

Recommended videos on hermeneutics (Bible interpretation)

Humpty Dumpty & Bible interpretation -- Alice in Watchtower land

https://youtu.be/Z4u_swx2hN8

It is ironic that Lewis Carroll's most famous creations, "Alice in Wonderland" and "Through the Looking Glass", should be inspired by the daughter of one of England's greatest scholars, and written by a great logician and mathematician. For the most famous exchange in "Looking Glass" is one of most nonsensical, illogical -- and delightful -- dialogues which ever graced a page of English. Doubly ironic that the Victorian age's scholars and logicians are losing the battle for the public mind (?) to Humpty's descendants, who think that THEY -- not words nor ideas -- should be master!

Humpty Dumpty (part 2) -- Watchtower ignores rules of Bible interpretation

https://youtu.be/y7p7bsmzl_M

Hermeneutics -- It is absolutely crucial that we know this word and the concept it represents. If we do not master the rules of Bible interpretation, we will be forever at the mercy of arbitrary Bible teaching, or-- just as dangerous -- our own subjective imagination

Humpty Dumpty (part 3) No rules, no reliable resources, no Rock <https://youtu.be/sTZ459jh4JU>

The Watchtower, like all self-contained systems, has no Rock to anchor its tossing, restless imagination. Having no outside accountability, no reference point beyond itself, The Watchtower tells its adherents to have "faith in Jehovah's theocratic organization". Isn't putting faith in ANYTHING human idolatry?

Reason versus Revelation -- the Epistemology of Ecclesiastes (What JW org NOT telling)

<https://youtu.be/5UVGxAmXcao>

HOW do we KNOW? That is the key question for a branch of philosophy called EPISTEMOLOGY. Most of us get pretty deep into our lives before testing our core assumptions about how we know ANYTHING. We just assume our eyes, our ears, our other senses are telling us the TRUTH. And then -- another assumption -- we trust that our rational faculty can make proper sense of our sensory data. But how do we know we can TRUST our mind & our senses? And if you are one of Jehovah's Witnesses, you are committed to another leap of faith. You trust that the Bible, as authoritatively interpreted by "God's organization", will lead you into all truth. You even call your religion "the Truth". Because we tend to treat the Bible itself as a source book -- a set of convenient texts to prove what we think we know already -- we can easily confuse ourselves as to what Scripture intends to say. The books of Job, Psalms and Ecclesiastes particularly become problematic if we fail to recognize the epistemological claims of the texts themselves. Do the texts actually claim to be a word from God? And how can we call Scripture "the Word of God" if we cannot trust every part, even every word of it? Does this cautious approach to the "inspired text" make us LESS reverent -- or MORE?

INSPIRATION -- What JW org is NOT telling you about how to read the Bible (Ecclesiastes pt 4)

https://youtu.be/9wIC_f4F3kc

[thumbnail pic: The famous handbook on hermeneutics, "How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth", produced by two Biblical scholars of the first rank, Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart] Jehovah's Witnesses are not taught how to read the Bible. The Word of God, for JW's, is a collection of texts used to prove what the Watchtower has convinced them is TRUTH. JW's -- and they are not alone -- take their reasonings and conclusions INTO the text. They do not extract their beliefs FROM the text. This fallacious method of "Bible study" is called eisegesis. The only safe and sane way to study Scripture is EXEGESIS -- reading OUT of the Word, not reading into it. A sound view of inspiration will allow the Bible text to speak for itself. We do not have the liberty to MAKE the Bible say what we want it to

mean. We all come at the Word of God from our peculiar situations, circumstances and experiences. We ALL distort the Word in some way because of our prejudices, influences and human limitations. We see "through a glass darkly". We should therefore be extremely cautious about judging others because they do not come to the same conclusions as we do regarding specific Bible texts or Scriptural teachings.

INSPIRATION, JW's & JOB : Complications for conservatives - 4 views (What JW org NOT telling) <https://youtu.be/4FIZo2rBl3U>

[thumbnail pic: James Orr, "Revelation and Inspiration" -- one of the great books on the nature of the Bible's authority] The Book of Job is perhaps the best test case for views of Bible inspiration. Even non-believers call Job one of the most "inspired" of all literary creations. Fundamentalist Christians, however, would not be pleased at all with such a view of inspiration. They would tend to limit inspiration to the concept of a God-breathed book, even God-breathed words. That is, very conservative Christians would wish to tie the authority of the Bible to a verbally inspired text. Other conservative Christians would be more comfortable with a view which is more nuanced, which might tie the notion of inspiration more to the thoughts, concepts and doctrines, rather than the words. Such conservatives would be cautious too in their application of the word "inspired" to the entire content of Scripture. They might see multiple problems in such a flat surface approach to a multi-dimensional, historically-embedded set of documents. Then there is the problem of literary genres, which itself has multiple hermeneutical complexities built in.

Job's 8 voices -- Who is RIGHT? The implications for INSPIRATION (What JW.org NOT telling) <https://youtu.be/0AoGjJcmLTU>

When we dig in our heels about the Bible's inerrancy, we had better make sure our shoelaces aren't tied together. A nuanced view of Bible inspiration demands we exercise our whole MIND. Complications with a simplistic view of inspiration might be well illustrated from the book of Job. There are 6 human voices in the text of Job. How many of them are inspired? There are 3 non-human voices in the narrative -- if you count Eliphaz's "spirit guide". Which of the 3 can be trusted?