was fully satisfied that it is its own interpreter. I found that, by a comparison of Scripture with history, all the prophecies, as far as they have been fulfilled, had been fulfilled literally; that all the various figures, metaphors, parables, similitudes, etc., of the Bible, were either explained in their immediate connection, or the terms in which they were expressed were defined in other portions of the Word; and, when thus explained, are to be literally understood in accordance with such explanation. I was thus satisfied that the Bible is a system of revealed truths."

In thus continuing the study, he adopted the following:

#### RULES OF INTERPRETATION

- I. Every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented in the Bible. Proof; **Matt. 5:18**. [see also **Rev. 22:18, 19. Matt. 4:4. Deut. 4:2. Prov. 30:5, 6. Rom. 15:4. I Cor. 10:11, 12**].
- II. All Scripture is necessary, and may be understood by a diligent application and study. Proof; **2 Tim. 3:15-17**. [see also **Heb. 11:6. Jer. 29:10-14; 33:3. Isa. 55:6, 7**].
- III. Nothing revealed in Scripture can or will be hid from those who ask in faith, not wavering. Proof; **Deut. 29:29. Matt. 10:26, 27. I Cor. 2:10. Phil. 3:15. Isa. 45:11. Matt. 21:22. John 14:13, 14; 15:7. James 1:5, 6. 1 John 5:13-15**.
- IV. To understand doctrine, bring all the Scriptures together on the subject you wish to know; then let every word have its proper influence; and if you can form you theory without a contradiction, you cannot be in error. Proof; **Isa. 28:7-29; 35:8. Prov. 19:27. Luke 24:27, 44, 45. Rom. 16:26. Jms. 5:19. 2 Pet. 1:19, 20**. [see also **John 7:16, 17**].

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- V. Scripture must be its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound to me, and he should guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed or wisdom, is my rule, and not the Bible. Proof; **Ps. 19:7-11; 119:97-105. Mat. 23:8-10. I Cor. 2:12-16. Ezk. 34:18, 19. Luke 11:52. Matt. 2:7, 8**. [see also **Jer. 17:5-7. I Jn. 4:1; Jn. 7:24. I Thess. 5:19-21; II Thess. 2:1-13. Mt. 24:4,5, 23,24. Isa. 8:20**].
- VI. God has revealed things to come, by visions, in figures and parables; and in this way the same things are oftentimes revealed again and again, by different visions, or in different figures and parables. If you wish to understand them, you must combine them all in one. Proof; **Ps. 89:19. Hos. 12:10. Hab. 2:2. Acts 2:17. I Cor. 10:6. Heb. 9:9, 24. Ps. 68:2. Matt. 13:13, 34. Gen. 41:1-32. Dan. 2, 7 and 8. Acts 10:9-16**.
- VII. Visions are always mentioned as such. **2 Cor. 12:1**.
- VIII. Figures always have a figurative meaning, and are used much in prophecy to represent future things, times and events,-- such as mountains, meaning governments, **Dan. 2:35, 44**; beasts, meaning kingdoms, **Dan. 7:8, 17**; waters, meaning people, **Rev. 17:1, 15**; day, meaning year, etc., **Ezk. 4:6**. [see also **Num. 14:34**].
- IX. Parables are used as comparisons to illustrate subjects, and must be explained in the same way as figures, by the subject and Bible. **Mark 4:13**.
- X. Figures sometimes have two or more different significations, as day is used in a figurative sense to represent three different periods of time, namely, first, indefinite, **Eccles. 7:14**; second, definite, a day for a year, **Ezk. 4:6**, and third a day for a thousand years, **I Pet. 3:8**.  
  
The right construction will harmonize with the Bible, and make good sense; other constructions will not.
- XI. If a word makes good sense as it stands, and does no violence to the simple laws of nature, it is to be understood literally; if not, figuratively. **Rev. 12:1, 2; 17:3-7**.
- XII. To learn the meaning of a figure, trace the word through your Bible, and when you find it explained, substitute the explanation for the word used; and, if it makes good sense, you need not look further; if not, look again.

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#### RULES OF INTERPRETATION

**XIII.** To know whether we have the true historical event for the fulfillment of a prophecy; If you find every word of the prophecy (after the figures are understood) is literally fulfilled, then you may know that your history is the true event; but if one word lacks a fulfillment then you must look for another event, or wait its future development; for God takes care that history and prophecy shall agree, so that the true believing children of God may never be ashamed. **Ps. 22:5. Isa. 45:17-19. I Pet. 2:6. Rev. 17:17. Acts 3:18.**

**XIV.** The most important rule of all is, that you must have faith. It must be a faith that requires a sacrifice, and if tried, would give up the dearest object on earth, the world and all its desires,--character, living, occupation, family, home, comfort, and worldly honors. If any of them should hinder our believing any part of God's word, it would show our faith to be vain. Nor can we ever believe so long as any of these motives lies lurking in our hearts. We must believe that God will never forfeit His word; and we can have confidence that He who takes notice of the sparrow's fall, and numbers the hairs of our head, will guard the translation of His own word, and throw a barrier around it, and prevent those who sincerely trust in God, and put implicit confidence in His word, from erring far from the truth. [**Heb.11:6. Rom.14:23. Jms.2:26. Jn.7:16,17. Mt.7:21**].

#### Pastor's Note

Remember that only the King James, the New King James, and the New American Standard Versions (there may be others I'm not aware of) are "FORMAL" translations (they try to translate word for word and as near as possible to the original meaning of the language), and are more reliable and free from doctrinal error. All other versions are "Dynamic" translations (they try to present the thought rather than a word for word translation of the text, thus subject to a more "Free" translation, leaving room for mistranslation and dangerous interpretation). "Paraphrased" Bibles should not even be considered as study Bibles, they are only a rewording of a translation and not a translation of the original text.

The King James is NOT the only version, but is the most preferred due to the fact that God's providence led in the publishing of this Bible by sincere Christians, who just wanted the common people to have the Word of God for themselves and in their own language. The KJV has been the basis of Christian Faith for over 388 years. Compare a variety of versions but remember that the formal translations are more reliable and accurate. The KJV is written at 12<sup>th</sup> grade reading level requires study and a good bible dictionary for outdated words.

Of course the most safest, and surely the most reliable, are the Hebrew & Aramaic Old Testament Scriptures and the Greek New Testament Received Text Scriptures. J. Green's "Interlinear" is a good source to begin with. A good Exhaustive Concordance is essential, in English, Hebrew & Aramaic, and Greek, and also Holladay's Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon, Arndt & Gingrich's Greek Lexicon. \_\_\_\_\_ Pastor Richard P. Mendoza. 1999.

God has given us His word that we may become acquainted with its teachings and know for ourselves what He requires of us. . . It is not enough to have good intentions; it is not enough to do what a man thinks is right or what the minister tells him is right. His soul's salvation is at stake, and **he should search the Scriptures for himself.** However strong may be his convictions, however confident he may be that the minister knows what is truth, this is not his foundation. He has a chart pointing out every waymark on the heavenward journey, and **he ought not to guess at anything.**

*It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light and encourage others to follow his example.* We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine help we are to form our opinions for ourselves as we are to answer for ourselves before God.

The truths most plainly revealed in the Bible have been involved in doubt and darkness by learned men, who, with a pretense of great wisdom, **teach that the Scriptures have a mystical, a secret, spiritual meaning not apparent in the language employed.** These men are false teachers. It was to such a class that Jesus declared: "Ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God." Mark 12:24. **The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed.** Christ has given the promise: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." John 7:17. If men would but **take the Bible as it reads,** if there were no false teachers to mislead and confuse their minds, a work would be accomplished that would make angels glad and that would bring into the fold of Christ thousands upon thousands who are now wandering in error.

We should exert all the powers of the mind in the study of the Scriptures and should task the understanding to comprehend, as far as mortals can, the deep things of God; yet we must not forget that the docility and submission of a child is the true spirit of the learner. **Scriptural difficulties can never be mastered by the same methods that are employed in grappling with philosophical problems.** We should not engage in the study of the Bible with that self-reliance with which so many enter the domains of science, but with a **prayerful dependence upon God and a sincere desire to learn His will.** We must come with a humble and teachable spirit to obtain knowledge from the great I AM. Otherwise, evil angels will so blind our minds and harden our hearts that we shall not be impressed by the truth.

Many a portion of Scripture which learned men pronounce a mystery, or pass over as unimportant, is full of comfort and instruction to him who has been taught in the school of Christ. **One reason why many theologians have no clearer understanding of God's word is, they close their eyes to truths which they do not wish to practice.** As understanding of Bible truth depends not so much on the power of intellect brought to the search as on **the singleness of purpose, the earnest longing after righteousness.** *The Great Controversy* p. 598-599.

