

Introduction

- Today, we want to focus on errors to avoid when interpreting the Bible. Going to give you ten practices that you'll want to be careful to avoid when interpreting Scripture.

Ten common errors - illustrate and explain:

When interpreting the Bible, Thou Shalt Not:

1. Make the Bible Say What You Want It To Say
2. Spiritualize the Text
3. Decide on a point of doctrine without looking at all relevant texts
4. Isolate texts from their context
5. Apply promises made to Israel to other nations
6. Replace Israel with the Church
7. Pour current thinking into the Bible
8. Make supernatural experiences in Scripture normative for today
9. Dismiss a text as purely cultural because you are uncomfortable with it
10. Over-Personalize the Bible

1. Don't Make the Bible Say What You Want It To Say.

- A. Example: 1 John 2:2 says, "and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world."

2. Do not Spiritualize the Text. To spiritualize or allegorize the text is to go beyond the plain meaning of the passage in search of a deeper or hidden meaning. The danger with this method is that there are no checks on fanciful and imaginative interpretations. The only standard becomes the mind of the one doing the interpreting. Stick to the plain, intended meaning of the text.

A. Example: Isaiah and Football?

B. Example: Joel 2:23 and the “Early and Latter Rains”

C. Example: The Song of Solomon.

(1) Example: SoS 2:1, “The Rose of Sharon” and the “Lilly of the Valley”

(2) Example: SoS 2:4 “His banner over me is love”

3. Avoid the practice of proof-texting.

(1) Example: The error of “Name It and Claim It”.

- 1 John 5:14-15; 1 John 3:22; James 4:1-3.

(2) Example: The error of the Homosexual Movement.

- David and Jonathan's friendship in 1 Samuel 18:3-4; 19:1
- Leviticus 20:13; Romans 1:24- 32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; and 1 Timothy 1:9-10

4. Do not practice isolationism.

(1) Example: Matthew 18:19-20

(2) Example: James 1:5 — A promise of direct revelation?

(3) Example: Does Second Corinthians 3:6 warn against a literal interpretation?

(4) Example: Second Peter 2:20 and the loss of salvation.

5. Do not apply specific promises made to Israel to other nations. This practice is called *nationalizing*.

- For example Second Chronicles 7:14:

6. Do not replace Israel with the Church.

(1) Example: Genesis 3:14-17

(2) Example: Romans 11:25-26

7. Do not pour current thinking into Biblical texts (*embellishing*).

“Embellishing” occurs when the interpreter reads current ideas and thinking into the biblical text.

(1) Example: The Six-Day Creation (Genesis 1-2)

(2) Example: Do we need to love ourselves first in order to love others?
(Matthew 22:39; Ephesians 5:29; Matthew 22)

(3) Example: Secular psychology and the redefining of terms (Robert Schuller, , *Self-Esteem*, : *The New Reformation*)

a. Sin

b. Hell

c. Being **born again**

8. Do not make all biblical phenomena and experiences normative for today.

(1) Example: The experiences of Moses, the prophets, and Apostles, and others in Scripture.

Martin Lloyd-Jones in his book, *Revival*, says that God's revealing of his glory to Moses in Exodus 33:18-23 is something that all believers should see:

Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King

(2) Raising the Dead. (First Kings 17 and Acts 9:36–43) .

(3) Paul's Trip to the Third Heaven. (Second Corinthians 12:1-10)

(4) Casting Out Demons. (Matthew 10:5–8; 12:28).

(5) Polygamy.

(Genesis 2:24)

(Matthew 5:27, 31–32; First Corinthians 7:2–3; Ephesians 5:22–23;
Colossians 3:18–19; First Thessalonians 4:3–7)

9. Do not dismiss a text as culturally bound simply because it does not seem to fit with the ideas of modern society (*culturizing*).

(1) Example: A Husband's Leadership In the Home (Ephesians 5:22–33).

(2) Example: Male Elders (First Timothy 2:11–15).

10. Do not over personalize the Bible:

- Example: “The account of Balaam’s talking donkey was meant to show that I talk too much.”
- Example: In the book, *Experiencing God*, Henry Blackaby applies the account of Jesus’ raising Lazarus as proof that God would heal his daughter’s sickness (p. 190).