“literal interpretation” frequently and erroneously bares the allegation that it does not allow for any type of figurative language. This is a gross misrepresentation.

“go jump in a lake”
“drove me up a wall”
“get outta here”
al'le-gö-ry (-gö-ri), n.; pl. -gies (-gëz). [L. allegoria, Gr. ἀλληγορία, description of one thing under the image of another; ἄλλος other (see ELSE) + a form akin to Gr. ἀνθρώπος to speak in the assembly, harangue, ἄνθρωπος place of assembly, fr. ἄνθρωπος to assemble; cf. F. alliger.] 1. The representation by means of a figurative story or narrative of something metaphorically suggested, but not expressly stated. An allegory is a prolonged metaphor. Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," Spenser's "Faerie Queene," and Dante's "Divine Comedy" are celebrated examples of the allegory. See FABLE. Syn. 2. An instance of such representation; anything which represents by suggestive resemblance; an emblem.
INTERPRETING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

• Literal vs. allegorical
• Guidelines for figurative language
• Common Errors
• “I am” figures of Jesus
• John 7:37 – water figures spirit
• Figurative language misuse satirical example
• John 6 examples
• John 3; Matthew 5
• Similitudes in the Bible
• Symbolism in Revelation
• Parables of Jesus
• Allegory & Paul
• Creation and Days
• Ruth & Boaz
• Ephesians 2: dead
• 1 Peter 3:21
• Companion Bible
literal (litˈər əl), adj. 1. following the words of the original as closely as possible: a literal translation. 2. (of a person) tending to construe words in the strict sense or in an unimaginative way. 3. in accordance with, involving, or being the primary or strict meaning of a word or words; not figurative or metaphorical. 4. true to fact; not exaggerated: a literal statement. 5. being actually such, without exaggeration or inaccuracy: literal bankruptcy. 6. of or pertaining to the letters of the alphabet. 7. of the nature of letters. 8. expressed by letters. [ME < LL litterālis. See LETTER₁, -AL₁] —litˈer·al·ness, n.
al·le·go·ry (alˈə gōrē, -gôrˈē), n., pl. -ries. 1. a representation of an abstract or spiritual meaning through concrete or material forms; figurative treatment of one subject under the guise of another. 2. a symbolic narrative. 3. emblem (def. 3). [late ME allegorie < Gk allēgoria < allēgorein so to speak as to imply something other. See ALLO-, AGORA]
Origen Adamantius (181-254)

“a great translator”
“ahead of his time”
“the first great scientific exegete”
“a scientific collator of Scripture”
“the first great Bible scholar”
"a monument to misguided industry- John C. Wevers
“a harmonizer of science and culture with the gospel”
“most brilliant Christian mind in the world at the time”
“Tremendous learning and depth of perception”

- 7 Stenographers
- 7 copyists
- Studied under Ammonius Saccas, founder of Neo-Platonism
- Gnostic school of Philo and Clement (non-Christian)
- Gnostic Library of Ambrosius
- Persecution made him magically “error free”
- Self-castrated

Allegorical Interpretation of the Bible
- Baptismal regeneration
- No Heaven, No hell
- No new birth
- No Blood Atonement
- No inspired word
- Platonic, Philonic, Stoic
- Reincarnation
- Platonic conception of God (monade)
- Adam and Eve not real people
- Unbaptized infants are unsaved
- Judith & Tobit part of Canon
- Protological Ontology rather than Christian Ontology which is Eschatological
- Universalist (eventually)
- Apokatastasis (Hindu/Brahman)
Literal Interpretation and figurative language

Interpret Literally unless...
- There is an indicator in the text that the language is figurative, spiritual, or symbolic.
- Known figures of speech are employed.
- The passage MUST be figurative, and makes no sense otherwise.

Common Errors when interpreting figuratively:
- When prejudicial doctrinal requirements demand it.
  - Millennial Reign of Christ
  - Prophecies regarding Israel and its Restoration
- When the reader does not like or agree with what is being said.
- Capitulation to some type of widely believed information set (age of the earth).
Literal Interpretation and figurative language

Indicators of Error presuming figurative language:
- When the no hermeneutical principle can produce the same results elsewhere (John 10:15 vs. Gal. 2:20)
- Glaring inconsistencies (John 6:54 vs. Rev. 20:6).
  - John 6:54 v. the fact that nobody ever ate Jesus at any time before or after the crucifixion and resurrection.
John 6:35 (KJV)
35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

John 9:5 (KJV)
5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

John 10:9 (KJV)
9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

John 10:11 (KJV)
11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

John 15:1 (KJV)
1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.
Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness.

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:
John 7:37-39 (KJV)

37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)
John 6:54 (KJV)
54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

Matthew 26:26 (KJV)
26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

1 Corinthians 12:27 (KJV)
27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Galatians 5:15 (KJV)
15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.
John 6:54 (KJV)
54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:47 (KJV)
47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

These are not the same, but they both give a "formula" for eternal life. Which of these matches many other passages of scripture? Scripture does not contradict. So if one of these is figurative, which one is it?
John 6:57 (KJV)
57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

John 6:63 (KJV)
63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.
John 3:4-6 (KJV)

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?
5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
Matthew 5:29-30 (KJV)
29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.
30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.
Hosea 12:10 (KJV)
10 I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.

Romans 1:20 (KJV)
20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:
Revelation 17:3 (KJV)
3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

Revelation 17:7 (KJV)
7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

Revelation 17:9-13 (KJV)
9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.
10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.
11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.
12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.
13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.
Parables are called “parables” and the meaning is often provided. There is no reason to assume something is a parable or an allegory that isn’t labeled as such.

Matthew 13:3 (KJV)

3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;

Matthew 13:18-19 (KJV)

18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.  
19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.
A historic narrative being employed as an allegory or pattern does not mean that the historic narrative is ONLY an allegory in the sense that it didn’t happen.

**Galatians 4:24-26 (KJV)**

24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.

25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.
Does a “day” mean a “day,” or something else, like an epoch or an era or an age which may have been millions of years?

**Genesis 1:5 (KJV)**
5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

**Genesis 1:8 (KJV)**
8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.
The word "day" (Hebrew “Yom” “יּוֹם”) is understood traditionally by orthodox Jewish scholars to be a normal ordinary day, like today’s 24-hour days.

When combined with the definite article (the) and an ordinal number (first, second, third), “day” always means an ordinary day.
Turning the days into ages of millions of years each does not solve any supposed “problems.”

Third day - grass, herbs, trees, seeds
Forth day – sun, moon, stars

Were the plants waiting for millions of years for the sun to come up?

If you change the days to “figurative,” then the whole narrative has to change.
Turning the days into ages of millions of years each does not solve any supposed “problems.”

Third day -  grass, herbs, trees, seeds
Forth day – sun, moon, stars

Were the plants waiting for millions of years for the sun to come up?

If you change the days to “figurative,” then the whole narrative has to change.
If God really did create the world in 6 days, how else should he have said it to make it clear?

What language should be used if it really were done in 6 days?
Exodus 20:11 (KJV)
11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Exodus 31:17 (KJV)
17 It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.
15 Also he said, Bring the vail that thou hast upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her: and she went into the city.

16 And when she came to her mother in law, she said, Who art thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her.

17 And she said, These six measures of barley gave he me; for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother in law.

18 Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.
1 Peter 3:20-21 (KJV)

20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:
Ephesians 2:1-5 (KJV)
1 And you *hath he quickened*, who were *dead* in trespasses and sins;
2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:
3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.
4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,
5 Even when we were *dead* in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)
SAMPLE:

Ant-i'-phras-is; or, Permutation (Genesis 3:22). The use of a word or phrase in a sense opposite to its original signification.

Ant'-i-pros-o'-po-poe-i-a; or Anti-Personification (2Samuel 16:9). Persons represented as inanimate things.

Ant'-i-pto'-s-is; or, Exchange of Cases (Exodus 19:6, compare to 1Peter 2:9). One Case is put for another Case, the governing Noun being used as the Adjective instead of the Noun in regimen.

Ant-i'-stro-phe; or, Retort (Matthew 15:26,27). Turning the words of a speaker against himself.

Ant-i'-thes-is; or, Contrast (Proverbs 15:17). A setting of one phrase in contrast with another.

Ant'-o-no-ma'-si-a or, Name Change (Genesis 31:21). The putting of a proper name for a Appellative or common Noun, or the reverse.

Aph-aer'-e-sis; or, Front Cut (Jeremiah 22:24). The cutting off of a letter or syllable from the beginning of a word.

Ap'-o-di-ox'-is; or, Detestation (Matthew 16:23). An expression of feeling by way of destestation.

http://www.therain.org/appendixes/app6.html