Domenico Feti (1589-1623) Parable of the Lost Drachma

How To Interpret Figurative Language and Studies In Biblical Figures Of Speech

Rules To Identify Figurative Language

• When context indicates it.
• When literal sense entails a contradiction.
• When literal sense entails an impossibility.
• When literal commands demand wrong, restrict good.
• When a passage declares itself to be figurative.
• When definite is put for indefinite.
• When stated in mockery (ridicule, sarcasm, etc.)
• Use your common sense.

see HTSB #10-Part 1
Rules To Interpret Figurative Language

• Let the author give the interpretation.
• The interpretation must be contextual.
• Compare figurative and literal accounts of same topics.
• Remember the likenesses of comparison.
• Remember historical, biographical, practical information.

see HTSB #10-Part 1
• Inspired interpretation is definitive.
• Don’t demand endless points of analogy.
• Figures of speech vary in meaning according to context.
• Figurative language may explain figurative language.
• Types and antitypes are often viewed together.
Types of Figurative Language

• Parable
• Fable
• Simile
• Similitude
• Metaphor
• Allegory
• Metonymy

• Metonymy of The Cause
• Metonymy of The Effect
• Metonymy of The Subject
• Metonymy of The Adjunct
• Synecdoche
• Proverb
• Irony

see HTSB #10-12
Types of Figurative Language

- Sarcasm
- Hyperbole
- Apostrophe
- Personification
- Interrogation
- Prolepsis
- Parallelism
- Synonymous Parallelism
- Antithetical Parallelism
- Synthetic Parallelism

see HTSB #10-12
Rules For Interpreting Symbols

• Follow author’s interpretation.
• Compare other symbols interpreted by divine authority.
• Compare/start with clear language on the same subject.
• Names of symbols are to be understood literally.
• Remember similarity between symbol and thing signified.
• What was its meaning for its intended audience?

see HTSB #12
Rules For Interpreting Types

- Consider original meaning of the word.
- Remember types ≠ antitypes.
- Usually given for single purpose.
- Must foretell something.
- Must have been so intended.
- Scripture should interpret if possible.

see HTSB #12
Rules For Interpreting Types

see HTSB #12

• They have not descanted upon all types.
• Similarity between type and antitype must be apparent.
• Types were real persons or things.
• Antitype always superior.
• Figurative language is used in presenting types.
• Rules for symbols will apply.
Kinds of Types

see HTSB #12

• Persons
• Things
• Institutions
• Offices
• Conduct
• Events
• Places