

BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLES

1. **God cannot lie.** Titus 1:2; Numbers 23:19
When facing any apparent contradictions, we don't go with the "truth" we're most comfortable with, we go back to this truth, God cannot lie. So the "apparent problem" must be with our understanding.
2. **Look for the Spiritual Intent.** 1 Corinthians 2:14
As often as possible take the Bible just as it reads. However, a divine principle states, "Spiritual things are spiritually discerned." Especially in the case of a parable, or an incongruous statement like Jesus made in John 6:53 to "eat His flesh and drink His blood," look for the spiritual intent.
3. **In what way is it true?** 2 Timothy 3:16
All scripture is given by inspiration of God. All of it is profitable. Therefore, in every situation where the scripture is not clear as in Revelation 1:5 where Jesus claims to be the "first begotten of the dead" when He clearly was not the first to come from the dead, or Revelation 13:8 where Jesus says He was slain at the foundation of the world, when He wasn't slain for 4,000 years, we must ask ourselves, "In what way is it true?"
4. **Truth is not founded on arguments from silence.**
It is not right, wise, nor safe to build a doctrine on what is not said. For example: In John 10:30, Jesus said He and the Father were one. If the Holy Spirit is part of the Godhead, why didn't Jesus mention Him in this verse? Therefore, the Holy Spirit must not be the third person of the Godhead.
5. **Doctrines are best founded on clear and oft repeated truth.**
Truth must be built on what is clearly and repeatedly stated. In the case of Jesus being begotten, the Bible nowhere states He was begotten in eternity past. But it does state where and when He was begotten. (see Psalm 2:7, Acts 13:33, Revelation 1:5, Romans 1:4, Colossians 1:18, Hebrews 12:23, 1 Peter 1:3)
6. **Truth is progressive.** John 16:12
In Deuteronomy 6:4 God's people were told God was one LORD. Then we learned the Godhead had two distinct personages (John 1:1, 29, 10:30, 33). Then Jesus and His disciples taught that there were three (John 3:5, 16:13, 14; 1 John 5:6-8). When this seems contradictory we refer back to principle #2.

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WHEN WAS JESUS BEGOTTEN?

In the messianic passage of Psalm 2:7 we read this prophecy.

I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

Here the psalmist David, in prophetic utterance, limits a certain day as “the day” when Jesus, the Messiah, would be begotten. Can we know when that day was? Was it in eternity past as some of our Godly and sincere brothers have said? There is not one verse in the Bible that tells us Jesus was begotten in eternity past. But there is a passage that clearly states when He was begotten. It is found in Acts 13:32, 33.

32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise (verse 33 tells us what that promise was) which was made unto the fathers,

33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, **in that** he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the *second psalm* (that’s Psalm 2:7), Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

There is no ambiguity here. Psalm 2:7 was fulfilled “in that” God the Father raised Jesus from the dead. The apostle Paul said in Romans 1:4 that this event, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, is the proof that Jesus was the Son of God.

And [Jesus is] declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

Jesus declares Himself to be God’s “first begotten” by being resurrected from the dead (see Revelation 1:5). And according to Jesus Himself, that experience of being resurrected is how we’ll know that we are also the children of God (see Luke 20:35, 36).

Christ is said to be the “firstfruits” and the “first born of the dead” of those who were resurrected. So we ask the question, “*In what way is it true?*” Christ was the first person to come from the grave offering eternal life to all who would believe in Him, to all who would trust Him for salvation (see 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23; Colossians 1:15, 18; Acts 26:23). Others were raised and died again. But not Christ!

When we accept Christ as the first begotten of the Father from the dead, when we accept Christ as our hope, our Lord and Savior, we become part of His body, the Church, the “church of the firstborn” from the dead (Hebrews 12:23).

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