

DANGERS TO AVOID IN THE STUDY OF YOUR BIBLE:

DANGER #1: *Beware forcing the Bible to say what you want it to say.* People often wish to avoid any passage of Scripture which is in conflict with their lifestyle. Many have abused and misused the passage where Paul advised Timothy to *"use a little wine for thy stomach's sake"* to justify social drinking. Thus they change or force the meaning of a verse or passage. More often, in fundamentalist circles, there is a tendency to read into the Bible something we want it to say. For example, some churches exert "standards" which are not biblical upon the church members and other preachers and churches and misuse a verse or passage to support their "conviction."

ILLUS.: Some fundamentalist preachers decided that the use of an overhead projector or (now) the use of Power Point and /or computer presentations along with preaching or teaching was "liberal." They reasoned that these presentations meant that the speaker was not "preaching" in the biblical sense of the Word. *"The Bible is filled with object lessons, visions, illustrations and drama. It baffles this writer why anyone would not want to use any method available to better communicate and enhance the message of God's Word. People may forget what they hear. However, they seldom forget what they see and hear. That is the value of visuals – Jesus used them constantly."* - Standards and the Standard, Dr. Ken Blue (It is interesting to note that while some fundamentalists are bickering over using technology in their ministries, the cults, isms and neos are beaming their doctrines around the world by satellite!)

NOTE: There is a difference between a "conviction" and a "standard." Any local church may apply standards to the membership at their discretion, but they should be careful that they don't call that arbitrary "standard" a Bible-based "conviction." For example, we may insist that all church leaders (pastor, deacons, musicians, and anyone who is on the platform of our church) wear shirts and ties or a certain type of dress, or not have facial hair but that should not be categorized as a Biblical "conviction." Preferences are not convictions. We often demand "chapter and verse" for others who may differ with us, but fail to produce chapter and verse for our standards. Standards are good, but they should not be forced on others without biblical basis or in the guise of a conviction.

DANGER #2: *Beware reading someone else's mail.** We have already spoken about the three classes of humanity designated by the Apostle Paul: the Jew, the Gentile and the Church of God. It is wrong to take something addressed to one of these groups and apply it to the other. In the Bible we have several different classes of believers as well. The same danger applies.

Old Testament Believers
New Testament Believers
Tribulation Believers
Millennium Believers

When a writer of Scripture addresses one of these groups or individuals in a book of the Bible or an epistle, it is dangerous to apply whatever is written to another group. This is where the cultists get into trouble. But the danger is for all of us.

Paul's epistles (those in which the first word is "Paul" – Romans through Philemon) are letters which contain *Church Age doctrine*. It becomes dangerous to attempt to read Church Age doctrine into the Gospels or even the book of Acts (which is transitional) or books like Hebrews and Revelation which deal primarily with saints in the Tribulation. Although we may make applications to the Church Age from these other books, we must be careful when *"opening other people's mail"* and making the Bible say something to us which was not meant for us. *(We may receive someone else's mail, but we had better be careful applying the contents to ourselves as if it was meant for us.)*

ILLUS.: This is the problem in Charismatic circles where they take passages dealing with tongues and healing and attempt to apply them to the church today. It is also the problem manifesting itself more and more in so-called "Bible" churches and their stealing of promises and covenants made with Israel and applying them to the church. This is called Replacement Theology. The Covenant Theology churches (main-line Protestant churches) do the same thing with equating circumcision of infants (Israel) with infant baptism. (Baptism is for the Church Age, and there are no passages where infants are baptized in the New Testament.) They "read the mail" written to Israel in the O.T. and apply it to the Church today.

* One Book Rightly Divided, Dr. Douglas D. Stauffer