

Commonly Misinterpreted Verses Or Taken Out of Context (Pt. 2)

1. John 16:13 - Used to teach that the Holy Spirit speaks to us in prayer

- Many of you have maybe heard the statement before: “When you pray, you should not only talk to God, but also be quiet, and let the Holy Spirit speak to you.”
- Why?
- Because John 16:13 says He will speak to us, guide us in all truth, and tell us of things to come.
- Is this what this passage is teaching?
- I don’t believe it is because 2 Timothy 2:15 says in order to know truth we must do what? Study, be diligent, do our best.
- In other words, if listening to the Holy Spirit is all we needed to do to ascertain spiritual truth, then there wouldn’t be any need to study.
- So, if this verse isn’t talking about listening for the audible voice of God in prayer, then what is it talking about?
- Let me ask you this question: “What is the #1 key to determining the meaning of any given text?”
- CONTEXT!
- Who is Jesus speaking to? He is talking to His disciples.
- What unique role did some of the disciples have in relation to God’s truth? They would be the ones to author the New Testament.
- Matthew - The gospel of Matthew
- Peter - 1 & 2 Peter
- John - The gospel of John, 1-3 John, and Revelation
- These verses are not a promise that the Holy Spirit will speak to us.
- They are promises to the disciples that the Holy Spirit would enable them to recall the words of Jesus so they record them as Scripture.
- (John didn’t begin his gospel until 60 years after Jesus died, yet He was able to recall every word and detail of the ministry of Jesus - Jn. 14:26)

2. 1 Corinthians 2:9 - Used as a reference to heaven

- This is one of the most common verses used in funeral services.
- Here is how it is used: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” But, this dear brother (or sister) who has gone before us is now experiencing those things which we can’t yet see or imagine.”
- Now, that idea may be true, but that’s not what this verse is talking about.
- You might be thinking, “Well how do you know?”
- Read v10
- It is obvious that whatever verse 9 is talking about is not something we have to wait until to death experience because it’s already revealed to us.
- Then what information is Paul talking about?
- Verse 10 tells us that whatever information Paul is referring to in verse 9 is revealed through the Holy Spirit.
- That is a major clue!
- Let me ask you this: “What unique role has the Holy Spirit played in getting information to us?” Or, “What has the Holy Spirit already given to us by way of revelation?”
- The Word of God!
- The human authors were the apostles (or close associate of the apostles), but the Holy Spirit was the one who guided the process so that what they wrote were the very words of God.
- So, when verse 9 says...., what Paul is saying is that there is no way we could discover God’s truth on our own.
- He had to reveal it to us; otherwise we could not come up with it.

3. 1 Corinthians 14:5a - Used to say that all Christians should speak in tongues

- It doesn’t seem much clearer than that.
- Paul says directly, “I wish you all spoke with tongues.”
- What are some problems with this interpretation?

- A. It's obvious that not every Christian does speak in tongues.
- B. It is the Holy Spirit's decision on who gets what gifts (1 Cor. 12:11)
- C. 1 Cor. 12:30 indicates not all have the same gifts.
 - That kind of interpretation has many problems.
 - So what is Paul communicating here?
 - Let me see if I can summarize it for you.
 - In this section (14:1-5), Paul is describing the superior nature of prophecy (or preaching) in comparison to tongues or the gift of languages.
 - Paul's argument is, though the gift of tongues isn't a wrong gift (it was one of the first century sign gifts), prophecy/preaching is superior because of the way it uniquely builds up the body.
 - The principle of spiritual gifts being used for the purpose of edifying or building up the body is dominant in this section (1 Cor. 12:7, 14:12)
 - These believers were more concerned about the showy gifts for self-benefit.
 - So what is verse 5 saying?
 - Paul is using hyperbole to emphasize that tongues aren't inherently wrong, but he says it would be even more wonderful if everyone could prophecy or proclaim God's truth because of its unique ability to build up others.
 - So, should this verse be used to say all Christians should speak in tongues? No!
 - That would be the very opposite of what the Holy Spirit is teaching.

4. Colossians 1:15 - Used to teach that Christ is a created being.

- Jehovah Witnesses like to use this verse to say that Jesus is not God, but He was a created being.
- Their reasoning has to do with the word "firstborn."
- So let's about the meaning of this word.
- Actually before we do, let me ask you a question.
- If I were to ask you, "What does the word 'bank' mean, what would you say?"
- You would probably say, "How is it used?," illustrating that a word's

meaning depends on how it used in its context.

- The word “bank” could be referring to...
 - A place to deposit money.
 - A type of shot in basketball.
 - A place by the river where you go fishing.
- Carry that over to Colossians 1:15, the word “firstborn” has a range of meanings.
- This word, “protokos,” can mean first in relation to time.
- But interestingly, in Scripture, it most often refers to “first in position,” or “first in rank.”
- Jesus, though He became man, was unique in that He was the preeminent one, first in rank, and superior over all.
- This is supported by the context (1:19 “fullness of deity”, 2:9).
- John 3:16 (“only begotten” sounds like offspring... the word “begotten” is “monogeneis” meaning “one of a kind Son”).

5. Revelation 3:20 - Used to teach receiving Christ

- I would go so far to say that probably 90% of the time this verse is used, it used in reference to receiving Christ.
- Hear someone say, “If you don’t know the Lord, then please know that Jesus is standing at the door of your heart and He is knocking. And if you let Him in, He will be your Savior.”
- That is most often how this verse is used.
- To provide a balance, I do believe you could use this verse to discuss salvation (we’ll look at that in a moment).
- But I don’t believe salvation is the primary emphasis of this text.
- What is the number one issue of Bible interpretation?
- CONTEXT!
- Who is Jesus addressing this text? Not an individual, but a church!
- What does He say about this church?
 - Verse 15: Draws from their culture (Hierapolis known for its hot springs, Colosse known for its cold springs). I wish you were either blazing in your passion or refreshing in your walk, but

they were neither).

- Verse 16: They were of little value to God's kingdom because of their spiritual apathy.
- Verse 17: Unaware of how blinded they were by their spiritual condition.
- Verse 18-19
- The reason I read through these verses is to show you that these words were written to a church, not individual unbelievers.
- Read v20
- Here Jesus is pictured standing at the door of a person's heart? No!
- He is pictured standing at the door of His church.
- He is basically offering an appeal saying, "If any of you are willing to get your spiritual act together, then I will fellowship/commune with you."
- The primary emphasis of this verse is an appeal to the church.
- Could it be used for evangelism?
- It could in this way, "Here in this passage Jesus exhorts this church to repent because He desired to enter in and fellowship with them. In a similar way, if you don't know the Lord, then Jesus desire to have a relationship with you. But in order to have that relationship, you to repent so He can enter your life."