Rightly Dividing Scripture:
The Rules of Biblical Interpretation

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How do we properly interpret the Scriptural passages we read so that we arrive at the right meaning of the text? Many church splits have occurred and denominations have started because someone had a different interpretation from someone else. Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:15, **"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, <u>rightly dividing the word of truth</u>."**

If there is a right way to divide the word of truth then it follows that there must be a wrong way to do it, as well. We actually have record of this occuring in the first-century. In 2 Peter 3:16 we read, **"As also in all [Paul's] epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable <u>wrest [twist], as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction</u>."**

Twisting or improperly interpreting Scripture can lead to one's spiritual ruination. This is no small matter! There are whole denominations that claim to justify through their biblical interpretation such heinous abominations and sinful practices as abortion, homosexuality (sodomy). Scripture warns very clear that **"no prophecy [divinely inspired utterance] of the scripture is of any private interpretation."**

So with all these warnings and admonitions in mind how can we insure that we do not fall into the trap of misinterpreting Scripture and coming up with "damnable heresies" and false teachings as we read about in 2 Peter 2:1, **"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction"**?

During the first-century there were specific rules of Scriptural interpretation that were taught and well-known among Bible students and scholars. These had been developed over the centuries by learned Jewish rabbis and sages to ensure that false teachings and twisting of Scripture would not occur. We can learn from the wisdom of those who have gone before us.

As Messianics seeking to reconnect ourselves with the Hebrew roots of our faith we realize that much twisting of Scripture has occurred in Christian theology. Grossly aberrant teachings have been promoted in churchianity where, for example, it is taught that Messiah Yeshua and Paul came to "do away with" the Torah-law. Sabbath has been changed to Sunday and Passover to Easter. Christmas, Lent, Halloween, etc. have replaced YHWH's commanded and blessed Holy Days and the setting aside of the Torah's holy dietary laws has occurred with the eating of abominable things (e.g., pork, shellfish, etc.) now permitted. It is time

that we search out the truth and learn how to properly interpret Scripture so that we have the tools to separate the wheat from the chaff,and holy interpretations from profane ones so that we may all come out of spiritual Babylon (Rev. 18:4) to be the spotless and pure virgin bride that Messiah Yeshua is returning for at the end of days.

Objectivity Versus Subjectivity

The first rule in proper Scriptural interpretation is to know the difference between objectivity and subjectivity. The word *objective* means to *exist outside of or independent of the mind, something which is observable or verifiable by facts, not by emotions or feelings of the individual*. By contrast, the word *subjective* means *something relating to the mind of the individual as the subject of experience*. Trimm states succinctly that *objective* means *existing independent of the mind* while *subjective* means *that which comes from a person's point of view*. Facts are objective while opinions are subjective. Trimm goes on to say that many in Christendom, however, have developed a "do-it-yourself, do-your-own-thing" approach to biblical interpretation.. Christians will often have Bible studies in which they ask, "What does this verse mean to you?" Many will often say, "To me this verse means..." The Jewish response is to ask, "Okay, so if you were not here what would this verse mean?"

Exegesis Versus Eisegesis

These complicated sounding terms relate to the idea of subjectivity/objectivity. *Eisegesis* (subjectivity) is, *the interpretation of a text by reading one's own ideas into a text*. *Exegesis* (objectivity) is *an explanation or critical interpretation of a text, or drawing ideas out of the text, letting the text speak to you*. Many examples of this could be given of a subjective (eisegetic) approach to biblical interpretation in contemporary Christian theology. Examples:

- •Mt. 5:17
- •Rom. 10:4
- •Rom. 14:5-6
- •Rev. 3:20
- •Ezek. 37

The "Science" of Argumentation

Throughout Scripture one finds arguments used to prove theological points. An argument in Scripture is not referring to a heated discussion between two parties, but rather to the putting forth of series of points which lead to a conclusion which is the point the author is trying to make or prove. An argument generally has two parts: the premise and the conclusion. A premise is a proposition (i.e. the point to be discussed or maintained in argument, usually stated in sentence form near the outset of the argument) antecedently supposed or proved as a basis of argument or inference. It is something assumed to be true or taken for granted. Sometimes an argument can be simple with one or two points leading to a conclusion. Other times the an argument is a complex series of steps often containing points and subpoints or mini-arguments (as in some of Paul's writings) eventually leading to the conclusion. These can be hard for the untrained mind to follow. Paul was a theological lawyer and formulated some pretty complex arguments which as Peter noted were hard to follow and easy for unlearned individuals to twist or distort (2 Pet. 3:16).

An argument can usually be laid out laid out in an "if/then" format. *If* the premise is true *then* the conclusion must be true. In Scriptural argument the words *if* and *then* are not always used.

Here are some examples of other words that have the same meaning as *if*: *since, because, for, as, in as much, for the reason that*. Words that have the same meaning as *then* would include: *therefore, hence, so, consequently, it follows that, we may infer that, we may conclude that*.

All arguments are either *deductive* or *inductive*. *Deduction* is deriving a conclusion by reasoning,, or inference in which the conclusion follows necessarily from the premises. Trimm gives the following example to illustrate this point:

> All prophets spoke as they were moved by the Ruach HaKodesh (2 Pet. 1:20-21).
> Enoch was a prophet (Jude 1:14).
> Therefore, Enoch was moved by the Ruach HaKodesh.

Induction is the act of bringing forward or adducing, or the process of reasoning from a part to a whole, from particulars to generals, from the individual to the universal. Trimm gives the following example of an inductive argument where the reader is lead to a conclusion through inference:

> Abel obtained a good report by faith (Heb. 11:4).
> Enoch obtained a good report by faith (Heb. 11:5).
> Noah obtained a good report by faith (Heb. 11:7).
> Abraham obtained a good report by faith (Heb. 11:8).
> Therefore, all of the Elders of the Tanach obtained a good report by faith (Heb. 11:2, 39).

According to Trimm, a proposition (i.e. the point to be discussed or maintained in argument, usually stated in sentence form near the outset of the argument) which is widely accepted on its intrinsic merit as self-evident truth is called *an axiom*. In biblical interpretation (hermeneutics) any proposition which comes directly from the text of the Scripture is called a *proof text*. One utilizes a proof text/axiom as the premise for an argument. If the proof text is in context and a valid axiom (and is therefore regarded as true) and if the argument made is valid, then the argument (exegesis) is sound and the conclusion is therefore true. Using a valid proof text to formulate an argument and *prooftexting* are two different things. We shall discuss *prooftexting* below in *the section Examples of Common Logic Errors*.

When formulating arguments or interpretations from Scripture, Trimm gives the following pointers:

> 1. Don't sacrifice objective understanding to make your point.
> 2. Superficial study can be worse than no study.
> 3. Spiritualizing and allegorizing should be avoided. When it is used they should be restrained to illustrate a point from the objective meaning of another passage.
> 4. The Rule of First Reference: A concept or term in the Scriptures is defined by its earliest usage and that definition is then applied to later readings.

Examples of Common Logic Errors

•Prooftexting: When one starts with a conclusion and searches for "proof texts" to support it (eisegetical interpretation).

—Example One:
Conclusion: The Sunday, the first day of the week, is the day the Brit Chadasha declares is the day of worship and rest.

"Proof texts":
Act 15:20 —no mention of Shabbat here being a requirement upon NT believers.
Col. 2:16:17—proves Shabbat is no longer obligatory upon Christians.
Rom. 14:4-6—can keep any day as a rest day that you like.
Mt. 28:1; Mk. 16:1; etc—proves Jesus rose on Sunday making it the "Lord's Day."
And all the other usual Scriptures Christians use to invalidate the Fourth Statement of the Ten Words, none of which clearly, logically, definitively prove any such thing.

•Circular Reasoning: the premise is only true if the conclusion is true.

—Example One:
Premise: NT Christians are "under grace" and not "under law" and that grace and law are mutually exclusive concepts.

A form of circular reasoning: We are under grace (unmerited pardon) because of our past sin [i.e. the violation of Torah — 1 Jn. 3:4], yet because we are "under grace" and are no longer "under law" or under the "dispensation of grace" the law is now annulled [the very violation of which caused us to need grace in the first place] and is no longer binding upon us; therefore we can violate the law (esp. the Sabbath), the violation of which caused us to need grace in the first place.

•False Conversion: the mistake of presuming that if a proposition is true then the reverse of that proposition must also be true.

—Example One:
How about this one?: "If sinners are saved, than the saved are sinners." The bumper sticker which says that, "I am a sinner saved by grace" expresses this prevalent idea in Christianity. Au contraire, my Bible says that there are only three categories of people on earth: righteous (i.e. saints), sinners and the ungodly (1 Pet. 4:18). So I wonder under what category the guy with the above bumper sticker would place himself under? I don't know about him, but if I am in Yeshua (and He is in me) then I am a new creation and the old man is passed away (Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 5:7) and I am no longer a sinner, but a saint (though I still sin occasionally). I think that the Brit Chadasha would agree with me on this point considering how many times it uses the word *saint* or *saints* (exactly 62 times) us applied to those who are in Messiah.

—Example One:
For this one, how about the old, "everyone's doing it, so it must be right" adage? If you do not agree with the majority, or the party line, then the majority marginalizes or shuns and brands you as "right wing," "a cult" or a "fringe group/movement" or some such label. To wit, the Christian counter cult/apologetic ministries who take it upon themselves to brand any church or ministry that is not copacetic to the "historic Christian faith." Anyone "outside the pail of Christian orthodoxy (to use their terminology)" is branded a heretic, false teacher or a cult. (It is only a matter of time before the Messianic/Hebrew Roots Movement will make it onto their radar screen and will be branded as such.) With these Christians "might makes right" and the length of time (nearly 2000 years) that some of its (non-biblical and/or pagan) belief structures have been in place to these individuals in and of itself validates the legitimacy of those beliefs, regardless of the fact that those beliefs were foreign to original Notzrim Judaism. And now, are we not back to "proof-texting" where fallacious scriptural texts are " found" which "prove" their erroneous belief systems?

•Circumstantial Argument: In this error an argument is either accepted or rejected not because of whether or not it is valid or sound, but because of the deeply held beliefs of the person to whom the argument is presented or those of the presenter.

—Example One:

If I am understanding this one correctly, two example of this immediately come to mind. First, the cult leader that everyone views as infallible and no one dares oppose. Second, the church/denominational tradition (party line) that must be defended at all costs and no one dare oppose. In the former, we are dealing with an individual who has deeply held beliefs and who establishes the marching orders for all those under him, and in the latter we have a powerful corporate group acting as an individual establishing the marching orders for those under them.

•Argumentum ad Ignorantiam: This takes place when a proposition is accepted as true solely because it has not been proven to be false. Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

—Example One:
I have heard people reason against Torah-obedience because there are no direct commands for tithing, Sabbath and Feast Day observance, kashrut, etc. in the Brit. Had. Therefore, they reason, since they are not there, these things are not binding on us. (Of course, implied in this line of reasoning is that the Tenakh is totally passé and of little or no relevance to us today. My response to them has been that because bestiality is not prohibited in the Brit Chadasha does that give us the green light to engage in this abomination? That usually ends the argument.

•Argumentum ad Verecundiam: This error takes place when an argument or proposition is accepted not because it is true, valid or sound, but because some outside authority declares it to be true.

—Example One:
Perhaps the example I gave under **Circumstantial Argument** would better fit this error. Here the "Church", denomination, infallible leader, cult leader, or "historic Christian faith" declares what is truth and not.

•Accidental Case: This occurs when a generalization is usually true but is applied to a special situation in which the generalization is not true for that particular example.

—Example One:
Elohim is love (Jn. 4:7, 16). He loves the entire world (Jn. 3:16). But on occasion a man will become so reprobate that the love of YHWH gives way to hatred for that individual: **The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity** (Ps. 5:5). See also Ps. 11:5.

—Example Two:
Normally it is a sin to work on the Shabbat, but in rare instances, Torah allows for exceptions to that rule.

•Argumentum ad Baculum (appeal to force): This error occurs when a proposition is accepted as true not because it is the result of a sound argument, but because of threat of punishment is the propositions not accepted as true.

•False Inference: This occurs when it is argued that because a statement is true in a certain situation, that it is always true.

—Example One:
The examples in the previous point could apply here, too.

Five Basic Principles For Understanding the Scriptures

The Literal Principle. This is very similar, writes Trimm, to a rule of Jewish hermeneutics which states that

"no passage loses its pashat (simple, plain or literal meaning)." This prinicple involves understanding a passage in its plain, literal sense, according to the normal meaning of the words and phrases used.

The Cultural/Historical Principle. It is important to understand a passage in its cultural-historical context. We must understand a each passage in light of the culture and history of the person who wrote it. One must understand the traditions, controversies and so on. This might also be called "the Hebraic Roots Principle."

The Grammatical Principle. This principle involves understanding the text in accordance with its proper grammar. Just what do the nouns and prepositions refer to? What are the idioms of the original language? What are other peculiarities of the original language in which the text was written?

The Synthesis Principle. This principle tells us that if we understand two passages in a way that they contradict each other then we are misunderstanding one or both of them. Trimm says that this relates to the Rule of First Principle and from this we arrive at what he calls *The Tanach Principle* which states that when the writers of the Brit Chadasha ("NT") referred to "Scripture" (e.g. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Acts 17:11) they were referring to the Tanach ("OT") and not the "New Testament" which didn't exist yet. So everything we read in the Brit Chadasha must be understood in the light of the Tanach and can never contradict the Tanach. Trimm writes, If you think you understand something in the "New Testament" in such a way that it contradicts the Tanach, then you need to realized that you are misunderstanding it.

The Practical Principle. This involves the practical application of the text, writes Trimm. It also involves asking to whom is the text speaking and who is the speaker. There are 613 commandments (mitsvot) listed in the Tanach. Not all of them are for everyone. Some are specifically for the priests, for women, for soldiers, for the king, for farmers and so on.

PaRDeS (Garden/Orchard)

Now we come to the four levels of understanding the written word of YHWH as determined by the Jewish rabbis long ago. Trimm writes, the Hebrew/Aramaic word *pardes* is spelled in Hebrew and Aramaic without vowels are *PRDS*. *PaRDeS* refers to *a park, garden* or especially *the Garden of Eden*. The word appears three times in the Aramaic Brit Chadasha (Lk. 23:43; 2 Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7). The word *PRDS* is used in Jewish hermeneutics as an acronym for:

> [P]ashat (Hebrew for *simple*)
> [R]emez (Hebrew for *hint*)
> [D]rash (Hebrew for *search*)
> [S]od (Hebrew for *hidden*)

According to Trimm, in Jewish hemeneutics these four terms indicate the four levels of layers of understanding of the Scriptures. Each layer becomes deeper and more intense than the last. Digging deeper and deeper into these four levels of understanding is like digging through the layers of an onion. Each layer gets deeper and more intense than the last.

Pashat (Simple). The literal, simple, basic meaning of the text; understanding Scripture in its natural, normal sense using the customary meanings of the words being used. The pashat is the keystone of Scripture understanding. If we discard the pashat we lose any real chance of an accurate understanding. We are left with a no-hold-barred game of pure imagination in which we are no longer objectively deriving meaning from Scripture (exegesis), but are subjectively reading meaning into the Scriptures (eisegesis).

Some rules to remember:

1-When an inanimate object is used to describe a living being, the statement is figurative (e.g., Prov. 18:10 — "The name of YHWH is a strong tower..."; Isa. 5:7).

2-When life and action are attributed to an inanimate object the statement is figurative (e.g. Isa. 55:12 — "the trees of the field shall clap their hands"; Zech. 5:1-3).

3-When an expression is out of character with the thing described, the statement is figurative (e.g., Psa. 17:8 — "Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of your wings...").

REMEZ (hint)

 The implied meaning of the text. On the remez level details in the text are often regarded as implying a deeper truth than that conveyed by it pashat meaning. In many cases a corollary would be a remez understanding.

•In Ex. 21:26-27 we are told of our liability regarding eyes and]. By the remez understanding we know that his liability also applies to other parts of the body as well.

•Prov. 20:10 deals with different weights and different measures, both of which are an abomination to YHWH. The peshat interpretation here would be concerned with dealings between merchants. The remez interpretation goes beyond this implying that fairness and honesty in one's dealings in all areas of life is necessary.

Some Rules Used to Find Remez

Remez is a method of textual interpretation long used by Jewish students. The student's mind is set in the mode of "search". He needs to look for "…a hint, a symbol, or something hidden" in a specific word or passage, that is connective in types. Does a word or phrase really have a second meaning different from it's literal meaning? The following rules are some that the reader will draw on as he searches and finds remez:

1.   Look to Israel as the signs and symbols Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 8:18; Devarim (Deuteronomy) 28:46. Such functions as history, holy days, Temple construction, objects, and the like.
2.   Look for a redeemer (Messiah) as well as anti-Messiah types.
3.   Examine numbers as symbols to convey more information.
4.   Examine words used as metaphors, e.g., bread as Bread of Life, water as Living Water.
5.   Determine the Hebrew meaning of people's, place names, tribes, etc. These are usually proper nouns, commonly found in Gesenius Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the OT.
6.   Note the role of the good women (faithful) vs. the bad women (unfaithful – harlot, prostitute, or whore).
7.   Look for the allegorical story contained TaNaK to those found in the Apostolic Writings.
8.   Look for an adversary in the stories.
9.   Closely examine the true definition of words in Scripture, especially figures of speech.
10.   Note that the stories are types of "… what has been before, will be again" Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 1:9-10
11.   Correct translations of Hebrew and Greek text is essential to be able to find symbols.
12.   Examine short stories and parables as conveying a second coming (Kingdom) message.

DRASH (search)

This is the allegorical, typological (antetypes and types) or homiletical application of Scripture. On the drash

level creativity is used to search the text in relation to the rest of Scriptures, other literature, or life itself in such a way as to develop an allegorical, typological or homiletical application of the text. This process often involves eisegesis (reading ideas into the text) of the text, but should be constrained by having some foundation in sound exegesis, as well.

Drash can involve taking two or unrelated verses of Scripture and combining them to create a verse with a third meaning. This is called sermonizing or homiletics.

The term *midrash* generally refers to a commentary which is built upon drash understanding.

Some rules to remember :

1-A drash understanding can not be used to strip a passage of its pashat meaning, nor may any such understanding contradict the pashat meaning of any other passage.

2-Scripture will interpret Scripture. Scriptures themselves will define the components of an allegory.

•The Parable of the Sower: Mt. 13:3-9 gives the parable of the seed. Here Scripture itself defines the components of an allegory (vv. 18-23); i.e. defines itself in a drash sense.
•Rev. 1:12-16 mentions seven candlesticks and seven stars. Verse 20 tell us what they allegorically represent.

•Rev. 17:2-8 mentions seven heads, seven mountains, a beast with ten horns, a woman and waters. Verses 9-18 explain what all these elements refer to.

3-The primary competence of an allegory represent specific realities. We should limit ourselves to these primary components when understanding the text.

Examples of Drash

•Mt. 2:14-15 gives a drash understanding of Hos. 11:1. In Hoseah the pashat meaning of *son* is referring to Israel. However, Mt. 2:14-15 allegorically likens Messiah to Israel.

•Rom. 5:14 (14-21 gives a drash understanding of Gen. 3:1-24 comparing Adam to Messiah.

•"Puffed up" in 1 Cor. 4:6 implies a drash understanding of unleavened bread (See Ex. 12).

•Gal 4:24 (21-31) gives a drash understanding of Gen. 17-22 comparing Sarah and Isaac with the Torah and comparing Hagar and Ishmael with the *under the law* heresy.

•Col. 2:17 indicates a drash level meaning to the Hebrew festivals (moedim).

•Heb. 8:5 gives a drash understanding which compares the Levitical priesthood with the priesthood of Messiah.

•Heb. 9:9, 24 gives a drash on the Tabernacle which compares the Tabernacle with the heavenly Holy of Holies.
•In Rom. 9:7 Paul takes "seed" to mean Isaac, Abraham's son (the peshat interpretation); In Gal. 3:16 he midrashicly applies "seed" to Yeshua; In Rom. 3:13 Paul uses "seed" to refer to Abraham's physical seed, in verse 16 his spiritual seed.

•Heb. 10:1 gives a drash understanding which compares elements of the Torah with the death of Messiah.

•Heb. 11:19 gives a drash understanding of the events of Gen. 22:1f.

•1 Pet. 3:21 gives a drash understanding of the events in Gen. 6-9.

Sᴏᴅ (hidden):

This level of understanding the Scripture is the hidden, secret or mystical meaning of a text. First Corinthians 2:7-16 (especially verse 7) alludes to this level of understanding.

•Yeshua's words in Jn. 6:54-56 about eating his flesh and drinking his blood can yield both a drash and a sod interpretation.

•Jacob's dream of the ladder to heaven in Gen. 28:10-22 is highly mystical in its understanding.

•The book of Revelation is full of mystical, hidden or secret understandings: *the dragon, the whore of Babylon, 666, New Jerusalem, etc*.

The Seven Rules of Hillel (Rules of Biblical Interpretation)

Rabbi Hillel (the Great) was perhaps the most notable Jewish (Pharisee) Rabbi who lived before and during the youth of Yeshua. He founded and was the head of the Pharisaic rabbinical School of Hillel. Many of his teachings and sayings were taught by Yeshua and the early Messianic believers. His grandson and the latter leader of the School of Hillel was the same Gamaliel mentioned in Acts 5:34-39 who spoke in defense of the early Messianic believers. He was the same rabbi who taught Paul (Acts 22:3). The Seven Rules of Hillel pre-existed Hillel, (we see them used in the Tenach) but Hillel was the first to write them down. Paul would have been taught these rules of biblical interpretation by Gamaliel. According to Trimm, upon examining Paul's writings we see that they are filled with usages of Hillel's Rules. It would appear that the Seven Rules of Hillel are at least part of what Paul was speaking of when he spoke of "rightly dividing the Word of Truth" in 2 Timothy 2:15. Now let's look at these rules.

•**The First Rule of Hillel** —*Kol V'Khomer (Light and Heavy)* **or** *a fortiori (i.e., for a still stronger reason; even more certain; all the more)***:**

The Kol v'Khomer thought-form is used to make an argument from lesser weight based on one of greater weight. It may be expressed in the following manner:

If X is true of Y then how much mor X must be true of Z (where Z is of greater weight than Y)

The conclusion of a kol v'khomer argument is often, but not always, signaled by a phrase like *how much more...* There are several examples of kol v'khomer in the Tenach:

-Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner (Prov. 11:31).
-If you have run with the footmen and thy have wearied you, then how can you contend with horses (Jer. 12:5).
-See also Deut. 31:27; 1 Sam. 23:3; Jer. 12:5; Ezek. 15:5; Est. 9:12.

Examples of kol v'khomer in the Brit Chadasha of Yeshua and Paul using this argument:

> -If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the Torah of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with me because I made a man completely will on the Sabbath? (Jn. 7:23)

> -What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath (Mt. 12:11-12). See also Mt. 6:26, 30; Mt. 7:11; Mt. 10:25; Jn. 15:18-20; Mt. 12:12; Jn. 7:23.

> -Examples in Paul's writings: Rom. 5:8-9, 10, 15, 17, 11:12, 24; 1 Cor. 9:11-12; 12:22; 2 Cor. 3:7-9,11; Phil. 1:16; 2:12; Heb. 2:2-3; 9:13-14; 10:28-29; 12:9, 25

•The Second Rule of Hillel — *G'zerah Shavah (Equivalence of Expressions)*:

An analogy is made between two separate texts on the basis of a similar phrase, or root. This involves using information from one passage to assist in interpreting another passage.

Tenach example:

> By comparing 1 Sam. 1:10 to Jud. 13:5 use the phrase "no razor shall touch his head" we may conclude that Samuel, like Samson, was a nazarite.

Brit Chadasha example:

> In Hebrews 3:6 to 4:13 Paul compares Ps. 95:7-11 to Heb. 3:7-11 and Gen. 2:2 to Heb. 4:4 based on the words *works* and *day*/*today* (*today*) in Hebrew means literally *the day*. Paul users this exegesis to conclude that there will be 6,000 years of this world followed by a 1,000 year Shabbat (Millennial) rest.

•The Third Rule of Hillel — *Binyan ab mikathub echad (Building of the Father From One Text)*:

One explicit passage serves as a premise or starting point so as to constitute a rule (father) for all similar passages or cases.

Brit Chadasha example:

> In the Book of Hebrews (9:11-22) Paul creates a rule from Exodus 24:8 (Heb. 9:20) that *blood* is required in the making of a covenant. Since blood was required in making the Mosaic Covenant, Paul argues that blood is required in the renewing of the Covenant or the Renewed Covenant ("New Testament") (See. Jer. 31:31-34).

•The Fourth Rule of Hillel — *Binyb ab mishene kethubim (Building of the Father From Two or More Text)*:

Two texts or provisions in a text serve as a premise for a general conclusion.

Tenach example:

> Exodus 21:26-27 speaks of only eyes and teeth, however by use of the fourth rule of Hillel we can recognize that the provision applies to other body parts as well.

Brit Chadasha example:

> Paul , in order to build a rule that the Messiah is of a higher order than angels cites In Heb. 1:5-14 the following Tenach passages:
>
> > Ps. 2:7 in Heb. 1:5
> > 2 Sam. 7:14 in Heb. 1:5
> > Deut. 32:   ; Ps. 97:7; Neh. 9:6 in Heb. 1:6
> > Ps. 104:4 in Heb. 1:7
> > Ps. 45:6-7 in Heb. 1:8-9
> > Ps. 102:25-27 in Heb. 1:10-12
> > Ps. 110:1 in Heb. 1:13

•The Fifth Rule of Hillel — *Kelal uferat (The General and the Particular)*:

A general statement is first made and is followed by a single remark which particularizes the general principle. When a general principle precedes a specific example it is said that there is nothing in the general which is not in the specific. The general principle adds nothing, it simply provides the framework of logic. One example from the Tanach is in the Torah command regarding loses:

> In like manner shall you do withy his ass and so shall you do with his raiment and with any lost thing of your brother's.

The appearance of the general principle implies that the details given are just examples, and that the precept actually applies to all types of losses, without exception.

Brit Chadasha example:

> Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! which tithe mint, and rue, and cumin, and have neglected those things which are weightiest in the Torah: judgment, loving-kindness and trust. Those things ought you to have done, neither to have rejected these (Mt. 23:23).

We can determine by using this rule that judgment, loving-kindness and trust are just examples and that the precept presented here applies to all of the "things which are weightiest in the Torah."

•The Sixth Rule of Hillel — *Kayotze bo mimekom akhar (Analogy Made From Another Passage)*:

Two passages may seem to conflict until a third resolves the apparent conflict.

Tenach examples:

> Lev. 1:1 "out of the tent of meeting" and Ex. 25:22 "from above the ark of the covenant between the cherubim" seem to disagree until we examine Num. 7:89 where we learn that Moses entered the tent of meeting to hear YHWH speaking from between the cherubim.

> 1 Chron. 27:1 explains the numerical disagreement between 2 Sam. 24:9 and 1 Chron. 21:5.

Brit Chadasha examples:

Paul shows that the following Tenach passages seem to conflict:

> "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17 and Hab. 2:4) with "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10; Ps. 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Ecc. 7:20) and "[Elohim] will render to each one according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:6; Ps. 62:12; Prov. 24:12) "Blessed are those whole lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man whom YHWH shall not impute sin" (Rom. 4:7-8; Ps. 32:1-2). Paul resolves the apparent conflict by citing Gen. 15:6 (in Rom. 4:3, 22): "Abraham believed YHWH and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

Thus Paul resolves the apparent conflict by showing that under certain circumstances, belief/faith/trust (same word in Hebrew) can substitute for righteousness/being just (same word in Hebrew).

•The Seventh Rule of Hillel — *Davar hilmad me'anino (Explanation Obtained From Contest)*:

Some pointers:

> 1. Who is speaking?
> 2. Who is being spoken to?
> 3. Obtaining context from poetic forms.
> 4. Use the overall context to understand the passage.

Example:

> Gal. 5:2 says, "...if you be circumcised, Messiah shall profit you nothing." Christians take this out of context.
>
> Question: Who is speaking?
>
> Answer: Paul
>
> Question: Who is being spoken to? Who does *you* refer to?
>
> Answer is found in Gal. 4:21. "You desire to be under law." *Under law* is a term Paul uses to describer a false teaching that was never true; it does not refer to the "Old Testament" system, but to a false religious system that twists Torah and turns it into a works-based legalistic system.
>
> Thus the *you* in Gal. 5:2 refers to a group of people who were wanting to enter a false theology and it does not refer to you and me.

Hebrew Poetry: A Key to Context

One third of the Bible is poetry. There is a great deal of poetry to be found even in the Brit Chadasha. Did you know that? Let's take a brief look at the various forms of Hebrew poetry.

According to Trimm one of the major forms of Semitic poetry is called *poetic parallelism*. This is a sort of thought-rhyme with a near one-to-one relationship of both form and concepts between successive poetic lines.

This type of poetry takes on five forms which we will address one at a time.

Being familiar with the forms of Hebrew poetry can be very helpful in obtaining context and in using the seventh rule of Hillel, writes Trimm.

Synonymous Parallelism: In this form the same concept is expressed in successive lines so that the second line simply repeats the meaning of the first in slightly different words (i.e., saying the same thing but in a different way). Examples:

-Job 3:11-12 Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck?

-Job 4:17 Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?

-Ps. 2:4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.

-Ps. 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

-Isa.. 1:3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib...

-Amos 5:24 But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

-Mt. 7:7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

-Lk. 6:27-28 Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

Antithetic Parallelism. In this poetic form the concept express in the second line contrasts and emphasizes the concept of the first line. Examples:

-Job 42:5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.

-Ps. 1:6 For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

-Ps. 34:10 The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.

-Prov. 10:1 A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

-Prov. 15:1 A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

-Mt. 7:17-18 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Synthetic/Formal Parallelism. Synthetic parallelism, sometimes called *formal parallelism*, does not contain repetition in different words, nor contrasting statements. In synthetic parallelism the concept of the first line is

carried further in a progressive flow of thought and completed in the second and succeeding lines. Example:

-Ps. 1:3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

-Ps. 14:2 The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.

-Job 4:19-21 All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me. My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth. Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me.

-Mt. 9:14-17 Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast. No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved. (In this poetic parallelism we see that *new piece of cloth=new wine=fasting* and by contrast *old garment=old wineskin=Messiah present with us*.)

Climactic/Step Parallelism. This type of poetic parallelism combines the qualities of synonymous and synthetic parallelism. In climactic parallelism the second line echoes the concept or repeats part of the first and also adds to it an element which carries forward or completes the meaning which is the climax of the whole.

-Ps. 29:1 Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

-Mt. 6:6 thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

-Lk. 9:48 And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me...

-Jn. 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Chiasmus. This is an inverted type of parallelism. Parallelism is turned a round so that the second line follows in reverse order. Chiasmus may appear in the various forms of parallelism. Example:

-Isa. 55:8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

-Mt. 10:39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

-Mt. 5:12-14 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

-1 Cor. 12:12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.