

God's Word – Exegesis Vs Eisegesis (#8)

Text : **Gen. 11: 1-9**

INTRODUCTION :

- A. What's the longest standing positive relationship you have ?**
1. How have you managed to maintain that long-term relationship ?
 - a. Seeking commonness
 - b. Avoiding conflict
 - c. Being loving and considerate
 2. Learning to maintain and to establish relationships is an essential skill.
 - a. Life on earth requires relationships. (*Man is a herd animal, co-dependent.*)
 - b. People skills are routinely evaluated in job interviews.
 - c. Success is most often dependent upon one's ability to interact well with others.
- * **Illustrate a brilliant man who could not hold a job because he lacked people skills.**
3. One principle is fundamental to all non-combative relationships.
- B. Communication is the most fundament element to any positive relationship.**
1. When communications break down a relationship begins to become confrontational.
 2. Improving communications is consistently listed as one of the top issues for business.
 3. As well, the breakdown of communications :
 - a. Can destroy lifelong friendships.
 - b. Is the first step in dissolving a marriage.
- C. When God wanted to divide mankind, He destroyed their ability to communicate.**
1. **Text ... Genesis 11: 1-9**
 2. In Vs. – 6 God gave the keys to accomplishment :
 - a. They were together.
 - b. They were unified in purpose.
 - c. They were able to communicate well.
 3. These three ingredients can be applied to most any productive relationships.
 - a. With spouse, friends and family
 - b. With employer and coworkers
 - c. With God.

D. Inaccurate communications destroy relationships.

1. Some people deliberately distort communications.
 - a. They want to do harm to one considered an enemy. (*false teachers called deceivers*)
 - b. They want their perspective to supersede that of another. (*global warming*)
2. Misunderstandings skew communications.
 - a. Some people do not express themselves clearly.
 - b. More often people don't listen well. (*Listening skills are as important as speaking.*)
3. Everyone listens through the filter of their own life experiences.
 - a. The speaker and the hearer may interpret the same words differently.
 - b. This is why missionaries study cross-cultural communications, but people of similar backgrounds erroneously assume sameness.
4. People often misunderstand because they hear what they want to hear.
 - a. People who want their children to do well interpret everything in their favor.
 - b. People who hate another person hear evil in everything they say.
Titus 1:15- To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.

E. We bring these simple facts to our memory because they all directly relate to our relationship with God.

1. Man must establish and maintain a positive relationship with God.
2. Maintaining a relationship with God requires one to :
 - a. Seek commonness (*realizing that God is sovereign and He sets the standard*)
 - b. Avoid conflict (*Since God is sovereign man must submit to God's reign.*)
 - c. Loving God with all our heart, soul and mind is the foundation. (**Matt. 22: 37**)
3. One cannot maintain a relationship with God without good communications.
 - a. We must realize that God does not think like man thinks. (*cross-cultural*)
 - b. We must learn to listen to Him with open ears, **seeking** what HE has to say to us. (*Not seeking what we want to hear.*)

Note : One who goes to the scriptures to prove what he already believes is not seeking the mind of God, but is seeking to reaffirm his own thoughts.

- c. Only those who relate to God on a spiritual level can understand Him. The person with worldly values cannot understand spiritual things.

I Cor. 2:14- But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

The longer one walks with God, the greater should become his familiarity with the mind of God AND the deeper ones relationship with God the greater his desire to accurately understand what God is communicating to him.

I. The universal principles of communication also apply to the bible.

A. When God writes He has one principle that He is communicating.

1. When you write something you know exactly what you want to communicate.
 - a. News
 - b. Request
 - c. Instructions
2. God has a reason for everything He has written. (*One meaning, one truth*)
 - a. The objective of all the writings is not the same, but all have an objective.
 - b. One sins against God when he uses God's words to prove something other than that which God intended to be proven by those words.
 - c. Such remains true even when one misapplies words to prove something that is true.

ILL. - John 9: 31- We know God does not hear sinners ...

- i -> This is often incorrectly used to teach a truth; i.e., sinners do not have a prayer relationship with God. (cf- Isa. 59: 1-2)
- ii -> This passage accurately quotes an uninspired man.
- iii -> The context is the rejection of and opposition to Jesus by Jewish leaders.

*** Any text taken out of context is but a pretext.**

3. For one to state that "*Everyone has his own interpretation.*" is a rejection of God.
 - a. It says that God does not have the ability to clearly communicate with man.
 - b. In fact it says, "*I will take it to mean what I want it to say irrespective of God.*"
- * God has a will and He knows how to communicate it. WE MUST SEEK HIS WILL.**

B. "Proof-texting" is a common practice which distorts the scriptures.

1. Christians must learn to properly handle the scriptures.
 - a. This is a direct command.

II Tim. 2: 15- Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

- b. Those who mishandle the scriptures do so to their own destruction.

II Peter 3: 15-16 Regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, ¹⁶ as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

2. Definition of Proof-texting.

- a. Internet dictionary : “Proof-texting is the practice of using decontextualised quotations from a document (often, but not always, a book of the Bible) to establish a proposition. Critics of the technique note that often the document, when read as a whole, may not in fact support the proposition.”
- b. Proof-texting distorts the true meaning of a passage of scripture because it lifts a fragment, a sentence or a paragraph out of context.

ILL- Bro. “A” writes, *“It is not good to ask John questions about the paint colors, because he is colorblind.”*

When Bro. “B” writes to Bro. “C” about a doctrinal question, he quoted Bro. “A”, *“Well, I would not ask John about that because Bro. “A” wrote ‘It is not good to ask John a question.’”*

Do you believe that Bro. “B” was fair to Bro. “A”?

Do you believe that Bro. “B” accurately represented Bro. “A”?

*** This is the proof-texting that is so commonly done to God's words.**

- c. Proof-texting is so common as to have become the norm for many.
3. Rather than study, people take a concordance and use every passage which has a phrase which lends credence to the proposition they are advancing.

II. Learning what God is communicating requires Exegesis NOT Eisegesis.

A. Definition of terms :

1. Exegesis : Analyzing passages from a document - often the Bible - to understand what it meant to its author and others in the author's culture.
2. Eisegesis : The process of taking a preconceived belief and interpreting a biblical passage in a way that supports that belief. This is very common, although the interpreter is not generally conscious of the process.

B. The longer one studies, the greater the danger of his study becoming eisegetical.

1. This is a major obstacle to the growth of one's understanding.
2. Consequently, it is an ENORMOUS problem among preachers or advanced students.

ILL. - Story of student asking to be taught by Chinese martial arts master. Master refused, but student tried to persuade the master to accept him. The master told the boy to pour him a cup of tea. The boy said he could not because the cup was already full. The master explained, “That was why I cannot teach you; your cup is already full.”

Our challenge is to bow before God with an empty cup seeking to be filled.

III. An example of Eisegetical interpretation of scripture.

A. Eisegetical lesson on “The Importance Of Church Attendance”

1. Text ... **II Chron. 27: 1-2** Jotham was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And his mother’s name was Jerushah the daughter of Zadok. **2** He did right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Uzziah had done; however he did not enter the temple of the Lord. But the people continued acting corruptly.
2. Main points of lesson :
 - a. Jotham was a good king, but he did not go to church so he fell short spiritually.
 - b. If Jotham had gone in the temple he could have influenced the people to do so.

B. Exegesis of **II Chron. 27:1-2** requires understanding of the context.

1. The reference to Jotham NOT entering the temple stems from **II Chron 26 : 16-20.**

16 But when he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly, and he was unfaithful to the LORD his God, for he entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense **17** Then Azariah the priest entered after him and with him eighty priests of the LORD, valiant men. **18** They opposed Uzziah the king and said to him, “It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful and will have no honor from the LORD God.” **19** But Uzziah, with a censer in his hand for burning incense, was enraged; and while he was enraged with the priests, the leprosy broke out on his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the altar of incense. **20** Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and behold, he was leprous on his forehead; and they hurried him out of there, and he himself also hastened to get out because the LORD had smitten him. **21** King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death; and he lived in a separate house, being a leper, for he was cut off from the house of the LORD. And Jotham his son was over the king’s house judging the people of the land.
2. The proper lesson about Jotham :
 - a. He was more faithful than his father, because he did not go into the temple.
 - b. He learned from his father’s mistake.
 - c. Jotham might be criticized for not having removed the places of idol worship.

CONCLUSION :**In this lesson we have seen that :****A. Relationships depend upon open and honest communication.**

1. This same principle applies to our relationship with God.
2. God communicates to us through His inspired word, the bible.

B. In order to communicate with God, we must study His word.

1. No relationship is sustainable without communication.
2. No relationship is sustainable when one party does all of the communicating.

** This is why people who can't speak developed sign language.*

3. Prayer is important, **BUT** studying God's word is equally important.

C. Communication requires understanding of that which is communicated.

1. Understanding requires effort.
2. Understanding requires attentive listening. (*concentration and study over time*)

ILL. - *A Student asked many questions because he paid more attention to writing his notes than to listening to the teacher's lesson.*

3. We must pay close attention to what we learn from God's word.
Reading a verse here and there will never produce understanding. (Psa 119: 160)

D. That which is communicated must be used properly if relationship is maintained.

1. You cannot maintain a relationship with a person if you misrepresent them to others.
2. One must put forth the effort to learn the context of each passage they use.
3. God's word never changes ... there is only one book to learn ... we can learn it.

The sum of it all is : *"How much do I value my relationship with God?"*

INVITATION :

Do you have a relationship with God ?