

Day 4

Use Clear passages to help you understand Difficult Passages

There are some parts of the Bible that are hard to understand! This doesn't mean those parts are unimportant of course – it just means we need to be extra careful as we study to understand them. The Bible directly warns us about this!

2 Peter 3:16-17 – “As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are **some things hard to be understood**, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, **beware** lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.”

Here are **3** Key Principles for making sure we don't fall into the trap of bad teachings:

#1) The Simple and Clear teachings are our guide for interpretation

The Bible is filled with very simple, very clear, easily understood teachings. If you'll keep these teachings as your foundation, and make sure every other teaching builds on that foundation, you'll avoid 99% of all dangerous teachings. For example, the Bible is abundantly clear that Jesus Christ was God in the flesh.

Colossians 2:9 - "For in him [Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

1 Timothy 3:16 - "...God was manifest in the flesh"

John 8:58 - "Before Abraham was, I am"

Hebrews 1:3 [Speaking of Christ] - "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high"

Because the Trinity is a mystery, and because Jesus Christ was also human – there are some hard to understand passages from Christ's life. For example: His despairing cries on the cross (“Why hast thou forsaken me?”) or even when Jesus prays in the Garden of Gethsemane (“Not my will, but thine”) – these passages have led some to question if Jesus was always fully God, or if he was something less than that. It is always dangerous to throw out clear verses of the Bible in an effort to understand a difficult or confusing passage.

#2) Never use a Bible story or illustration to overthrow a Bible teaching

The Bible clearly teaches that marriage is supposed to be between one man and one woman.

Ephesians 5:31 – “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they **two** shall be **one** flesh.” (see also: **Genesis 2:24**, **Matthew 19:6**, etc)

But we read many stories of people having more than one wife! Even great men of God like Abraham, David, and Solomon! Does that mean it's ok to have multiple wives? **No!** If you read those stories carefully, you'll see that great grief and suffering was the result of these plural marriages. Abraham = a whole nation of enemies for Israel, David = terrible civil war, and Solomon = heart away from God because of his extra wives.

Note that the people of God often sin – even commit murder! – but that doesn't mean it's ok. Stories of the Bible are simply true records of what happened. They don't over-rule the Bible's clear teachings on any subject.

#3) A supposed “contradiction” is probably two separate events

Matthew 5:3 – “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Luke 6:20 – “Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.”

A contradiction? No! Two different sermons!

Note that Matthew 5 was delivered on a mountain (**Matthew 5:1**), Luke 6 on plain (**Luke 6:17**)

PART 2

Application to Prophecy: Difference Between the Rapture & Second Coming

When Jesus comes, will we meet him in the clouds or on the mount of olives?

1 Thessalonians 4:17 – “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

Zechariah 14:4 – “And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west...”

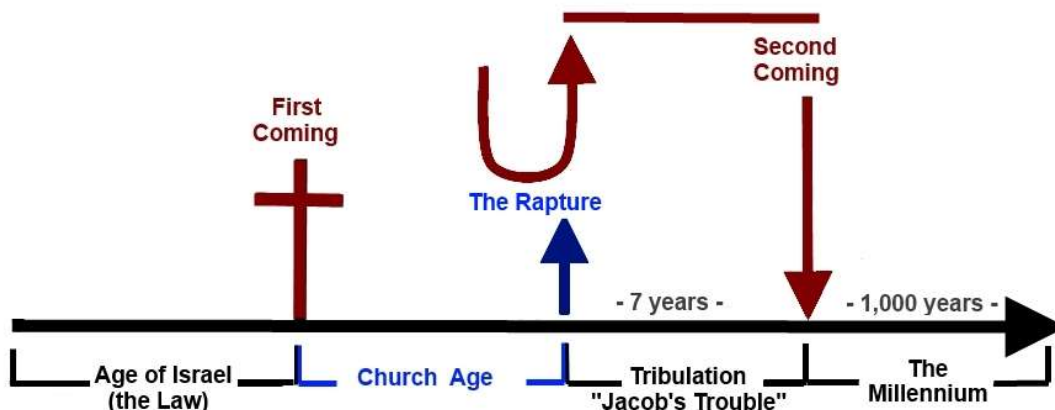
There are no contradictions in the Bible. These are two different events!

Rapture:

- Saints taken to Heaven
(1 Thessalonians 4:17)
- Earth not judged
(Hebrews 9:28)
- Imminent (any time), Instant, Sign-less
(Mark 13:32-37, 1 Cor 15:50-54)
- Affects only believers
(Hebrews 9:28)
- Christ comes in the clouds for his Bride
(1 Thessalonians 4:17)

Second Coming:

- Saints return to the Earth
(1 Thess 3:13, Colossians 3:4, Revelation 19:14)
- Earth judged & righteousness established
(Daniel 2:44-45 & 7:14, 2 Timothy 4:1, 2 Thess 1:6-8)
- Follows definite signs and timing (7 year period)
(Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15-31, Luke 21:25-27)
- Affects the whole Earth
(Jude 1:14-15, Revelation 1:7, Revelation 6:15-17)
- Christ comes to Earth (Mt. of Olives) with Saints
(Zechariah 14:1-15, Acts 1:9-12)



We are to be looking for Jesus, *not* the Anti-Christ!

Philippians 3:20 – “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ”

1 Thessalonians 1:10 – “And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”

Titus 2:13 – “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ”

But if the rapture didn't precede the second coming, then we'd be looking for the Anti-Christ (and many other signs), since all of that must happen *before* the Second coming!

2 Thessalonians 2:3 – “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition”

Luke 21:28 – “...And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.”