

Berean Bible Study

Acts 17:11 – “Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.”

“We do not start our Christian lives by working out our faith for ourselves; it is mediated to us by Christian tradition, in the form of sermons, books and established patterns of church life and fellowship. We read our Bibles in the light of what we have learned from these sources; we approach Scripture with minds already formed by the mass of accepted opinions and viewpoints with which we have come into contact, in both the Church and the world. It is easy to be unaware that it has happened; it is hard even to begin to realize how profoundly tradition in this sense has molded us. But we are forbidden to become enslaved to human tradition, either secular or Christian, whether it be ‘catholic’ tradition or ‘critical’ tradition, or ‘ecumenical’ tradition. We may never assume the complete rightness of our own established ways of thought and practice and excuse ourselves the duty of testing and reforming them by Scriptures.” (J. I. Packer, “Fundamentalism” and the Word of God, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1958, pp. 69-70.)

Glenn L. Hill – Christianity’s Great Dilemma, p. 120

1. We all tend to accept the traditions we inherit.
2. We all tend to completely trust the good, honest, and faithful Christians who teach us.
3. We all hesitate to question the well-educated leaders in our lives.
4. We never give any thoughts to the possibility that what we believe may be wrong.
5. We all do not study our Bibles for ourselves as we should.
6. When we do study, usually we are trying to prove that what we believe is the truth, instead of trying to listen to what the Scriptures actually say!

This results in doctrinal errors, which get perpetuated and handed down from one generation to the next.

Christians say they believe the Bible, but most Christians cannot tell you from where in the Bible their own beliefs originated. In fact, we dare say that most Christians believe what they believe not because they can support those beliefs with the Bible, but because they believe what they were taught by their favorite pastor, Sunday School teacher, Bible teacher, denomination, or television preacher. – Harold Eberle and Martin Trench in *Victorious Eschatology*

Max R. King – We are weak and frail as human seekers of truth, and the maze of human doctrines and traditions often hinders objective study, but the fervent prayer of the author is that God will help us all to be thoughtful, reverent and considerate in our search for the ancient order, and to fear not the truth, nor man’s response to it in our acceptance and presentation of it.

The Father does not want slaves (legalists) for sons, who reach a certain plateau of knowledge on the mountain of truth, stake out their little piece of ground and settle down as “guardians of the truth,” as

though they have under their feet “the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.” Instead, the Father wants growing sons; sons who are searchers, who are not the “servants of men,” and who are not content to be restricted to a certain level of understanding simply to remain within an established framework of the church. Max R. King – *The Cross and the Parousia of Christ*, p. 758

David B. Currie – *Rapture (The end-times error that leaves the Bible behind)*, pp. 54-71 – nine Biblical ground rules:

1. “Prophecy happens” – Prophecy inspired by God can foretell events in advance of any possible human foresight.
2. “Numbers are symbols” – Numbers in prophecy denote a symbolic meaning that trumps any empirical value.
3. “History is prophecy” – An event can be a prophecy of a still-future, final fulfillment, and when it is we should consider the entire historical context of the events to gain a fuller understanding.
4. “One equals two” – Apocalyptic visions may use one image to symbolize two realities.
5. “It’s all political” – Apocalyptic literature uses dramatic imagery of cataclysmic disruptions to describe changes within the human political sphere.
6. “Here comes the judge on a cloud” – Physical objects can signify spiritual realities; for example, clouds can signify the glory of God the Judge.
“Resurrection equals renewal” - Physical-resurrection language can symbolize spiritual renewal.
7. “Don’t cling to chronology” – Chronological order is not always observed in apocalyptic visions.
8. “The end is now” – Christ’s first advent catapulted humanity into “the last days.”

Glen Beck – “We should all be seeking truth rather than defending our personal beliefs.”

Some assumptions I make when I am studying the Bible:

1. The Bible was not written to us, but it was written for us. Romans 15:4 – For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. II Timothy 3:16, 17 – All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.
Thus we need to determine what the original writers meant to communicate to the original readers.
2. The Bible is its own best commentary.
3. The New Testament interprets the Old Testament.

Questions to ask about a book, chapter, or verse before interpreting it:

1. Who wrote this?
2. To whom was it written?
3. When was it written?
4. From where was it written?
5. Why was it written?

W questions – Glenn L. Hill – Christianity’s Great Dilemma, p. 12

“To begin to understand what the Scripture was about, what it meant, and how to apply it.”

“principles of study’

1. Who was the writer?
2. To whom was he writing?
3. About what was he writing?
4. Why was he writing?
5. When was he writing?
6. What was the setting?
7. What was the context?
8. What were the circumstances at the time?
9. What did the words mean to the original recipients?

D. A. Carson – A text without a context is a pretext for a proof text.

Hermeneutics – hearts – Hebrew experience, audience relevance, time statements