

Helvetic Confession, the Belgic Confession, and the Westminster Confession. Baptists can use the 1689 London Baptist Confession (a revision of the Westminster Confession) or the simpler and more recent Baptist Faith and Message statement (2000).

The results of basing Scriptural exegesis on any of these confessions is that many people are set adrift in a sea of conflicting theories. The end result is that they simply rely on popular literature for guidance or they rely on their own personal interpretation.

Some Bible Christians reject all use of creeds and confessions on the notion of private interpretation. They develop their own creed by their own unaided wisdom.

The Literal Sense of John 6:63-59. How does one reject the literal sense of Scripture when the following words come from the mouth of our Savior? “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever.” This he said in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum” (John 6:53-59).

Saint Paul wrote: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is

it not a participation in the body of Christ? (1 Cor 10:16)

And again: “For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, ‘This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. (1 Cor 11: 23-30).

These passages are so clearly stated that they can only be understood in the literal sense.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, bread and wine are miraculously transformed into the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of our Savior, Jesus Christ, whenever and wherever Holy Mass is celebrated.

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“Bible Christians” are Not Truly Bible Christians!

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Bible Christians hold to the doctrines of Sola Scripture — that the Bible alone as the sole rule of faith, and Sola Fide — that faith alone is all that is necessary for salvation.

Catholic Christians find these theories untenable, as unfortunately for these adherents, the Bible does not support these doctrines. Regardless of how many Scripture verses cited, there is not one verse that specifically supports either premise.

2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work”, is the most commonly cited verse to prove Sola Scripture.

Ephesians 2:8-9, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God not because of works, lest any man should boast” is the most commonly cited verse to prove Sola Fide.

Yet, anyone with intellectual integrity must admit that these verse does not state that the Bible is the sum-total of God’s revelation, or that we are saved by “faith ALONE”. As a matter of fact, the Bible states in James 2:24, “You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.” The Bible also states in John 21:25, “But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.”

Biblical Interpretation: The basic principles involved in Scriptural interpretation.

Hermeneutics: The science or study that determines the rules for finding and explaining the meaning and true sense of the books and texts of Scripture in accord with the principles of exegesis.

There are two chief senses of Scripture: the *literal* and the *spiritual* (also known as typological, mystical, or real). The literal sense is that concerned with what is expressed directly by the words, that is, the meaning the writer intended to convey. The spiritual sense is the meaning expressed immediately through a person, an event, or a thing by means of words, or arising directly, not from the words but from what is signified by the words. In the spiritual sense, there are different kinds of expressions: *metaphorical*, *allegorical*, or *anagogical*. A metaphorical example occurs in Psalm 117:22 in which the Israelites are described as the cornerstone; and allegorical meaning is Christ called the "Paschal Lamb"; an anagogical example occurs when St. Paul calls Jerusalem the heavenly city.

Exegesis: The study whereby the investigation and exposition of Sacred Scripture is presented. In general it seeks through tradition, archaeology, history, and criticism to expound the true meaning of the Scriptures. In particular, it concerns itself with the various senses of Scripture, the literal, spiritual senses, and the accommodation of Scripture. The Church [Catholic] sets forth no restriction upon the extent of investigation regarding the Scriptures

Eisegesis: an interpretation of Scripture, that expresses the interpreter's own ideas, bias, or the like, rather than the meaning of the text. Simply put, it is when a person has a set idea and searches the Bible to find evidence to support his theory. This is quite common among the authorities who make up the Governing Body of the Watchtower Society (Jehovah's Witnesses) and the Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints (LDS or Mormons).

The literal sense: The literal sense of Scripture is that which has been expressed directly by the inspired human authors. Since it is the fruit of inspiration, this sense is also intended by God, as principal author. One arrives at this sense by means of a careful analysis of the text, within its literary and historical context. The principal task of exegesis is to carry out this analysis, making use of all the resources of literary and historical research, with a view to defining the literal sense of the biblical texts with the greatest possible accuracy (cf *Divino Afflante Spiritu*: EB 550). To this end, the study of ancient literary genres is particularly necessary (*ibid.* 560).

The spiritual sense: As a general rule, we can define the spiritual sense, as understood by Christian faith, as the meaning expressed by the biblical texts when read, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, in the context of the paschal mystery of Christ and of the new life which flows from it. This context truly exists. In it the New Testament recognizes the fulfillment of the Scriptures. It is therefore quite acceptable to re-read the Scriptures in the light of this new context, which is that of life in the Spirit.

While there is a distinction between the two senses, the spiritual sense can never be stripped of its connection with the literal sense. The latter remains the indispensable foundation otherwise, one could not speak of the "fulfillment" of Scripture. Indeed, in order that there be fulfillment, a relationship of continuity and of conformity is essential. But it is also necessary that there be transition to a higher level of reality.

The spiritual sense is not to be confused with subjective interpretations stemming from the imagination or intellectual speculation. The spiritual sense results from setting the text in relation to real facts, which are not foreign to it: the paschal event, in all its inexhaustible richness, which constitutes the summit of the divine intervention in the history of Israel, to the benefit of all mankind.

Spiritual interpretation, whether in community or in private, will discover the authentic spiritual sense only to the extent that it is kept within these perspectives. One then holds together three levels of reality: the biblical text, the paschal mystery and the present circumstances of life in the Spirit.

Confessional Interpretation is a term for the method of interpretation that takes as its starting point a confession of faith. In other words, this method starts with a deduction and then searches the Scriptures to find supporting evidence. The question for the Protestant is which confession of faith is the correct one? There are a number of confessions and the choice usually depends upon which theological tradition the student embraces. In the Reformed tradition, there are the Second