

What does the Bible Mean by What It Says?, Part 2

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 1367

This is a very difficult series that we've been doing, for a lot of reasons. Difficult to try to rightly evaluate a movement by dealing with any individuals in it is very hard because there's so much variation. And also, because there's no attempt or desire on our part to in any way alienate our brothers and sisters in Christ; but rather, to call them back to the Word of God, and to what God has laid down as the basic important principles. And also, because there's a sense in which people sometimes think your ministry is negative rather than positive. I would hate for any of those things to be assumed as a result of this. One of the reasons I'm glad I'm a pastor is because I can stay in one spot long enough to have different emphases from time to time, and you get the whole picture of what God is saying. And this is just one little part. Not the most important part, but one little part, and that is an attempt to bring the charismatic movement as we see it in the world today, to the test to the Word of God. There are many good things, as we've said along the way that have come out of it, since people have been saved, and Christ has been preached, and much of the love of the Lord has been emphasized. But at the same time, there are some things that we have to look at honestly and objectively about the movement, and that's what we're attempting to do. We're not trying to assign all of the people the role of a heretic. We're not trying to throw the baby away with the dirty bath water. We're trying to maintain a balance, and yet, to deal with what must be dealt with.

This is not anything that I don't do in my own life, and hopefully you don't do in your own life, and that is to cull out those things that don't stand the test of the Word of God, and pass it. And so, that's what we're trying to do as we study this movement. Now, we've been looking at two major areas of the charismatic movement that we feel must come to the light of the Word of God. One is the issue of Revelation, and we've covered that. And the other is the issue of interpretation, and we're in the process of covering that right now. The issue of interpretation is very important. One, we established that this is the Bible; and two, we are now endeavoring to establish the fact that it must be rightly interpreted. Now, we began by our study last time, and I really feel in my own heart that the message we gave last week is a very, very essential message. And connected with the one today, would be a series of messages that every Christian ought to understand because we endeavor to show you the importance of rightly interpreting the Bible. And today, we're going to take it a step further and show you what the principles are for doing that. And a third step: how to apply those principles, so that this becomes a very important study in helping us to interpret the scripture.

Now, it's hard, as I said earlier, to speak for everybody in the charismatic movement, many of whom are very dear friends of mine, and because there's a wide variation of instruction going on. But there

are some basic points that we're trying to touch on. This one is on the area of how they interpret the Bible. And in some Scriptures, there is a pretty much unanimity in the movement. There are some particularly well-known people known by the name of Charles and Francis Hunter who have written several books, and appear many times on television and in conferences around the country advocating the charismatic movement rather energetically. They have one book entitled, "Why Should I Speak in Tongues?" It is a collection of the testimonies of various people who did, and they go on to tell about it. But the introduction to the book, which I was reading this week, I found to be very interesting. And I'd like to read part of it to you, and then use that as a basis of what I want to say. We'll just jump in at the beginning of their introduction.

"Jesus, the most beautiful gift that was ever given to the world, contained all of God in a tiny human body the moment he was born. God loved the world sufficiently to let this child be loved so much to die on a cross for us. God did more for the human race in giving us Jesus than anything that has ever been accomplished by scientists, educators, teachers, or all things combined. The Pharisees condemned him. They said he was of the Devil. They credited his power to the Devil. They said this about the savior of the world. It is difficult to believe that the same things are being said today of the beautiful gift of the Holy Spirit as were said about Jesus. Gordon Lindsay says, 'To say that all supernatural manifestations of the speaking in tongues in general are the work of evil spirits is to take a daring and dangerous stand.' The Pharisees were the fundamentalists of Christ's day, and they attributed his works to the power of the devil. Jesus not only rebuked such accusations, but said all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

The beautiful gift of power to the Christian world has been lambasted, condemned, forbidden, ridiculed, and criticized by the Pharisees of the 20th century as they attribute the work of God's Holy Spirit to the Devil, claiming that Jesus has changed, and is not the same as He was 2,000 years ago. Some attempt to negate the healing power of the Holy Spirit today. Some insist that speaking in tongues is of the Devil. Some refuse to believe that miracles are occurring when people fall under the power. Some do not accept prophecy, messages in tongues, and interpretations.

The Bible will always stand the test if we believe the Bible is true. There's nothing in the Bible that ever mentions the Devil and tongues. The only time the tongues are ever mentioned in the Word of God is in connection with the Holy Spirit. We never have to worry about criticism when we stand on the Word of God. The best proof of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a life of intimacy with God and a walk in the power of the Spirit.

It is genuine, it is real, and it is for today. The most exciting people we know are the ones who have accepted the baptism of the Holy Spirit. People whose every word, thought, and deed concerns Jesus. People whose lives overflow with the fruit of the Spirit. Many people are opposed to charismatics because they feel too much emphasis has been put on speaking in tongues. This is

interesting because the only proof in the Bible offered concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues.” End quote.

Now, that’s the introduction of the book begins. Now, I don’t know how it affected you if you were able to listen along with it, but it affected me in many interesting ways. There is a building up of statements there that become, in the end, very intimidating to anyone who doesn’t accept what they say. For example, the implication is that to deny tongues is to take the role that the Pharisees took in condemning Jesus Christ. In other words, you are condemning the work of the Holy Spirit. To deny tongues is to be guilty of committing the unpardonable sin for which there is no forgiveness. To deny tongues is to say that there is no baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Now there are many things in that that I would want to take issue with, but let me just pinpoint a couple as a starting point for our thoughts. And we’re dealing with the issue, not the person involved, just the issue here. Several things bother me, I’ve been called unloving, and I’m not really unloving. I don’t know if I can communicate that or not, but I won’t belabor the point. But, I’m trying only to deal with the truth of the Word of God. But I’ve been called unloving by people because I disagree with their view here. And, at the same time, it seems to be incongruous that I should be called a 20th century Pharisee guilty of lambasting the Scriptures. Or, that I should be assigned with the Pharisees who condemned our dear Lord Jesus Christ, as one who is condemning as satanic the total ministry of the Holy Spirit. I won’t accept that. I don’t do that.

But you see, those kinds of misinterpretations and generalities are, become the intimidators that draw less an understanding people into the movement by making them fear that they are standing with the Pharisees who condemned Christ in condemning the Spirit; that they are secondly, doing something that is totally unbiblical because the statement the Hunters make is that: nowhere in the Bible does it ever mention the Devil and tongues. Tongues are only mentioned in connection with the Holy Spirit.

Well, you see, that isn’t true. Because in 1 Corinthians 14, it is very evident that the whole point of the chapter is to show the Corinthians that tongues don’t necessarily have to be of the Spirit at all, because they had so obviously counterfeited them. They had so obviously twisted them, perverted them, and there had to be a testing of what was going on to see whether it was of God or not. And so, I react to those things. And then to be indicted as if we have committed the unpardonable sin, to me, is a very serious thing.

Now you can see that by beginning a book like that, a less knowing Christian, perhaps a young Christian, immediately is threatened with the fact that he’s a Pharisee potentially, that he is denying the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and that he’s potentially committed the unpardonable sin, if he doesn’t accept what comes in the book. That’s a pretty good setup, wouldn’t you say? To somebody who’s a sensitive Christian, and maybe doesn’t really know how to handle those Scriptures? And that’s why I say it’s so devastating. It’s so devastating to pull people into these movements by misinterpreting the

Scripture. This is the same thing that the cults do. They take Scripture and they twist it around. And this is Ephesians 4 where the babes are tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, and by cunning craftiness. Because what you do with the Scripture has such an impact on someone who can't defend himself at that point, who's too new to understand or too young to understand, spiritually speaking. It's a sad thing.

The Hunters, further in the introduction, discuss Mark 16:18, they were discussing Matthew 12, the unpardonable sin. They go on to Mark 16 and this is what it says. And you know, Mark 16:18 says that "All those who believe shall handle serpents, and drink any poisonous thing, and touch people with their hands, and they'll heal them." So they're talking about the serpents, and the poison, and everything there in Mark 16:18. This is what they say. Who wants to go out and handle snakes? We certainly don't. And we equally sure that God doesn't intend for you to go out and put your hand in a basket of rattlesnakes to see whether or not they're going to bite you.

What does this verse mean then? Well, do you remember what happened to Paul when he was shipwrecked in Acts 28:3-5? He picked up a serpent by accident. Well, I'll just add a footnote: it doesn't say he picked up a serpent, but we won't discuss that. He did not run around telling everyone, "Look at me, look at me. I can handle snakes with safety." No, he just shook it off into the fire and praised God because He protected him. We certainly don't intend to go around drinking poison just to prove we're immune, because we believe we'd soon find out we're not. God doesn't intend for us to tempt Him, but His protective covering is there if we need it. Do you notice the Bible says: if we accidentally drink anything poisonous it won't hurt us? Hallelujah, best insurance policy we know of.

Now, I'll stop there. The Bible does not say "if" accidentally. There's no accidentally in Mark 16:18. You won't find it. But, you see, it's very difficult to explain it any other way, because none of them would dare grab a basket full of rattlesnakes, nor would anybody else who was sane. You've recently read about some who did that and they died. So you see, they've got to explain it, so it's accidentally. But that doesn't work either, because I remember when I was a little kid, and I drank some poison accidentally, and I couldn't handle it, and I had to have my stomach pumped, Holy Spirit or no Holy Spirit.

And you've had similar experiences. People have died from poison, Christian people. There have been Christian people who've died from being injected with the wrong medication. That's poison. You see, it's very difficult to interpret those verses that way. To say: this is going to follow all believers, they say. All believers will be able to do this, if they accidentally get into that situation, but there have been believers die of snake bite and poison. Historically, it doesn't hold up.

And so in order to sort of mollify a little bit, the strength of that, they say this in this next paragraph: "From Genesis to Revelation who's the biggest snake of all? Satan, of course, and what does the baptism of the Holy Spirit do for you? It gives you the power to handle Satan." End quote.

Now you see what's happened here is, in order to try to explain it they made it into an allegory. And now, it's talking about Satan, and that, incidentally, is the interpretation that Oral Roberts gives to the passage, which I read this week. But, it's allegorical. But you see, they want to include the healing part in verse 18, and they want to include the tongues part in verse 17. So, it's all mixed up with the poison and the snakes. And it's either all five or none. And so, they want to grant all five, and then in order to explain all five, they're really in hot water. So it's accidentally. Some others have said, "Well, actually what it means is that all five aren't available if you seek them." It doesn't say that. Or if you ask for them, it doesn't say that either. So you see, if you really look at the passage, which we'll do in a few minutes, you'll see there are some problems there.

Another paragraph I thought was interesting, also in their book, it said this: "In the 20th century, we don't have to settle for any less than the disciples did. God is pouring out His Holy Spirit in the same manner today as He did then. There is no difference. Probably, the verse we've heard quoted more than any other is Hebrews 13:8, 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.'" And you've heard that many times. "If He baptized with the evidence of speaking in tongues yesterday, then surely He's doing the same thing today, and will continue doing it tomorrow. The New Testament has not been rewritten since the days of the disciples and we would be assuming it had been, if we were to have a different evidence or lack of positive evidence. Every word of the New Testament was written by those who had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and who spoke in tongues. God considered it vital, Jesus commanded it. We accept it; it works."

Now, number one, just a couple of thoughts here. We'll get back to this text later. Everyone who has written the New Testament has spoken in tongues. You can't find that in the Bible. We don't have any indication that all the Bible writers did that. Jesus commanded it. We don't have any evidence of that. But you see, those things are misinterpretations. So far, we've seen some problems with Matthew 12, Hebrews 13, and we'll come back to those in a minute. But I wanted to point out to you how that, to a person just being exposed, you can be drawn in for fear, for example, that you've denied the eternal constant character of Jesus Christ. You've denied the commands of Jesus in Matthew 6. You've been guilty of blaspheming the Holy Spirit. You are assigning to the Holy Spirit devilish work. You are a modern day Pharisee who stands in similarity to one who condemned Jesus Christ. You see, that it is very intimidating material. And you wonder what draws people into that. In many cases, it's that kind of fear that's generated by that approach. And all of that is based on faulty interpretation.

One other problem that I see too that comes up again and again in the interpretive area is the idea that healing is in the atonement. That, if you're saved, Christ died for your sicknesses. And the text is 1 Peter 2:24, which says "By His stripes ye were healed." And so on the basis of that, we have healing in the atonement, Jesus died for our diseases, and they're all gone, and you just claim the fact that you're not really sick. Or, that you're sick simply because you haven't claimed the fact that He's healed you. Is that what that verse is saying? That's what they want it to say and that's what

they make it say.

But you see, it all comes back to how you interpret the Bible. And I'm not offering you the fact that I'm infallible or inerrant. Quite on the contrary, or that Grace Church is infallible or inerrant. I'm sure we misinterpret the Scripture in the weakness of our humanness as all believers do everywhere. And I'm not saying that they misinterpret all Scripture. I'm just saying that these would seem to be the cardinal elements that they're driving at. They're guilty of misinterpretation. They misinterpret in the book of Acts, the baptizing work of the Spirit, the filling of the Spirit. Misinterpreting the 12th of Corinthians and the 14th. And these are the things in the weeks to come we're going to be dealing with, to try to show you what the Bible is in fact saying, so that we can understand it. And we'll do our best to support it. And I'm not giving John MacArthur's interpretation, but rather that which is historic, which is the general interpretation of believers through the years, who have had a solid interpretive approach to Scripture.

Clark Pinnock says in his book "Biblical Revelation," a loose hermeneutic, and hermeneutic means: principles of interpreting the Bible. "A loose hermeneutic can destroy the meaning of inspiration all together, and may be a cloak for a denial of Bible teachings. And orthodox stand on Scripture prophets not at all if the truth of Scripture is short-circuited by perverse interpretations." End quote.

Well, of course, that's what we were saying last week. What good to have the Bible if you misinterpret it? And so beloved, we just need to make a commitment in our hearts that we're going to interpret the Bible the right way. We're going to cut it straight, remember 2 Timothy last week? Cut it straight.

Now let's look at the issue of interpretation. If we're going to interpret the Bible right, what are the principles we have to have? Now, we've showed you last week how important it is. Now here comes point number two, how to do it. How do you interpret the Bible properly? What are the principles you deal with? You know, do you just flip open and say, oh I think this means this? And what, you have principles you work with.

Let me give them to you. Here they come. Number one. And these are generally accepted principles of interpretation. Number one, the literal principle, the literal, and you should write these down because you should have these right beside you somewhere when you approach any passage. Good place to write them: right in the front of your Bible, if you can understand what we're saying: the literal interpretation principle. Now, by that, we simply mean that the Scripture is to be understood in its natural, normal sense. Scripture is to be understood in its natural, normal sense. The basic customary meaning of the words. You see, if God wants to communicate His word to us, then He will do it in the most obvious fashion. And the most obvious fashion is as simple as possible, and as simple as possible is to speak it in words that are clearly understood by people. So that we say the literal sense is the sense that God is after, not some deeper, hidden, secret, imaginative, allegorical, spiritualized meaning.

As we saw last week, when God is talking about Nehemiah rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, He is not saying that the Holy Spirit is rebuilding the walls of human personality. He is saying Nehemiah built the walls of Jerusalem. Period, paragraph, end of story. And when the Bible talks about a cow, it's a cow. When it talks about a house, it's a house. And a man is a man, and a woman is a woman. Now, when you get into apocalyptic literature that gives future visions such as we've seen in Zechariah, or such as you'd see in Daniel, or Ezekiel, or the book of Revelation, you may have some figurative language and some figures of speech, but they too are customary and normal, because you will know what those figures are, and the normal approach to those figures would be to interpret them. So, you haven't violated the literal aspect of it. The Bible must be dealt with then literally.

And I would just warn you, once you have abandoned the literal principle, you have ended all hope of any accurate interpretation. It's gone, because then you have a free-for-all, and only the imagination rules. Whoever is the most imaginative, wins the race for interpretation. And you see, when you deny the literal, then you are not serving the Bible by understanding it. You are making the Bible your slave by molding it to say what you want it to say.

It's like the old Rabbis who, because in the Hebrew language, letters in the alphabet also have numerical equivalence. See? Letters in the alphabet have numerical equivalence. They would take the letters of somebody's name and add them up, and come out with some meaning. For example, Abraham's name adds to 318, which means that Abraham had 318 servants. Is that what it means? No. When it says Abraham, it's not talking about his 318 servants, it's talking about him. You see, that violates the basic, simple purpose of language, which is to communicate in a normal customary way. And so, we must deal with the literal interpretation.

Second principle, and you'd have to have a course in hermeneutics to get all the depth of all of this, but I'm just giving you the little skim off the top. Second is what I call the historical principle, the historical principle. One of the things that a Bible student learns very soon as he begins to study the Bible is how important it is to recreate the historical setting in which the passage was penned and written. I know that if you've been here through our study of 1 Corinthians, we've now finished the 13th chapter. And if you've been through that, you know that I spent a lot of time to reconstruct the history. If you've been coming Sunday night, in our really exciting study of Zechariah, you know that night after night, as we've gone through this thing, we've been reconstructing past history: where Israel was, what they were doing, back from captivity, here they are, outside, wanting the wall built. And then all that stuff begins to make sense, and it's been my contention for years that if a Bible teacher or a Bible student will faithfully build up the historical setting, you can almost interpret the Scripture simply by reading it. Because, if you understand the scene, it almost interprets itself to the scene.

You know, when the books of the New Testament, for example, were sent out, they didn't come along with an interpretation. Why? Because in that culture, at that time in history, given the problems that existed, and the situation that was, they could read it, and it had meaning. And for us, we need to reconstruct that, which means we have to study a little geography. You've got to find out a few things. You can never understand the seven letters to the churches in Revelation without an understanding of the geography of each one of them, because they're really woven into the letter. You have to study the history. What was going historically? Who was ruling? Who was in power? What was this? What was going on? What were the tensions in the society? What was the culture like? You have to understand something about the customs of the people. That's why we have books like "Sketches of Jewish Social Life" by Edersheim, who helps us to understand the Jewish patterns of living so that we can interpret what's going on. So the historical is vitally important, and we need to have information on that. We need to be able to get a hold of that, and a Bible dictionary will be a great asset in reconstructing historical settings, or an introduction to the Old Testament, or an introduction to the New Testament. Any of those books will help you to be able to reconstruct that setting, and out of that setting will flow the meaning. That's why I took a minor in college, in history, because I felt that this would so important.

A third principle is what I call the grammar principle. The grammar principle. And, given that you're going to interpret it literally, and given that you're going to do what is needed to be done historically. Thirdly, you must be sure that you let it say what it really says in terms of the words and the grammar. Now, some people call this, for you students, lexicography and syntax. But what it really means is that you're just dealing with what it really says. I mean, you're struggling with the words. How many times have we done that? Gone over a word, and what that word mean, and what the nuances of its meaning was, and how that certain prepositions are very important, that it matters whether it says into, in, by, or with. Or that it says because of, or through, and what is the antecedent of this, and what is the relation of this clause to that phrase, and so forth. You see, that's all necessary to interpret the Scripture. Grammar. You can't just yank something out of there and make it say something; you have to say: this is the sequence of what is being said, and it only meaning in that sequence, and let the words say what the word says.

So, you have to take the text. And the people say to me often: what do you first when you prepare a message? The first thing I do is study the text to find out exactly what the proper words are, what they are in Greek, what the sentence order is, and what the structure is, what the grammar is so I know what's the direct object, what's an indirect object, what's the subject, what's a predicate, what's a modifier, what's an adjective, what's an adverbial phrase, what's a conditional clause. All of that so that you know exactly what is being said. That's grammar.

The fourth principle. Some of you by this time are saying, yikes, you know, I'm afraid I'm not going to be able to study my own Bible, but don't worry about that. I'm just giving you the basic principles. You're only able to apply them at different levels depending on how long you've been a Christian and

the Holy Spirit will meet you at the point where you can handle that. We'll talk about that in a minute. But, number four is what I call the synthesis principle. The synthesis. What the old reformers used to call *analogia Scriptura*, or the analogy of Scripture. This is the synthesis principle, and it means this: that no one part of the Bible contradicts any other part. In other words, if one author wrote the whole Bible, then it will have one marvelous whole unity to it. And if you come up with something in passage that doesn't square with something in another passage, then one of those two is interpreted wrongly, because the Holy Spirit doesn't disagree with Himself.

So very often when I teach you, I'll explain a passage, all that's in a passage. Tell you the words, the meaning, the structure, and then I'll start to take you to different passages in other books in the Bible to show you that this fits in to the total analogy of Scripture. The total picture ties together.

J.I. Packer in his book, "God Has Spoken," says, and I quote, "The Bible appears like a symphony orchestra with the Holy Ghost as its Toscanini. Each instrumentalist has been brought willingly, spontaneously, creatively to play His notes just as the great conductor desired. Though none of them could ever hear the music as a whole, the point of each part only becomes fully clear when seen in relation to all the rest." End quote. That's exactly what Peter wrote when he said in 1 Peter 1:10. They looked into the Scripture to see what they were writing, because it was even beyond them. They didn't see how it connected up, even the Bible writers. So, that the Scripture must tie with the rest of Scripture.

Now basically, that's it. You want to know what I spend my time doing? Those four things. First of all, I read the Bible and see what its literal sense is. And then, I reconstruct the historical setting, and then I deal with the grammar, and then I try to fit it in with the total picture of Scripture, the total picture.

And then there's one other element. Make this number five. One other. And that's what I call the practical principle. The last thing you do is: make an application of it, the practical principle. Well, so what? That's the question I always ask. That's wonderful, so what does that have to do with me? And that's where you get a broad possibility of application from the principles of the Scripture. 2 Timothy 3:16 says: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is," what? "Profitable." How much of it is profitable? All of it. It's profitable for instruction. Well, you've got to make it practical. You've got to make it say something to the man and the woman living the life that God calls them to live now, here and now. So, that's vital. You just can't ivory tower, kind of approach, where up in the fog somewhere. You've got to get it down where they are.

That's it folks. Those are the five elements of building any good lesson, five elements of any good sermon, five elements of any Bible study.

And then there's one other element that is the umbrella under which all the rest exists. And I call it the illuminating Holy Spirit, the illuminating Holy Spirit. You know, all that stuff that I just said to you will come up wrong without the Holy Spirit, do you know that? All of it. Why? Because in 1 Corinthians 2:14 it says: "The natural man understandeth not the things of God, they are foolishness to him because they are spiritually discerned." And, that same chapter says that only the Holy Spirit can show us the truth. Only the Holy Spirit can lead us into it. And apart from the Holy Spirit, the Bible is locked. It is a mystery. But when the Spirit of God comes, then there is illumination. And illumination simply means that you understand what has been written. And listen, the only person who can understand the Bible is a Christian. And I'll go a step further: the only person who can really understand the Bible is a Christian who is living a pure life.

You can't go into the Bible to try to study the Bible with sin in your life. I've known Christians who are claiming that they were having Bible study, and they were living in open sin. And whenever I'd run across it, I'd say, "Well, you don't expect to learn anything do you? I mean, you don't have a proper receptacle for receiving information. Your bucket is covered with your sin, it's full of garbage." The truth just bounces off. You say, where'd you get that? 1 Peter chapter 2, verse 1. "And laying aside all evil, and guile, and malice, and deceit, and hypocrisy, and evil speaking as babes desire the pure milk of the word that you may grow." And you can't desire it and really grow by it, until you get rid of the garbage, you see? Verse 1 comes before verse 2. Simple enough. And so, only a believer will really understand it, and only a believer living in purity will really get the depth of it.

But I'll tell you, it's because the Holy Spirit's there. You know, I've read a lot of books in my time and I hope to read a lot more, but you know, often when I read a book, I don't understand what I'm reading. I'm like the guy on his way to Gaza, you know, the Philip man, I don't understand a lot of things. And, I'll be reading along in some guy's book and I'll say, "What is he saying here? I don't understand this." And I've often wished. "Boy, I wish he was here so I could ask him." Wouldn't it be neat if every time you bought a book you got a week with the author? Could you please explain? Oh yes, well, don't you see that's very clear, blah blah blah. Well, you want to know something? The day this book became yours, its author became yours, not for a week, but for your life. Isn't that great? You not only have the written word, but you have the resident truth teacher who wrote it, and that's the illuminating element. Now that doesn't mean you can sit in a corner and say I'm now ready for my lesson. And you have him dump it on you. You balance off the teaching ministry with the Holy Spirit with the diligence called for in Timothy, right? "Study to show yourself approved or be diligent," cut it straight. He will only illuminate what you have diligently studied. Pinnock says, "To appeal to the Spirit apart from Scripture is sub-Christian fanaticism." You can't just appeal to the Holy Spirit, and He will teach me. Apart from Scripture, that's less than Christian. That's some kind of fanaticism.

On the other hand, Pinnock says: to appeal to Scripture apart from a complete dependence on the Holy Spirit is presumption. Don't presume that you are smart enough to understand the Scripture without the Holy Spirit. And I'm afraid, sadly, that charismaticism is often a form of sub-Christian

mysticism because they seemingly equalize revelation, inspiration, illumination, and make it all sort of happen in one big glob as they open their Bible, and the Holy Spirit tells them what it means. Those are the principles.

All right now. Last week, we considered point number one: why it's important to rightly interpret. Now we've given you point number two: what are the principles? Now I want to give you number three: some examples of what happens when you do or don't apply the principles. And I had a lot of them, and I'm going skip a whole bunch, because I just want to touch on the ones that I mentioned at the very beginning and I'll give you the rest of these next week.

We started out at the very beginning with Matthew chapter 12. Let's look at it. The first thing we saw in the book that the Hunters have written, is that if you disparage tongues in the modern day charismatic movement, you might be guilty of the unpardonable blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Is that what that text is saying? Is this text saying that if you try to evaluate the charismatic movement biblically, you will have committed the unpardonable sin? Is it saying that if you ever assign any tongues to Satan, you are committing the unpardonable sin? Let's see what it's saying.

Verse 24 of Matthew 12, and here we're going to try to apply some of the principles to show you. "When the Pharisees heard it," that is, they heard that Christ had cast out demons in verse 22 there, he had, Christ had cast out these demons. "But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, 'This fellow doesn't cast out demons, but by Beelzebub, the prince of demons.'" Just another term for Satan. "He casts out demons by the power of Satan." That's what they said.

Now, I want you to see something. The first thing we've got to do is to work with the literal meaning. The literal meaning is: He cast out demons by the prince of demons, Satan. Oh yeah, that's simple. Then we've got to look at history. What's going on historically here? Let's take that historical principle and make a little application of it. First of all, what we find out is, that Jesus has been around for three years. And all during those three years, he has been explicitly and repeatedly on a multiple of literally dozens of times, making evident to them without refutation, that He is God. Miracle after miracle after miracle, why, they aren't even numbered. I mean there's so many that at the end of the gospel of John it says, I couldn't even begin to write them; the books of the world wouldn't hold the things that he did. And so, there is no way to even begin to describe the ways that those Pharisees had seen Jesus prove He was God. Again, and again, and again, and again. And another way was by power over Satan.

But, whereas they should have been over here saying he's God, they were 180 degrees over here saying he is doing it by the power of Satan. Notice, they had concluded the very opposite. Do you see? The opposite. Not partway over here, but the opposite. They didn't say, oh, He's a pretty good guy, who knows? No. He is of the devil, the opposite. So, they have then concluded that Christ has done what He has done under Satanic power.

Now, if we are to use the principle of synthesis, we would find out by simply looking at the baptism of Jesus Christ, that Jesus did what He did by the power of the Holy Spirit, remember? The Holy Spirit descended upon Christ. Up to that time, He had never done a miracle. Did you know that? Oh yeah. John 2, after His baptism, He went to Cana and made water into wine, and the text says: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus." He never did one before that. In spite of what people have said through the ages, that Jesus went around fixing little broken wings on birds when He was a kid, it isn't true. He may have fixed their wing, but He had to use a stick. It wasn't until His ministry began, till the Father authenticated Him, till the Spirit came, and He began the beginning of His miracles. And from then on, He began to prove who He was. But it was by the power of the Spirit, somehow in a marvelous manner, the Son connected with the Spirit, connected with the Father, did it all together. And yet, the Son attributes His ministry to the Spirit.

Why the Spirit came upon Him, Isaiah said, that He should preach and do wonders. And so the Spirit. So, He did what He did not by Satan, but by whom? The Holy Spirit. But instead of concluding the Holy Spirit, they concluded the opposite. Well, Jesus answers them. Now you see how the history and the analogy of Scripture comes to make sense? Now we go to verse 25. "And Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation. Every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. And if Satan cast out Satan he's divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?'" You can stop there. He says, that's the dumbest answer I've ever heard. If I'm casting out Satan by Satan, what do you think Satan's doing to himself? He's destroying his own kingdom. But you see, the point is: their hatred for Christ had total control of their logic. So what was rational was gone. But Jesus says, that's ridiculous.

Now jump down to verse 31. "Wherefore I say to you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men. But the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven men." Now listen to me, what is he saying here? Is he saying that if we say a word against the charismatic movement that we've committed this? No? You've got to get the context. You've got to know the history. "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men." Unregenerate man can be forgiven of anything, anything. But, continual blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven. Sooner or later in order to be forgiven, listen to this. Sooner or later, in order to be forgiven, every person would have to stop blaspheming the Holy Spirit, right? Because it is the Holy Spirit, John 16, that convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment. You must be born of the Spirit. It is the Spirit that is the regenerated agency of the Trinity. And sometime, the man has got to stop blaspheming the Spirit to be saved. Don't you see?

So, if a guy continues to blaspheme the Holy Spirit, there's no way he's going to be a Christian. Forgiveness can't come to one who does that. But there's even more than that here. That's just a possible interpretation. Let me show you verse 32. "And whosoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him. But whosoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven

him, neither in this age, neither in the age to come.” Now notice, you could speak a word against the Son of man. The Son of man is Jesus’ human name, right? What was His divine name? Son of God. His human name, Son of man. You might say some things unkindly about His humanness. You might have some questions about the way He looked, or the way He acted, or His mannerisms, or something like that. You might want to say something about His humanness. But if you assign His works that are done by the Holy Spirit to Satan, there’s no way you’re going to be saved. Do you see the point? That’s all He’s saying. If, when you have all the evidence, and all the information, and all the revelation about Christ, and miracle after miracle, and wonder after wonder, He says to these Pharisees, you’ve had it all on your conclusion is He’s satanic, you’re hopeless.

You’re hopeless, because, you’ve had the pinnacle of revelation. That’s as much revelation as God could give. What more could He do than send Jesus into the world as God? What more could He do than leave Him three years? What more could He do than have Him do miracle, after miracle, after miracle; teaching, after teaching, after teaching. And if your conclusion is He’s Satanic, and He did all that to the Holy Spirit, you have denied the Holy Spirit. You have assigned it to Satan. You’re hopeless. That’s what He’s saying. So you see, the point here has nothing to do with tongues, the charismatic movement, or what you’re saying today about that in trying to evaluate it biblically. That’s totally foreign to the whole thing.

I would add a footnote. The end of verse 32. “This sin of doing this will not be forgiven, neither in this age, neither in the age to come.” Now what age do you mean? What is the Lord saying? Well, what age was it when He was speaking? Well, it wasn’t the church age. When did the church begin? Pentecost in Acts 2. This is the age when Jesus is on the earth, right? In this time period. So, this is a sin for that time period when Christ is on earth, when He’s here doing signs, and here doing wonders, and here doing miracles. That’s the pinnacle. “In this age, neither the age to come.” Now to every Jew, what was the age to come? The kingdom, the great kingdom. The Jew didn’t see the church age. The Jew had no concept of the mystery of the church, so the Jew is looking at the kingdom, the future. And listen, during the kingdom, who reigns on the earth? Christ. He’s back again. You see, this sin could only be committed when Christ is on the earth. He’s only on the earth twice: once during the gospels, once during the kingdoms. That is the this age, and the age to come.

Now, you see, the last principle just applied is grammar. We studied what that meant. We analyzed it in terms of other Scriptures that talk about the age to come such as Hebrews 6, powers of the age to come, and we know it means the kingdom. Now, by putting interpretive principles together, you find out that this is a sin that could only be committed when Jesus was here. It could only be committed then and in the kingdom. It is irrelevant to us today. But I would add, you say, “John, what about application? What does it say to us?” It says this much to us, that even today, if somebody rejects Jesus Christ and rejects the wooing and the calling of the Holy Spirit, he’ll never be forgiven, right? That’s just a general truth. But you see, if you just go to this and interpret it rightly, you can’t use that verse to defend the fact that tongues is right and to deny tongues is to deny the Holy Spirit.

The other verse that they use was Hebrews 13:8. Let's look at it. Quickly, got to look at it. Hebrews 13:8, having such a good time here I forgot. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever." And they say whatever He did then He's doing now, and He can't change, and nothing changes and everything goes on. Revelation goes on, and tongues goes on, and healings go on, and miracles go on, and on, and on goes everything. And it's got to be, and they say to deny this, is to deny His character. Listen, it doesn't make sense. It says in the first place, Jesus Christ the same yesterday. And it is talking about yesterday. Well, listen He was, was He Christ who lived in a human body in Galilee during the Old Testament? No, He's the angel of the Lord. Well, what was He even before the Old Testament? He was the second person of the Trinity in heaven.

Well, what about yesterday? What about tomorrow? Well, listen, when He came to the earth the first time, He came in humiliation. When He comes the second time, it won't be the same. It'll be in glory. He came as a suffering servant the first time. He comes as an exalted king the second time. You see, it isn't talking about the circumstances; it's talking about His eternal character, which is unchanging. But how He manifests it is different. We don't give sacrifices anymore. We don't kill animals, but they used to. And if they say that all the gifts have to go on because Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever, then how come tongues, prophecy, and knowledge is all going to cease if He's the same forever? And that's what that's saying. You see, it just doesn't make it. You must rightly divide the word.

Back to Mark 16 a minute. Mark 16. In the first place, I don't want to get into a big debate about this, but there is a lot of textual argument about whether Mark 16 is in or out. In all of the reliable ancient manuscripts we have, with no exceptions, verses 9 to 20 do not appear. They do not appear until the 5th century after Christ. Sinaiticus and Vaticanus are the two most important ancient manuscripts, and neither of them have this. And there are multitudes of Greek manuscripts that we have, literally hundreds. Earlier than the 5th century, none of them have this. So, there is some decision about the fact that it is likely something added by a 5th century scribe for some reason, verses 9 to 20. And incidentally, there is also somewhere between eight and a dozen words that are used in that ending that Mark never uses anywhere else, that are totally foreign to his vocabulary. So it may be that this was added. But let's assume, because we really haven't got positive evidence, and we don't want to put anything aside that shouldn't be. Let's assume that it belongs, then let's see what they would say about it. All right? Verse 15, he said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Now, that's fine. We have that in the other gospels, and that's where it always ends in the other gospels. We don't have any further, but here we've got something else. "He that believes and baptized shall be saved. He that believes not shall be damned and these signs shall follow those who believe. In my name they'll cast out demons, speak with new tongues, take up serpents, drink any deadly thing it won't hurt them, lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

Now, for the people who get saved, he says, there are going to be some signs following. Now watch. Five marvelous, astounding things: casting out demons, speaking tongues, handling snakes, drinking poison, and laying hands, and healing the sick. Now, the charismatics say, "You see? This is to follow those who believe." Their interpretation is that those who believe means all Christians, for all time, through all ages because Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. So, that it's true all the time. Well, my first question is this: number one, do all Christians through all the time cast out demons? Do they all speak with tongues? Do they all pick up snakes, and drink poison, and not hurt? And can they call lay hands on the sick any time and they all recover? You see, that's the historical principal again. It doesn't make it, does it?

You know, it's sad to say, but there are a lot of charismatic folks who have sicknesses. A lot of charismatic people who have in their families, people who are dying of cancer. They can't seem to make that verse work. And you know, there have been Christians through the ages who died of poison and snakebite. That's right. And you know what they say, but the problem is, this is what the Hunters say, the problem is: you have to yield, and you have to commit yourself to the Lordship of Christ, and bow before Him in submission, and ask for these things. You want to know something? Where does it say that? Where does it say that? It says, and these signs shall follow those who believe, boom, boom, boom, boom. What are the conditions? What are the conditions? Those who what? Believe, that's it. That's the only condition. It doesn't say to yield to it, submit to it, search for it, ask for it, beg for it. It doesn't say anything about that.

You say, well, if it isn't true of the whole church, then what does it mean? Well, beloved, it was true of a group of people. And you know who? The apostolic community. That's who it was true of. They did those things. The only one we don't know for sure that they did was drinking the deadly poison. We have incident of that, but perhaps that happened as well. But it certainly didn't happen after the apostolic era, and it's certainly not normative today, and we read not too long ago about some people in the East who thought you could still handle snakes and they're dead.

But you see, if you make it apply to the apostles, you can show that indeed, it did happen. They did cast out demons. They did speak with new languages. They did. Paul, remember, was bitten, and threw the snake off into the fire. These things can be vindicated at some sense in the apostolic community, but not throughout the history of the church. And it's ludicrous to make people think that they can, because what a frustrating thing to realize that the reason somebody in your family can't get well is because you're not spiritual enough to claim what you have. What a guilt trip that is.

And a last Scripture, I told you at the first they used 1 Peter 2:24, and I want to mention it. They say 1 Peter 2:24 means we're healed in the atonement, because at the end of the verse, well, the whole verse says, "Who his own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin should live to righteousness by whose stripes ye were healed." And they say, you see, there's healing in the atonement.

Now beloved, there just is one simple test here. We could give you many, but let's look at one to start. What does it mean to be healed in this verse? Is it physical healing he's talking about? Spiritual. Where do you see physical healing anywhere here? There's nowhere here. When He died on the cross, He bore our what? Sins, in His own body. That we should live unto righteousness, not health. You want to know something? Our souls have been redeemed our bodies haven't. Romans 8:23 says: "We wait for the redemption of the bodies and we groan in the wild while we're waiting," don't we? And mine is groaning all the time, more than it ever did. Yeah, our bodies are not redeemed. You see, Isaiah 53:5 is where it says: by His stripes we are healed, but that isn't what Isaiah was talking about. He was talking about the healing that Israel needed. And if you read Isaiah 1 it's clear. Again, you go back to the principle of synthesis. Isaiah 1 says, "You are diseased with sin." There is rottenness. There's no soundness in your bones. You are polluted with sin. And then 53 comes back and says, "But by His stripes, you'll be healed." And it's the healing of sin that he's talking about. Not physical.

And when it says he bore our sicknesses, it's talking about the sicknesses of our souls. In Matthew 18 it alludes to the fact that, in a sense, He carried out sickness. And what it means is by the sympathy of His heart. And that's clarified in Hebrews 4:15 where it says: He is the high priest touched with the feelings of our infirmities. He doesn't get our diseases. He sympathizes with the pain that we have in them.

And you'll notice on other thing in 1 Peter 2:24. Watch this. "By whose stripes ye," what? "Were healed." Past tense, pointing right back to the cross. It was there on the cross that you were healed, and that must mean salvation. It doesn't say, by whose stripes you will continually be being healed. And there, you're getting right down to the grammar and the tense principle. You see, you take these principles, you apply them, and what you come up with just can't support some of the claims.

Well, let's pray. Father, we've just covered some things this morning that are so very important. Not so much in dealing with the specific movement, but in dealing with how to treat Your Scripture – Your Word – and make us faithful students Father, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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