

Abusing the Bible - Nader Mansour

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This study is on “Abusing the Bible.” This is one of the most common ways that Christianity is misrepresented. Today there are all manner of teachings that are presented as Biblical, and yet they are at the most, foolishness. There are the most nonsensical presentations being promoted as truth. It becomes a little bit overwhelming to navigate the ideas and concepts out there. It is a challenge for all of us. There are ministers, ministries and churches who dedicate their time to promoting these ideas, and most of the time they have nothing to do with the Bible, but instead are an utter abuse of the Word of God. In this study today we will explore this trend where there is a systematic abuse and twisting of the Word of God. What is so tragic is the large number of followers who believe it, subscribe to it and are zealous in promoting and sharing it. The question is, how can we be safe and how can we know for certain what the truth is? God’s messengers today are not only to present the truth, but they have the unhappy task of unmasking the error and dealing with the false teachings that exist.

Paul was a preacher of the gospel and he had to deal with a lot of problems in the area of false teachings. For example, in Corinthians there were teachers saying there was no resurrection. You could sense his frustration as he said if Christ is not risen your faith is vain. In Galatians it was all about false doctrine. Doctrine is a Biblical word that means a certain teaching or instruction.

Paul gave an instruction to Timothy that is relevant to us today. 1 Timothy 4:1-6, **“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; (2) Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; (3) Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. (4) For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: (5) For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.”**

Paul the older experienced mentor was warning the young preacher Timothy that there would come some who have departed from the faith and would be teaching doctrines of devils and be hypocritical liars, particularly in the last days. He gives him a list of these doctrinal errors or Satanic teachings. There is a lot more that can be added to Paul’s list as the devil’s doctrines are many. There is one Christian group, Roman Catholics, that forbids its priest from marriage. The Bible teaches that it is not good for men to be alone. There are many other examples, but the important thing is that we are living in those latter times where there would be a profusion of various false teachings that would be commonplace. Then Paul says in verse (6) **“If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.”**

We are to be reminded today that this is what the Spirit of God gave to Paul. Every good minister has to be reminded and he must remind his flock, understanding how these things came about. More importantly, how can we avoid the teachings of Satan, especially when they do not sound like they came from Satan, but from the Bible. In verse 1 it says these teachers would depart from the faith. They are not outsiders, but they are people who are our very own brethren. They stray from the truth and begin to teach these false teachings. There is a twofold warning that Paul is telling Timothy about, false teachers and false teachings. We will look at both; but the teachers will be first.

In Romans 16:17, 18, Paul gives us the motive and style of false teachers. **“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. (18) For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”** Here it reveals to us their motives. By serving their belly, it means they have a selfish agenda. Their manner and their style is, that they are using good words in flowery speeches. They are charismatic and are elsewhere described in scripture as wolves who come in among the flock.

In 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 it gives further description, **“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. (14) And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. (15) Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”** Ministers of righteousness, only in appearance. But they are apostles of Satan. A wolf in sheep’s clothing is an apt description, but what is worse? It would be a wolf in shepherd’s clothing, because he can take out many more sheep. A leader who is appearing as a minister of righteousness, but he is not. False teachers are appearing smooth, charming, charismatic and good with words, convincing, engaging and so many will reason that what they say must be true. It sounds so good, so uplifting and smart. Paul’s point here is that the false teachers appear as the genuine. You cannot look at them and tell they are wrong, so there has to be some other means to tell if they are false teachers.

It is not up to us to go on a witch hunt and try to identify all the false teachers that exist. What is far more important is to learn to identify false teachings! The focus is not on the teachers, but on the teachings. Caution, not everything a false teacher says is wrong, because many times the error is attached to the truth. Here are some additional warnings given in other scriptures. 2 Peter 2:1 **“... false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies,”** next 2 Corinthians 4:2 **“... handling the word of God deceitfully;”** next 2 Corinthians 2:17 **“... which corrupt the word of God:”** next Galatians 1:7 **“... perverting the gospel of Christ.”**

There’s an underlying trend and an underlying theme; any false teaching promoted by any false teacher twists and abuses the Word of God. It is important for us and it was what Paul was telling Timothy, to identify when that occurs. Then it doesn’t matter who is speaking and teaching, so long as you are able to tell if it is according to God’s Word; if they are twisting the truth. The false doctrine is not only promoted by the teacher, but by his followers as well.

This is why Paul gives Timothy, this additional advice in 1 Timothy 4:16: **“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”** Paul is saying take heed, watch out, make sure you continue in the true and right doctrine or teaching. Don’t deviate from rightly dividing the Word of truth. And this is key, for if you are able to comprehend and rightly divide the word, you are insulated from these doctrines of devils.

Here is another verse that a lot of people use and abuse, 2 Timothy 2:15, **“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”** Paul give Timothy and us the method of how to do it. A lot of people abuse this verse by the wrong interpretation of the first word study. Thinking that word means open the Bible, read and have a study. Actually, the word study means strive, or to be diligent, so as not to wrongly divide the word of truth.

It happened in the garden of Eden. The serpent used God's words and instructions in such a way as to cast doubt on them, causing Eve to eat from the tree. It happened when Christ had come out of the wilderness and Satan quoted the scripture correctly, but he misapplied it, by twisting the word. The common practice of every false teacher.

We are going to learn some tools so that we will rightly divide the word of truth. Every person who promotes anything Christian is using the same source, the Bible. So how are we to know if they are right? Keep in mind that if the presenter has a faulty message, then it guarantees a faulty conclusion and they are not rightly dividing the word of truth.

Here are the tools and principle number one and the most important, Jesus taught in John 16:13, **“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”** It is the promise of the Spirit, which requires earnest prayer and believing He has come to guide you into truth. The prayer should not be hasty. Here is another, 1 Corinthians 2:14, **“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”**

This is the problem as we give a prayer and remain as a natural man as we approach the Word of God. When we approach as a natural man the Spirit is not given and it results in strange reasoning and differing opinions. Just hastily praying for the Spirit is not enough. Earnest heartfelt prayer and believing honestly with the heart is necessary in seeking the truth in the word. With your mind and intelligence alone, you will not rightly divide the word of truth. A concordance and dictionary are helpful, but does not replace the leading of the Spirit. The Spirit will not lead a person to contradict what is in the Scriptures. This first principle is so important, it is foundational.

A big problem will exist when someone in a conversation is hearing the prayer for the Spirit, and has not set their prejudice and bias aside, and is then shown a very convincing scripture, or multiple scriptures, that show the clear evidence for the truth. The based one prefers to run to his scriptures that he believes supports his opposing view and actually does not. A good example is the trinity. When the church member who is a trinitarian is closed minded, a mountain of evidence will not be enough to open their mind, it is better to politely end the discussion.

The second important principle is **CONTEXT**. Context is looking at a specific verse and its fit in the immediate surrounding verses around it. Invariably it will clarify what the verse means. Context has a number of layers, and this is important to keep in mind. So, the **SURROUNDING VERSES** have their importance to what we are reading, but it doesn't stop there. The **CHAPTER** is the next layer of importance to understanding the verse we are reading. The next layer of importance is the **BOOK** and author we are reading. Too often people jump to another book and a different author, trying to explain what this author means. So, the next level of context is the **AUTHOR**. The author of Romans is Paul and the author of Colossians is also Paul. So, when you compare Paul's writing in one book on a particular subject with what he wrote in another book on the same subject, the understanding is much clearer, than if you try to use Peter to explain Paul. The next layer is **TESTAMENT** or covenant. People use verses in the Old Testament and apply them to the New Testament or vice versa. This can be tricky and is often misapplied. All the above layers are important in their order and should be used so as not to skew the meaning into an incorrect understanding of the verses studied.

Here is an example of scriptures given different meanings because of being taken out of context. Leviticus 23:44, **“And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts (moed), of the LORD.”** The word, feasts, comes from the Hebrew word moed (mow-wide). It is given here in the context of the Old Testament, with all the laws and instructions that God gave at Sinai. What people do is couple it with a verse where moed is used in Genesis 1:14. **“And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons (moed), and for days, and years:”** In this verse, the word seasons is from the Hebrew word moed. So, what do the people conclude? That the feasts were given at creation. That is reading scripture and disregarding context. The feasts were given in the context of after sin entered the world and not before. The context is after God led the people out of Egypt and was given with the promise of blessing if they obey. But the context in Genesis 1:14 is in a perfect world without sin, on the fourth day of creation, before the creation of man. You cannot force the meaning because it is the same Hebrew word. To show how ludicrous this reasoning is, look at Jeremiah 8:7. **“Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times (moed); ...”** The conclusion would be that the stork keeps the feasts. That is the conclusion I would have to come to if I am consistent with this method of Bible study, by ignoring context. The Hebrew word moed does not always mean feast days; it actually means an appointed time. Feasts were an appointed time for the Jews in that system to worship at an appointed time in that manner. The sun and the moon were set in the heavens to have appointed seasons, not just the eventual appointed feast days.

Here is another popular one, 1 Corinthians 15:31, **“I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.”** How many times have you quoted these words? So, people say, we need to die to self, daily, because Paul said, “I die daily.” This example is taken out of context because Paul was not talking about the daily spiritual surrender. The concept of dying to self is good and correct, however, this is not what this verse is meaning. What do we have to do? Just look at the context. Here’s the previous verse, 1 Corinthians 15:30, **“And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?”** Here is the verse after it, 1 Corinthians 15:32, **“If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.”** Paul is talking about the difficult life-threatening experiences he is confronted with every day and that is why he said I die daily. Also, he is essentially saying if there is no resurrection, what is the point of me going through all this trouble? At the time he wrote this and in the context of his writing, he did not have in mind the daily spiritual surrender. In another verse elsewhere He said, “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live ...” and the daily surrender would be a more fitting example there. If however, we start expressing our faith in dying daily based on that scripture, what happens is we think that’s what the verse means and we start reading the scriptures in a different way. There are many more examples, but the important thing is to realize how important context is.

The full scope of the scriptures shows how important context is. Isaiah 28:9, 10 **“Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. (10) For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:”**

We are not to base a doctrine on a single text. False teachings are generally based on a few assorted texts taken out of context. It is important to identify them and why they are false. An example would be found in Matthew 12:40, **“For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth”** There are those who take this verse and say Christ could not have been crucified on Friday; it had to be

Wednesday. The problem is they are saying it is a literal 3 days and 3 nights totaling 72 hours. Now we must examine the context to find the truth. What did Jesus mean when He said three days and three nights? Let us first look at examples in the Bible and it will explain it. Genesis 7:12, **“And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.”** A little later in verse 17 it says, **“And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth.”** Forty days and forty nights compared with forty days; is it a longer period or the same? The same.

Here is another example: Matthew 4:2 **“And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.”** In Mark 1:13 it says, **“And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.”** Again, same thing. How long was Jesus in the wilderness? Forty days and forty nights, or forty days. It’s exactly the same. So, when Jesus says three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, it’s exactly the same as saying three days. So why did Jesus say three days and three nights? Because He was quoting Jonah. Jonah could have said three days and Jesus in quoting Jonah would then have said three days. Without reading all the context, it can lead to the false conclusion. Further context would show He died on the preparation day, was in the tomb on the Sabbath and rose on the dark part of Sunday.

False conclusions in reading Scriptures out of context have led to the false conclusion of Sunday sacredness. Eternal torment in hell fire, is another example of using a handful of scriptures, even a parable, taken out of context and ignoring the many scriptures that prove the real truth, led to that false and dangerous twisted doctrine of eternal fire and torment. How do we read?

Regarding consistency; when you interpret a passage in a way that contradicts the same author elsewhere, you’re inconsistent. Consistency is very important when you are quoting the authors. Paul for example is one of those authors, that according to some people, contradicts himself; but is really poor interpretation. An example would be Colossians 2:16, 17. **“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: (17) Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.”** Paul here is talking about the new moons, the sabbaths, the feast days and all the aspects of the ceremonial laws and he calls them shadows of things to come. Well, some people will say these shadows are still needed today because they help us access the reality. The apostle Paul uses that word shadow, only two other times. In Hebrews 8:5, talking about those ministering, **“Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.”** The other verse is Hebrews 10:1, **“For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.”** Paul is telling us that these former things were a shadow of good things to come; but now that we have the reality, we no longer need the shadow. So, to interpret Colossians 2 to say that this shadow (feast days) is to be maintained, when elsewhere the same author says the shadow is gone and we no longer have to keep them. To say that we are to maintain the shadow is to say that Paul contradicts himself. It is tragic because of those weaker in the faith are swept into the false teaching.

Some have said that shadow can be a good thing because the shadow of Peter has healed people near where he walked. Unbelievable! So Paul was using shadow as a metaphor of the old

covenant? Peter's shadow was literal and has no connection to the subject. The problem is that when a false teacher wants to believe something, he usually will find scriptures to make it fit. This is a prime example of twisting the scriptures to make it fit. Paul was consistent in his teaching.

Here is another one, 2 Peter 1:20, **“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.”** Peter is telling us that scripture interprets scripture and no private interpretation should replace that fact. People are not supposed to read a verse and say this is what the scripture says to me. No private interpretation. It's not important what we think a scripture means. What is important is what God intended it to mean and we find out by using additional scripture that clearly interprets it. What we really want to know is exactly what God wants us to know by inspiring the author and letting scripture give the clear explanation, without our interpretation of what we think it says or should say.

Now looking at the word or words, begotten, or only begotten. What does that mean, not according to theologians, but according to the Bible? It's only used in the Bible 9 times. It always means the same thing. It means born or only born. However, people say when it comes to Christ its different. They say it means unique, not really born. It doesn't matter how many people will hope that is true, the fact is that, that is a private interpretation.

We need to prove all things and hold fast that which is good. It is so important to employ the principles employed in this study, so as to avoid a false understanding.

Many people will embrace a false teaching or doctrine because they like and trust the presenter, or because it sounds good. Then when you ask them questions; they are unable to explain it, because they haven't tested it. Oftentimes we are either lazy or unable to take the time to test it, and so we accept something and since the majority accept it, it must be so. Time passes and error can take a stronghold and we will say we believe such doctrine without testing it. We should never blindly accept a doctrine without testing it.

Now we will deal with another aspect and that is, “bogus tools and abuses.” We have already looked at some good tools and the results of using them or not using them. The bogus tools are how many people study the Bible and arrive at strange ideas and conclusions. They will be in no particular order and the first one we will look at is “Two or three witnesses.” Some people will take two or three verses and say here is the truth. However, God gave this instruction to the judges in Israel when hearing a case, that the testimony from the mouth of two or three witnesses would be used to help determine whether one should be put to death or to determine that a matter was established.

Someone along the way decided that this same principle should be applied to Bible study. It sounds good, but it is utter nonsense because it goes contrary to God's word. God does not need to repeat something before it is valid; but that is what we are saying with two or three witnesses (verses). Many single scriptures need no further explanation. But if we make two or three witnesses a principle, we render the word of God meaningless, because God never said you study the word of God by going to two or three witnesses. When you apply it practically; it will totally collapse. Here is why that method of study is nonsense. When you quote a verse from Luke and compare it with a verse from Acts, there are two witnesses. When God said two or three witnesses, He meant two or three different people. Luke and Acts were written by one author; Dr. Luke. That is one witness. If you quote Romans and Ephesians, that's not two witnesses since Paul wrote both. It is one witness in two books. Same if you

quote Galatians and Colossians; one witness because it is the same author. It is a bad principle for Bible study.

Here is an illustration as to why. Many things we hold to, have a single scripture for support. Do we throw them out? The 70 weeks prophecy in Daniel is mentioned only once, so where is the other witness? The expression "new covenant" is mentioned only once in the Old Testament by Jeremiah. Is that a false prophecy because no one else said it? No, so maybe we should just throw out the two or three witness form of Bible study.

Another bogus form of Bible study is when words sound the same, even though they are in a different language. For example: the word Amen, usually said at the end of a prayer. People have been known to say that sounds like the Egyptian god Amun. (Ancient Egyptian god of the sun and air). Another is the name Jesus sounds like the Egyptian god Zeus. So, the people who believe this way say we should not say Amen or use the name Jesus, because it is of pagan origin. They even write books about such things. We laugh, but the tragedy is that some people believe this nonsense. People will read these things, then believe it and change their behavior and how they communicate with the God of heaven, based on these ideas. The leaders who push this stuff, don't even speak the languages that they are building a belief around. People who actually speak those languages, do not believe in this foolishness.

Here is another bogus form of Bible study, "Spiritualizing the literal." The example is in Galatians 3:17, talking about the covenant. **"And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect."**

He is talking about the Old Covenant and calls it the law. He said it came in 430 years after the promise was made to Abraham, as the point in time when the covenant was given, a specific point in time. In the next chapter, Galatians 4:24, it says, **"Which things are an allegory: for these things are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar."** So, people read the second verse and say, see, the covenant is an allegory. What does an allegory mean? It is usually a story with a hidden meaning; a metaphor, or something that means something else. So, what they do is, they say the covenant is an allegory and they use this allegory to discount the literal application of the covenant that the author said in the previous verse. So, what they then will say is that the covenant is an allegory representing a heart condition or mindset; and that's right, and this is how Paul applies it, as an allegory. But then they take the contradictory leap and say, they don't have any existence in time. But Paul just told us in the previous verse cited, that the law came in 430 years after Abraham. That is a particular point in time that you can identify. That's Mount Sinai. But then they come back saying, no, no, it's all allegorical, it's all spiritual. They completely miss the meaning of what the author was intending. They are using the one to discount the other. What God intended to be the real and literal; they are insisting on it being allegorical only.

Now the opposite is also a problem by literalizing the symbol. Sometimes God gives symbols and people take them literally. The most common one that people use and abuse is In Revelation 13:8 it says, **"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world."** These people are saying Christ was slain somehow, from the foundation of the world. This is a symbol and there is nothing that caused Christ to die at the foundation of the world. This is a good example of why context is important. Same book, same author, different chapter, Revelation 17:8, **"... and they that dwell on the earth shall**

wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.” These two verses are saying the same thing and it is all about the Book of Life whose owner is Christ, the slain Lamb, and the names that are written in the book of life after creation. This is allowing John in 17:8 to explain what he had written in 13:8. The book of life existed from the foundation of the world. The book’s owner was the slain Lamb, actually slain in the Spring of 31 AD. However, the plan for Christ to die for humanity was originated before creation, so that in the event man should sin. Revelation uses a lot of symbolic language that is not to be taken literally.

Eisegesis – A fancy Greek word for inserting your own opinion in the blanks in Scripture. There are no blanks in scripture, but people insert their opinion anyway. People are reading into scripture their conclusions, opinions and ideas that generally have nothing to do with it.

Isaiah 6:3 demonstrates the absurdity of this method. **“And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.”** They will say holy, holy, holy is three and that means the trinity. It’s not two or four. These are people who have decided the trinity is the truth and are looking for it in verses, and they read their own meaning into the verse. In that passage, the angels are crying holy, holy, holy to only one person and not three.

The alarming thing is that there are theologians with degrees from universities who share stuff like this. It is an utter abuse of the word of God. When a person is reading verses in this manner, how are they supposed to arrive at a correct understanding when they read other verses? We must conclude the following when reading Jeremiah 7:4, **“Trusting not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these.”** So, are we to conclude that there were three temples in Jerusalem? No there was only one, yet this illustrates how this line of Bible study is so ridiculous.

Luke 10:41 is another example. Jesus was at the home of Martha and Mary and the scripture says, **“And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things ...”** And so people who use this type of conclusive Bible study, even non-trinitarians, will say, Martha, Martha. That is two, the Father and the Son. Another time in Luke 22:31, **“And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.”** Some will say, see two, the Father and the Son. We must not read the scriptures and see the Father and the Son where they are not. For a non-trinitarian to see the Father and the Son in these two examples, is no less an abuse of the Bible than a trinitarian seeing the trinity in holy, holy, holy.

When we look at the structure, when we look at the truth, it will have a certain structure of doctrine and we can liken it to the framework in building a house. Our framework of understanding is where certain things fit in their place, so that we will have a neat and harmonious building. What happens many times is people will not believe something if it doesn’t fit in their structure.

Everything needs to be examined based on the foundation. Many times, we hear about something and it sounds impressive, and we say look how many books are written about it, see how many DVD’s are available on that subject, and look how many people go to the camp meetings to hear even more. Subconsciously this says something to us that there must be some validity of what this is about. The books are thick and filled with quotes and it produces an underlying belief that this must be true. One person may have studied the subject for 20 years and written many books and articles on the subject. But the truth is, it can all be utter nonsense.

Instead of rushing to a belief in what may be a lie, we need to examine the foundation and ask, what are the key pillars this foundation is built on? You need to have the ability to zoom in on these key verses, to determine if the foundation is sound. If the foundation is not sound, we should have no interest in entering the house. Any teaching or doctrine can be boiled down to key (pillar) scriptures on what the subject is about. If they are sound, then you can proceed. However, if they are not sound, proceed with caution or proceed no further. A good example of that is the trinity. The whole edifice of the trinity is built on a few quotes. Books and literature, DVD's and videos; all kinds of stuff. The foundation and the whole structure of the trinity is not sound.

Another very bogus tool is accepting something because it feels good. Accepting something because it feels right makes no sense. It's the method that the Morrmons use. They give you the Book of Mormon and tell you to read it. Then they say if it feels right, you will have discovered the truth. They don't tell you to test it by the word of God, rather test it by your feelings, because our feelings are easily manipulated. Good speakers can manipulate the feelings and emotions of the people. Paul said they do that with flowery speech and nice words and all the time they are deceiving people. Feeling based doctrines are no way to interpret scripture.

The people who talk in unintelligible tongues, which many times are demonic manifestations, are found mostly in the Pentecostal churches. They will describe to you how amazing and good it feels, to have this feeling come over you when you are speaking in tongues. There is nothing you can show them in the scriptures that can persuade them from their belief.

Then there are those who attend a feast day camp and conclude that it felt so good; it must be true. This is why people accept it. Feeling based doctrines are not necessarily Biblical.

Another belief is regarding the majority. They will say, if you people, who are non-trinitarian, believe it is the truth about God, how come everyone else in the church can't see it? All these theologians and evangelists; how come they don't see it? Numbers, the truth is based on numbers. Numbers and feelings are things that color our judgment.

The last thing we want to cover is the SDA message of abuse. The SDA message of abuse has to do with the writings of Ellen G. White. How we use Ellen White to abuse the Bible. One would ask, is that even possible? It is much more common than you think. Here is the problem. They use Ellen White to interpret the Bible. She was not given to interpret the Bible. Some people will say that Ellen White was a divinely inspired commentary on the Scriptures. That is not true. She was inspired, but not as a commentary on the Scriptures and here is why. Commentaries address every Scripture; which she did not. Commentaries go through the Bible and explain every verse. God did not have His prophet do that. It's like the church is saying read the Spirit of Prophecy and you will be fine. This is how many people view the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy. In fact, many people study the Bible by typing words into the search on the Ellen White CD-rom.

Sometimes in sermons, it is believed the verse has more effect when it is quoted by Mrs. White. So, at the end of her quote, you have the scripture read and the book source. People think the verse means much more in the setting of her writings. Then if the presenter has the sermon richly peppered with Ellen White quotes, it must be true. What is happening is the word of God is diluted and abused, causing the word of God to not have the relevance and meaning that it should, because it has been watered down. When you share something from the Bible, many say well, what does Ellen White say? What may have been shared from the Bible is clear, plain and true, Biblically. But people will hesitate

from accepting it because they are used to not taking the Bible alone for what it says. They want it affirmed and confirmed by the Spirit of Prophecy. It is impossible to do that with every verse of scripture because she did not comment on every verse of scripture. So, with those verses that have no comment from Mrs. White, do we discard them?

The most glaring example of this problem is when you share numerous scriptures about the Father and the Son, verse after verse, crystal clear, yet people will say, well, “third person of the Godhead”. And that answers all. Many times, Mrs. White is held above the Scriptures. That is not the purpose of the Spirit of Prophecy. We should love and read the Spirit of Prophecy and we should study it; but it is not the way we should study the Bible. We are not to study the Bible through what Ellen White says only, because that is limited in scope. There are beautiful treasures and beautiful meanings in her writings; but listen to what *she wrote* for our understanding in studying the Bible, found in Evangelism 256.2. ***“The testimony of Sister White should not be carried to the front. God’s Word is the unerring standard. The testimonies are not to take the place of the Word. ... Let all prove their positions from the Scriptures and substantiate every point they claim as truth from the revealed Word of God.”*** --- Letter 12, 1890.

Sister White wrote many more statements just like that. She did not want her writings to be used to prove what a scripture was saying, rather let Scripture interpret Scripture. So, do we establish our beliefs and teachings from the Word of God or the Spirit of Prophecy? It is an abuse of Scriptures that is among us, using the writings of Ellen White, and the writings of others Sister White endorsed and supported. Many times, our Bible studies are not a Bible study at all. It is actually the lazy way, where someone opens their Bible, then does a computer search, finds a quote, no thinking, just find a quote. This is a sad abuse of the writings. When quoted so often it actually turns a lot of people off. It’s like when you present a Scripture, it’s not enough.

God said in Isaiah that He talks to people who tremble at His Word. When God said it, God means it. She wrote this in Great Controversy, ***“But God will have a people on the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. ... Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain “Thus saith the Lord in its support.”*** (GC 595.1) When she says a “Thus saith the Lord”, she means a Scripture verse or verses. Ellen White is not equal to the Scriptures. Yes, her writings are inspired, but they are not equal to the Scriptures. They are a lesser light that is subordinate to the Scriptures. The Scriptures test the Spirit of Prophecy, not the other way around. There is a phrase that is very common, and many people say it, “I’ll believe it if it’s according to the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.” Okay, but in our minds, we are treating them as equals, which begins to dilute the Word of God. Now they don’t contradict, and her writings are in harmony, with the Word of God. It is our doctrines that are to be based on the Word of God.

When the time of trouble comes and we are brought into the courts to appear before judges, are we going to quote the Spirit of Prophecy? You’re going to quote the Bible. But many times, people are better at quoting the Spirit of Prophecy than they are at quoting the Bible.

Listen to this poem that someone wrote that states the matter well. It’s called, “Sister White said it.”

“Sister White said it, well I never really read it; but someone said she said it, so of course it must be so.

To prove my point, I'll quote it; though I can't show you where she wrote it, but someone said she said it, and that's all I need to know.

It saves a lot of time for me, if I just listen carefully, when others speak of Sister White, and they say what she said.

Though I can't repeat it word for word, I'll tell you what I think I heard, and quote you things from Sister White, that no one ever read."

This is so true. In our comments and our discussions, it comes up so often, Mrs. White said this; Mrs. White said that; and many times, it's true. But here is one that is said so often, but the source of the quote is a mystery. They say that Mrs. White said that when Satan rebelled, he had half of the angels convinced and then some came back and it was only a third that were cast out with him. Many state this, but it seems no one can find the reference.

Scribe note: Nader says that he has heard this mentioned by numerous people internationally; but has never been able to find such a quote regarding half the angels and would appreciate that anyone knowing the source to contact him. I too have heard this; but I have never read such anywhere. RV

Nader's final thought: Whenever we come to the Scriptures, we need to take into account, what Christ accomplished on the cross. In order to rightly divide the word of truth, we must understand what Christ accomplished on the cross. Paul said, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." We should not attempt to interpret Scripture without taking into account, what Christ's accomplished on the cross, and what that means to the plan of salvation. And understanding that before the cross there is an Old Covenant and there's a New Covenant afterwards, and all these elements aid us in rightly dividing the word of truth, and understanding what the cross really accomplished.

Our last scripture is John 7:38, 39, **"He that believes on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (39) (But this spoke he of the spirit, which they that believe on him shall receive: For the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified.)** You cannot fully understand what this verse means without the cross. When we say the cross, we mean the whole package of the death and resurrection of Christ. It's not just when He died on the cross and that's it. The cross is a symbol of Christ's victory over Satan; He was victorious through death. The resurrection is the seal and the illustration and the manifestation and the outgrowth of that. And so, it's the whole package.

What Jesus was talking about is something that would come as a result, of what He would accomplish. Of course, after His resurrection, He ascension and when He would be glorified, then that Spirit would come.

When we fail to realize the difference that the cross makes, we will have this standardized view of everything being the same before and after the cross. It will lead us to misunderstanding many things, particularly when it comes to the Old and New Covenants. This problem exists with many people today, which is common, borrowing elements from the Old Covenant and incorporating them into the New. It is because the cross is not taken into account when interpreting the Scriptures. This is a most important principle in understanding the Scriptures. So many people struggle with the fact that the Spirit Christ spoke of, was to be poured out on this side of the cross and not before. But that is what the verse was

saying. To believe otherwise is blindness. The key to understanding the New Testament is the cross. The cross ushered in the New Covenant. If you wish to have any hope in understanding the Word, particularly the New Testament section of it, you have to look at it in the light of the cross.

Nader's warning: Beware of false teachers, particularly false teachings, as that is how doctrines of devil are promoted today.