

## How to Study the Bible – Lesson 9: Interpretation – Traps to Avoid

### Introduction

- It is impossible to apply the Scriptures until you first \_\_\_\_\_ what they mean.
- The better you understand what the Scriptures mean, the better you can \_\_\_\_\_ them.

***Psa 119.34** Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart.*

- The second major step in studying the Bible is \_\_\_\_\_.
- This is where we ask the question: What does the text \_\_\_\_\_?
- **EXAMPLE:** Philip explained the meaning of Isaiah 53 to the Ethiopian official:

***Acts 8.30–31** So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” 31 And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?”*

***Acts 8.34–35** And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.*

**1. Beware of \_\_\_\_\_ that might prevent you from properly interpreting the Scriptures.**

**A. We must remember that we live in a different \_\_\_\_\_ than the people in the Bible.**

- The Bible was written in \_\_\_\_\_ cultures than ours, using different languages than ours.
- When we read the Bible, we often try to make it \_\_\_\_\_ to our own ideas, experiences, cultures, and prior understandings of words.
- We have to seek to \_\_\_\_\_ the cultures and mindsets in which the Bible was written.

**B. We must remember that there are different types of \_\_\_\_\_ in the Bible.**

- The Bible contains reasoned arguments, historical stories, parables, poetry, proverbs, and prophecy.
- You must understand the differences between the kinds of literature that are in the Bible, or you can easily misunderstand their correct \_\_\_\_\_.

C. We must remember that sometimes we're not being very \_\_\_\_\_ when we're interpreting the Bible.

***2 Pet 3.16b*** *There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.*

- Sometimes Christians \_\_\_\_\_ about the correct interpretation of a text.
- Beware of unique interpretations of the Bible, because they are usually \_\_\_\_\_.
- Wrong interpretations of the Bible are often the result of our own \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.
- We can only expect to understand the correct meaning of a text when we work to get the correct meaning \_\_\_\_\_ the text, and not when we impose our thoughts and ideas onto the text.

2. Beware of falling into common \_\_\_\_\_ when interpreting the Scriptures.

A. We must avoid \_\_\_\_\_ the text.

- **EXAMPLE 1:** The Bible says in John 1.1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.", but if you read it as saying, "...the Word was one of the gods", then you have misread the text.
- **EXAMPLE 2:** Jesus says in John 14.6, "I am the Way", but if you read it as saying, "I am one of the Ways", then you have misread the text.
- **EXAMPLE 3:** Paul says in 1 Tim 6.10, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils.", but if you read it as saying, "Money is the root of all evil," you have misread the text.
- **EXAMPLE 4:** David says in Psalm 37.4, "Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.", but if you read it as only saying, "He will give you the desires of your heart", then you have misread the text.

**B. We must avoid \_\_\_\_\_ the text.**

***2 Pet 3.16b*** *There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.*

- It is a \_\_\_\_\_ to distort the meaning of God's Word.

***2 Cor 4.2*** *But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.*

- We must be careful and eager to learn how to interpret Scripture \_\_\_\_\_.

**C. We must avoid \_\_\_\_\_ the text.**

- Contradicting the text is even worse than distorting it, because it is calling God a \_\_\_\_\_.

***Gen 3.1–4*** *Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" 2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" 4 But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die."*

- One of Satan's favorite practices is to raise up false teachers to \_\_\_\_\_ the words of the Bible to contradict the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Bible.
- **EXAMPLES** of false teachings that misuse the words of the Bible:
  - God rewards good works and great faith with great \_\_\_\_\_.
  - It is never God's will for His children to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Before God will forgive you for your sin, you must first do some \_\_\_\_\_ good works for God.

**D. We must avoid trusting our \_\_\_\_\_ more than the clear statement of the text.**

- Sometimes Christians fail to use logic or \_\_\_\_\_ when reading the Bible.

- Some people read the Bible waiting for a special feeling to come upon them to give them special \_\_\_\_\_ into the truth that no one else has.
- Our hearts should be moved by the \_\_\_\_\_ that's revealed in the text itself!
- The meaning of the text is found \_\_\_\_\_, not in our emotional reaction to it.

***Matt 22.37*** "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

- Use your mind to accomplish the \_\_\_\_\_ of studying the Bible carefully.

***2 Tim 2.15*** Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

- If you want to interpret Scripture correctly and gain clear and correct insights, then you will have to use your \_\_\_\_\_!

E. We must avoid \_\_\_\_\_ in our own understandings of the Bible.

***Prov 16.18*** Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

- Pride makes you arrogant and \_\_\_\_\_.
- Some of the worst \_\_\_\_\_ of Scripture happen when someone thinks he has nothing else to learn about a text or a doctrine.
- The task of interpretation \_\_\_\_\_ .

### Conclusion:

- We must beware of the obstacles that \_\_\_\_\_ us from clearly understanding the Bible, such as our cultural differences and the attitude of our heart.
- We must beware of the \_\_\_\_\_ traps that we can fall in when we try to interpret the Bible, such as misreading the text or failing to use our minds.
- Our goal to try to correctly understand what the text means and what it has \_\_\_\_\_ meant.

- **Being \_\_\_\_\_ and asking the right questions will help you avoid the errors that result from bad interpretation of the Bible.**