

# How Should we Interpret the Bible?

The Proper Attitude Toward Scripture

# Major Landmarks on Which Most Agree

- God
- Jesus
- Apostles
- Bible as God's word

Yet there are so many different beliefs and practices!

Is it Possible to Understand the Bible Alike?

**Ephesians 5:17** – “Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”

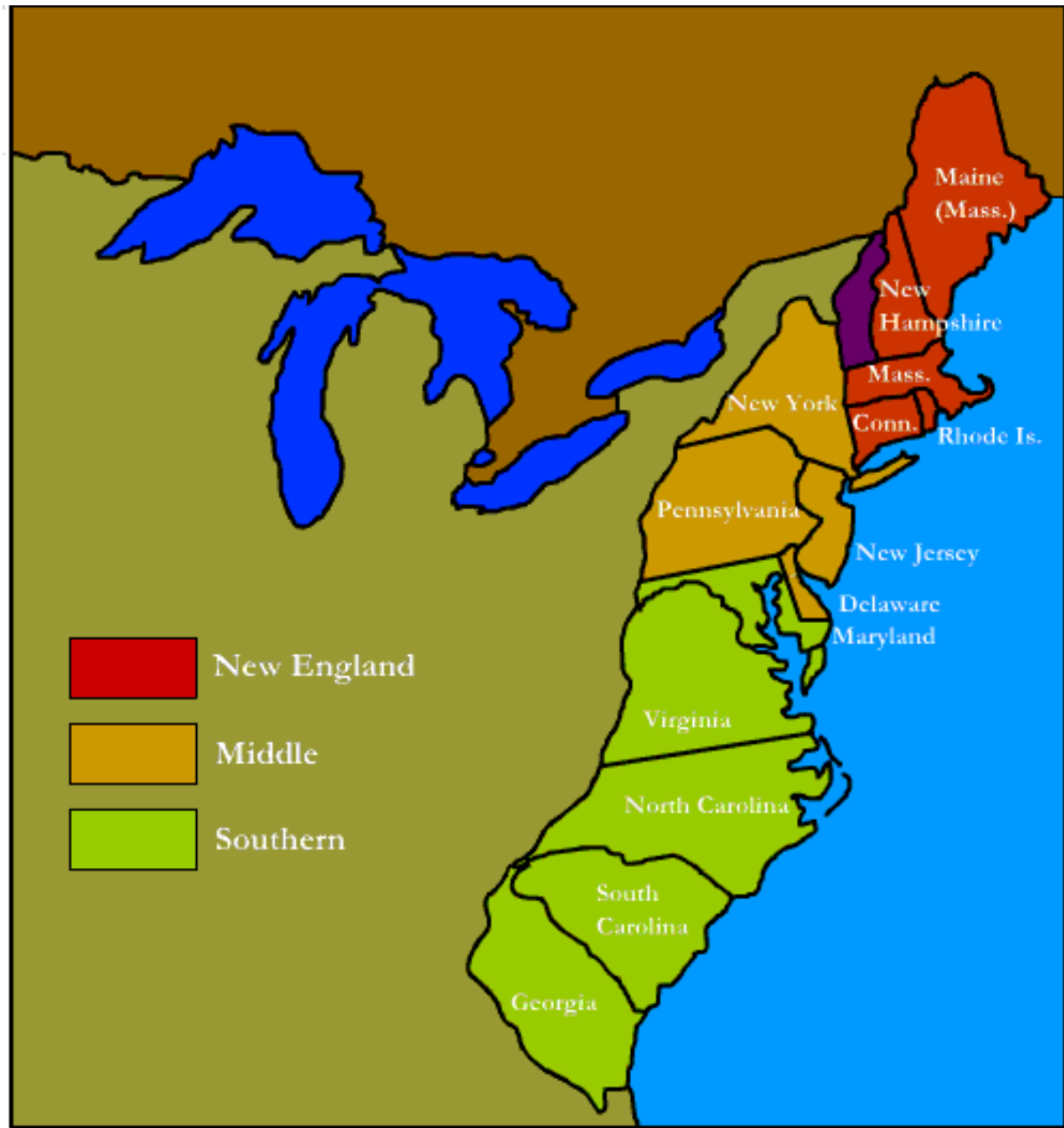
# Is it Possible to Interpret the Bible Alike?

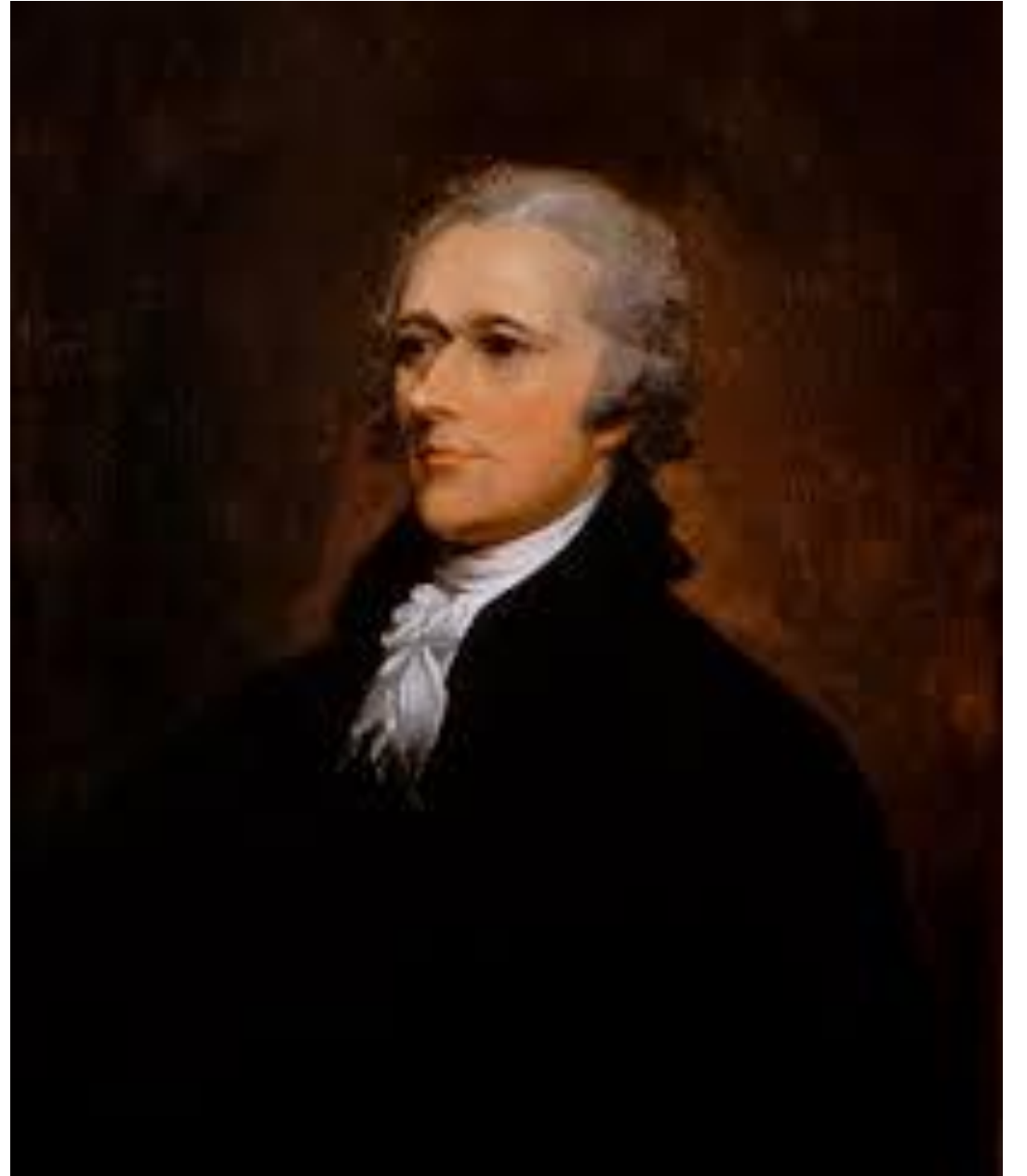
**Interpretation** – producing in the mind of the reader exactly what was in the mind of the author

But most religious differences are not caused by different interpretations of scripture

# The Real Problem is Different Attitudes regarding Scripture

- Strict Construction vs. Loose Construction
- Example from US History





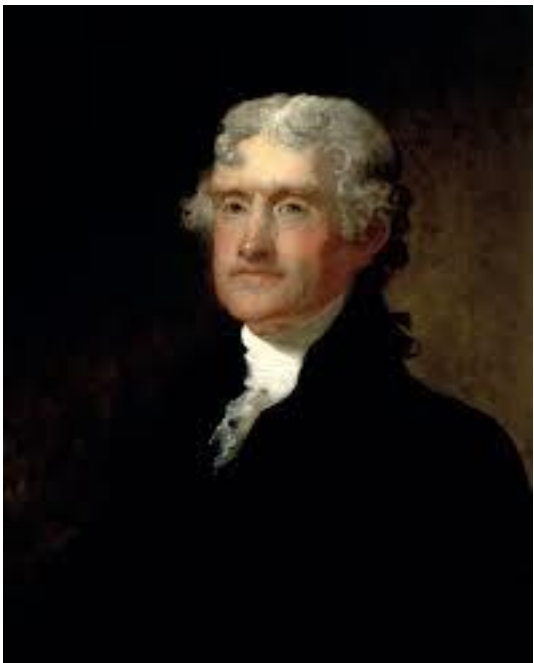
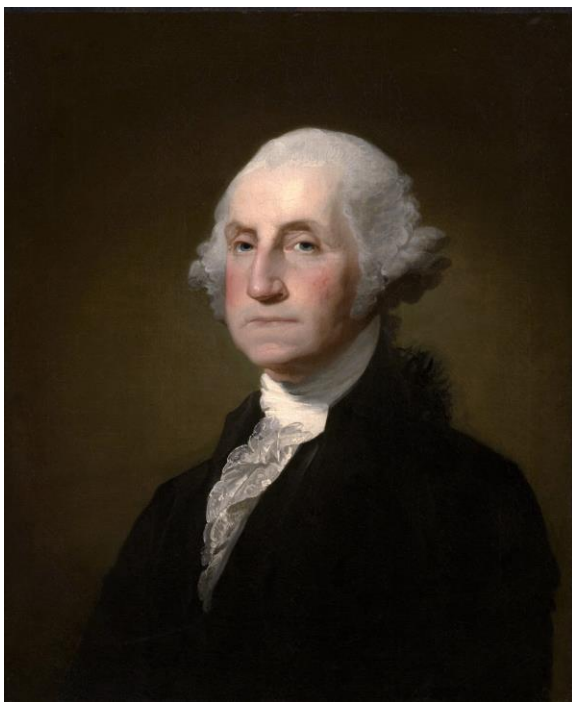


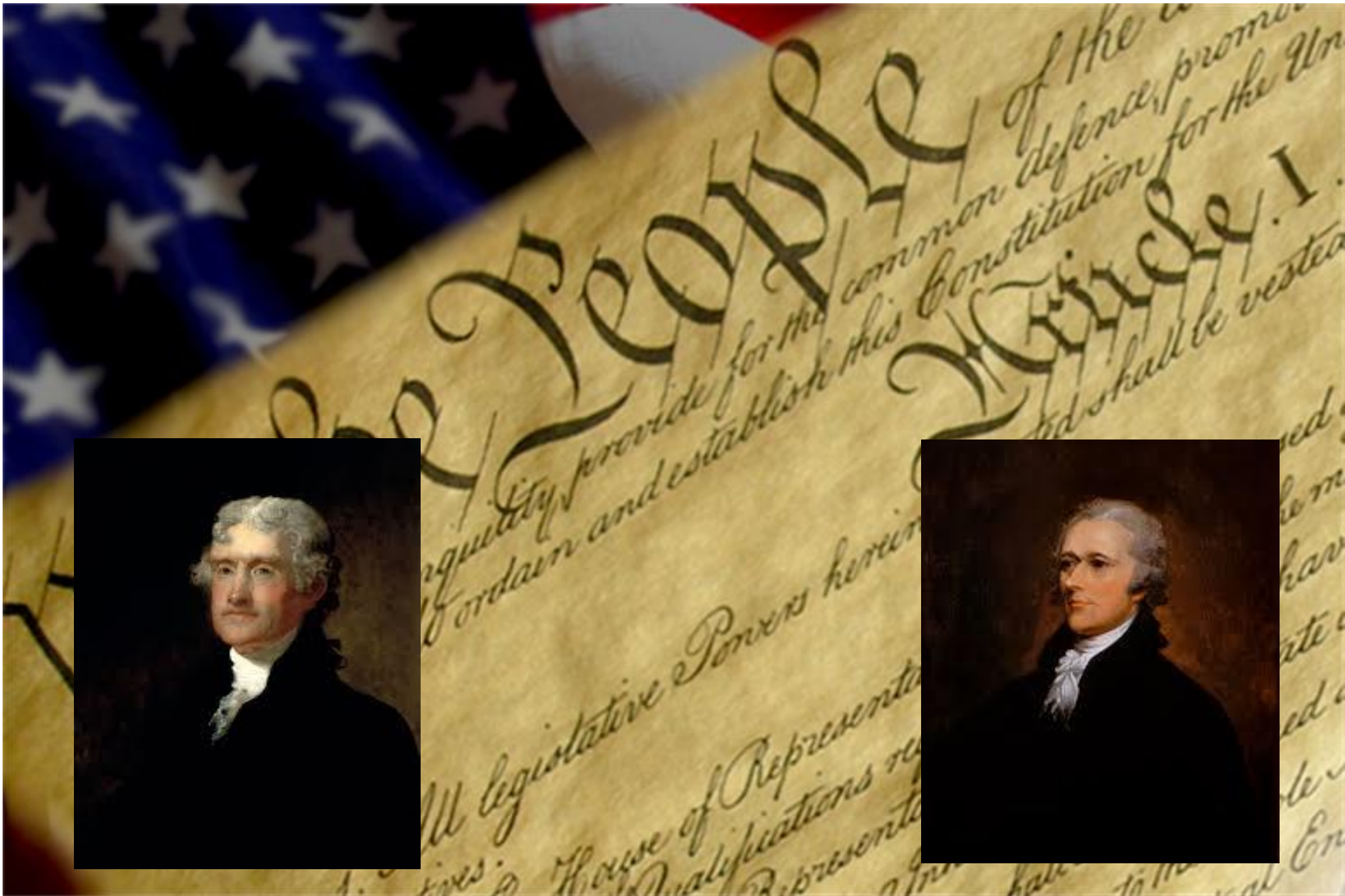
# WE THE PEOPLE

insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article I. Section 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Representatives chosen every second Year by the People of the several States; and the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch in each State shall be those requisite for Inhabitants of that State. The Electors in each State shall have the Qualification requisite for Electors in the most numerous Branch in that State. Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Year or more, excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons, all Persons above the Age of sixteen Years, in each State, Territory, Possession, and District. The Number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty Thousand Persons, but each State shall have at least one Representative, and until 1840, not more than three. Electors in each State shall have the Qualification requisite for Electors in the most numerous Branch in that State. No State shall have more Representatives than its equal Number of Electors. No Representative shall hold Office longer than seven Years, and no Person shall be Representative who shall not, when elected, have seven Years Residence in the United States; and no Person shall be Representative who shall not, when elected, be seven Years of Age, and fourteen Years a Citizen of the United States, and seven Years a Citizen of that State in which he shall be chosen. The Electors in each State shall have the Qualification requisite for Electors in the most numerous Branch in that State. No State shall have more Representatives than its equal Number of Electors. No Representative shall hold Office longer than seven Years, and no Person shall be Representative who shall not, when elected, have seven Years Residence in the United States; and no Person shall be Representative who shall not, when elected, be seven Years of Age, and fourteen Years a Citizen of the United States, and seven Years a Citizen of that State in which he shall be chosen.







# Pence: Trump will nominate a 'strict constructionist' to the court

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## Brett Kavanaugh's nomination is a victory for 'originalists'

*Jill Abramson*



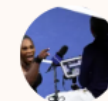
Donald Trump's court pick belongs to a group of conservative legal thinkers who believe in a strict, textual interpretation of the constitution. That's troubling

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Tue 10 Jul 2018 09:45 EDT



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# Two Attitudes toward the Constitution

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- Strict construction: what it does not permit, it forbids
- Loose construction: what it does not forbid, it permits

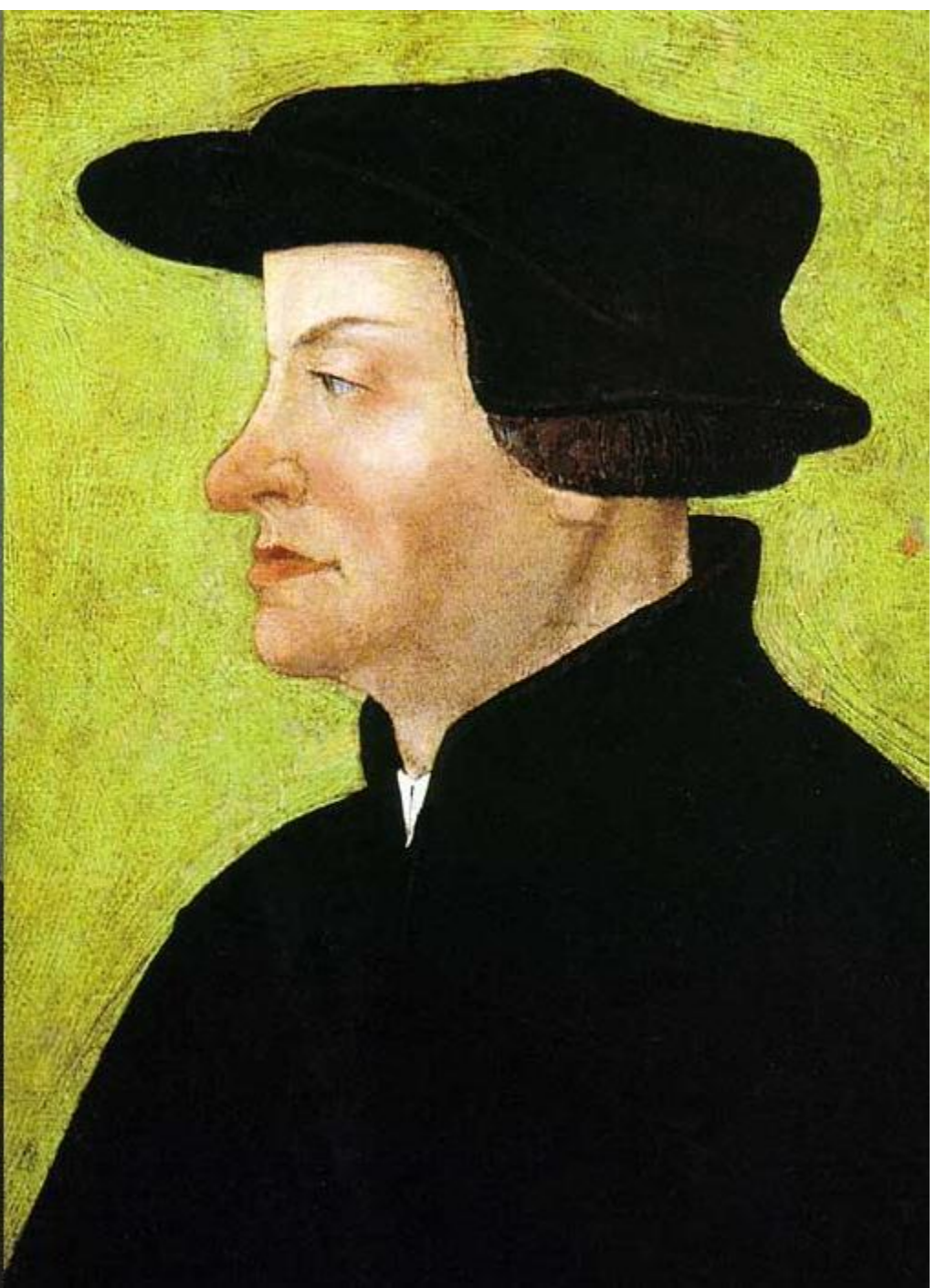


# Two Attitudes toward the Bible

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- Strict construction: what it does not permit, it forbids
- Loose construction: what it does not forbid, it permits





The Churches of Christ have traditionally held to a strict construction of the Scriptures

“Where the Bible speaks, we speak. Where the Bible is silent, we are silent.”

# Strict Construction Explains Many Differences

- The name we wear



## Acts 11:26 (NKJV)

And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

# Strict Construction Explains Many Differences

- The name we wear
- Jesus is the only head of the church

# Colossians 1:18 (NKJV)

And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

# Strict Construction Explains Many Differences

- The name we wear
- Jesus is the only head of the church
- Immersion for baptism

## Romans 6:4 (NKJV)

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

# Strict Construction Explains Many Differences

- The name we wear
- Jesus is the only head of the church
- Immersion for baptism
- Baptism limited to believers

## Mark 16:16 (NKJV)

He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

# Strict Construction Explains Many Differences

- The name we wear
- Jesus is the only head of the church
- Immersion for baptism
- Baptism limited to believers
- Music in worship limited to singing



# Ephesians 5:19 (NKJV)

speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

# Strict Construction Explains Many Differences

- The name we wear
- Jesus is the only head of the church
- Immersion for baptism
- Baptism limited to believers
- Music in worship limited to singing
- Autonomous local congregations

## Acts 14:23 (NKJV)

So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

# Strict Construction Explains Many Differences

- The name we wear
- Jesus is the only head of the church
- Immersion for baptism
- Baptism limited to believers
- Music in worship limited to singing
- Autonomous local congregations
- Responsibility for evangelism

# 1 Timothy 3:15 (NKJV)

but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

# Strict Construction Explains Many Differences

- The name we wear
- Jesus is the only head of the church
- Immersion for baptism
- Baptism limited to believers
- Music in worship limited to singing
- Autonomous local congregations
- Responsibility for evangelism
- Work of the church limited to evangelism, benevolence and edification

## Ephesians 4:11–12 (NKJV)

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, **12** for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

# Which Attitude Should we take?

- Strict construction: what it does not permit, it forbids
- Loose construction: what it does not forbid, it permits





# How do we decide what our attitude toward Scripture should be?



Traditional position of the Churches of Christ

# Which Attitude Should we take?

- Old Testament



# Deuteronomy 4:2 (NKJV)

You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

## Exodus 25:9, 40 (NKJV)

**9** According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it.

**40** And see to it that you make them according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.

## Exodus 39:43 (NKJV)

Then Moses looked over all the work, and indeed they had done it; as the LORD had commanded, just so they had done it. And Moses blessed them.

## 2 Samuel 7:1–7 (NKJV)

Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies all around, **2** that the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains.” **3** Then Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you.”

## 2 Samuel 7:1–7 (NKJV)

**4** But it happened that night that the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying, **5** “Go and tell My servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Would you build a house for Me to dwell in? **6** For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in a tent and in a tabernacle. **7** Wherever I have moved about with all the children of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?’ ” ’

## Leviticus 10:1–2 (NKJV)

Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. **2** So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.



# 1 Chronicles 15:12–13 (NKJV)

He said to them, “You are the heads of the fathers’ houses of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, you and your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel to the place I have prepared for it. **13** For because you did not do it the first time, the LORD our God broke out against us, because we did not consult Him about the proper order.”

# Why We Should be Strict Constructionists

- Old Testament
- New Testament



# Matthew 4:4 (NKJV)

But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’ ”

# From Heaven or Men?

**Mark 11:30** - The baptism of John—was it from **heaven** or from **men**? Answer Me.”

**Matthew 7:21** - “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of **heaven**, but he who does the will of My Father in **heaven**.

**Matthew 15:9** - And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines **the commandments of men.**’ ”

# 1 Corinthians 4:6 (NKJV)

Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.

## 2 Timothy 3:16–17 (NKJV)

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, **17** that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

## Hebrews 7:12–14 (NKJV)

For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. **13** For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. **14** For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.

# Why We Should be Strict Constructionists

- Old Testament
- New Testament
- Jesus is king





# Why We Should be Strict Constructionists

- Old Testament
- New Testament
- Jesus is king
- Faith requires it



# Why We Should be Strict Constructionists

- Old Testament
- New Testament
- Jesus is king
- Faith requires it
- Love requires it



## 2 John 9 (NKJV)

He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.

## 2 John 9 (NKJV)

Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.

“He Who Abides in the Doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son”

- The name we wear
- Head of the church
- Music in worship
- Autonomy of local congregations
- Responsibility for evangelism
- Limitations of the work of the church

“He Who Abides in the Doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son”

- Make a decision for Christ
- Raise your hand and we will pray for you
- Accept Jesus in your heart as Lord
- Pray the sinner’s prayer

“He Who Abides in the Doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son”

“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins” – Acts 2:38