

Review Questions on "Literal" Interpretation

Sharing Question - What is the silliest thing you've ever heard someone try to prove from the Bible?

Literal Interpretation

Look up Isaiah 35:4-6. Then read Matthew 11:2-6. How does this passage indicate that Jesus thought Scripture was to be understood?

Read Zechariah 9:9 and Matthew 21:1-11 (note especially verse 4); did Jesus deliberately fulfill this prophecy literally? Why or why not?

Isaiah 61:1-3 describes the ministry of the Messiah. Read it and then compare Luke 4:16-21. How is this Old Testament prophecy fulfilled? (literally or otherwise)

Why do you think Jesus stopped reading at the middle of Isaiah 61:2?

In II Samuel 7:8-16, promises regarding a kingdom are made to David. Read this passage. Then read Luke 1:26-38 (noting especially vv. 32,33). Did the angel think these prophecies would be literally fulfilled?

Now look up Acts 1:6. Did the disciples expect the fulfillment of this promised kingdom?

Note the answer of Jesus in verse 7. What does his answer indicate about the literal fulfillment of prophecy?

Read carefully the following domestic drama (from William E. Mouser, Jr., *Walking in Wisdom*). Note the words which are figurative in the order in which they occur in the text. Indicate after each figurative word or phrase how you can tell it is figurative.

"John sat at the breakfast table buried deeply in the morning newspaper. Occasional grunts and mutterings informed Mary that her husband was still alive behind the wall of newsprint. She noticed the teakettle was boiling and removed it from the stove. While she wondered how she might liberate her husband from the City News, an idea slowly dawned. Boiling water in hand, she approached her husband as carefully as if she were walking on eggs. The spout of the teakettle took careful aim between the lower edge of the paper and the edge of the table, beyond which lay the peaceful and unsuspecting territory of John's lap. 'It's about time city hall woke up' were the last words John spoke before coming fully and warmly awake himself."

Figurative word/phrase

Figurative because...

All figures of speech operate either by comparison ("this is like that") or by substitution ("this word can be substituted for that because there is some relationship between them"). Below you will find definitions of eight figures of speech. Read each definition carefully until you are satisfied that you understand what it means. Then, look up the references (reading the context as well!) and identify and figurative-literal statements by writing down the word or phrase that you feel is figurative and classifying it as one of the figures of speech listed below.

<u>Reference</u>	<u>Word/Phrase</u>	<u>Figure</u>	<u>Sense</u>
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Matt. 5:29

Matt. 6:34

Matt. 16:6

Rom. 3:20

I Sam. 1:15

Matt. 24:27

Hosea 7:8

Acts 1:25

John 10:26,27

Luke 10:3

I Chr. 12:38

Matt. 7:3-5

Jer. 2:13

Eccl. 9:11

Mark 1:17

Jer. 23:29

I Pet. 5:8

Lev. 18:6

Prov. 8:1-3, 12

Psa. 114:3,4

Ezek. 3:1

Rev. 6:12

Psa. 1:4

John 6:48

I Tim. 3:15

Isa. 41:1

Matt. 5:13

Deut. 19:12

Circle "T" for True and "F" for False in the following statements.

T F A person who is receptive to the illumining ministry of the Holy Spirit need not know or use principles of interpretation.

T F Literal interpretation is simply interpreting Scripture according to ordinary principles one uses to understand anything written.

T F Most, but no all, biblical prophecies already fulfilled were fulfilled literally.

T F A proper interpretation of the Bible necessitates attention to the details of a text.

T F When something is stated in figurative language, it becomes impossible to determine what the author really meant to communicate.

T F One should look for plain-literal statements first when reading the Scripture.

T F When the plain-literal sense makes good sense, seek no other sense.

Circle "P-L" for Plain-literal and "F-L" for Figurative-literal to indicate which each of the underlined portions in the following verses is.

P-L F-L Genesis 16:12; He will be a wild ass of a man

P-L F-L Exodus 13:22: He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor pillar of fire by night

P-L F-L Psalm 23:1: The Lord is my Shepherd

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P-L F-L Isaiah 53:6: All of us like sheep have gone astray

P-L F-L Daniel 6:16: Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions' den

P-L F-L Matthew 5:13: you are the salt of the earth

P-L F-L Matthew 5:30: if your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you

P-L F-L Matthew 12:34: you brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak is good?

P-L F-L Col. 3:24: whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men

P-L F-L I Pet. 2:2: like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the Word

The following verses contain figurative-literal statements. Look up the verses and write in the figurative-literal phrase or word next to the reference.

<u>Reference</u>	<u>Word/Phrase</u>	<u>Figure</u>	<u>Sense</u>
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Proverbs 12:18

Psalm 119:105

Proverbs 1:20

Isaiah 55:12

Luke 18:25

Proverbs 10:11

I Cor. 3:9

I Cor. 11:30

Proverbs 20:26

James 1:6

Special Project

Read Galatians 5:25-6:10 carefully. Note each figure of speech in this passage by (1) writing the figuratively employed word or phrase, (2) identifying the figure of speech, and (3) suggesting the literal sense intended by the figurative expression.

<u>Reference</u>	<u>Word or Phrase</u>	<u>Figure of Speech</u>	<u>Literal Sense</u>
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5:25	walk	metaphor	live/behave