

Misapplied Passages

Often, people quote a Scripture to support their view. The responsibility we have is to “examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil.” **1Th 5:21-22**.

Misapplied passages in the time of Christ and the Apostles

1. **Mt 4:5-7** - How did Satan misapply the Scripture he referred to?
2. **Mt 22:23-33** - What error were these men attempting to uphold by their misuse of the Scriptures they referred to?
3. **2Pt 3:16** - In the time Peter lived, what did he warn his readers some would do when using the Scriptures?

Misapplied passages today

1. **1Pt 3:15** - “make a defense [*give an answer* KJV]...**with gentleness and respect**” ESV. Used to criticize strong and clear denunciation of sin, especially if it hurts one’s feelings.
“Texas-based reality stars and Christians Chris and Joanna Gaines have squared off against conservative hardliners over the casting of a same-sex couple in their new Magnolia Network series, *Back to the Frontier*. ... Chip and Joanna Gaines achieved popularity with their HGTV show *Fixer Upper* between 2013 and 2018, per USA Today.” Chip Gaines, when strongly reproved for their support of homosexuality, used 1Pt 3:15—“Chip defended his stance online, responding to critics with a Bible verse. ‘But in your hearts reverence Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,’ 1 Peter 3:15. He said on social media. ‘I really felt the hope, and gentleness and respect here.’” [ESV uses “respect” srf]. *Houston Chronicle*, article by By Eric Killelea, July 15, 2025
 - a. Compare the NAS95, NKJV, ESV. Make note of the differences in how the words following “with” (at the end of the verse) are translated.
 - b. Look up definitions of the English words, “gentle” (“gentleness”), and “respect.” (“Words are vehicles on which *thoughts* travel.” Note the potential different connotations of these words.)
 - c. Look up the English definitions of “reverence” (NAS95), and “meek” (“meekness”), and “fear” (NKJV).
 - d. Since these “buses” (vehicles—words) have different “passengers” (meanings), make notes about how different people might evaluate the following responses in defense of the truth—e.g., harsh? severe? gentle, kind? “disrespectful” or respectful”? with “meekness” or “arrogantly”?
[Note: here we are appealing to the law of *harmony* for interpretation and application. **Mt 4:7; Ac 15:15**]
 - i. **Peter** - Note: *Peter* wrote the text we are studying, and the examples cited are of *his preaching and writing*.
Ac 2:22-23; 2Pt 2:1,3,12,22; 3:16 — How might people today judge Peter’s words?
 - ii. **Stephen** - See **Ac 6:6** for the Holy Spirit’s appraisal of Stephen’s character.
When he debated the Jews, “giving answer” or “making a defense” for his faith in Jesus as the Christ, they could not disprove his arguments, **Ac 6:9-10**.
 - How might people today evaluate debating and showing people the error of their reasoning—kind? gentle? disrespectful of others’ beliefs? arrogant?
 - Later in his “defense” he became pretty “salty”! **Ac 7:51-53**. Did Jesus approve of him? (see **7:54-56,60**)
 - iii. **Jesus** - Note examples of Jesus’ defense of the truth, e.g. **Mt 22:23f...29; Jn 8:12-13...14-15.....24...31-34...42-43...46-47...54-55**. Q: Did Jesus lack the attitude Peter encouraged Christians to have in their defense of their faith? How might you feel if Jesus spoke to you this way? How might he be judged if someone heard him speak this way to a friend, a family member, a religious person...?

Note the danger of being intimidated into saying nothing that might not be taken well (acting on anticipated *reaction*) rather than, in the interest of their spiritual well-being, telling someone what they need to hear. Also, be aware of the danger of *unjustly accusing* someone of an ungodly attitude.

2. **Mt 7:1 “Do not judge”** NASB; “Judge not” NKJV, ESV - used against someone who points out the error of one’s belief or practice.
- a. “Words are vehicles...” - The word (vehicle), “judge” can have different connotations (“passengers”).
 - i. What is the *basic* definition of the word?
 - ii. When people form an opinion about a person or their actions that they are good, is that “judging” in the basic sense of the word?
 - iii. When people form an opinion that you are wrong for “judging” someone, is that “judging” in the basic sense of the word? What do they mean? Have they “judged” you?
 - b. Based on the *context* of vv1-5, is Jesus forbidding making judgments about others, or warning about our attitudes and consistency in judging others? Explain based on statements in the context.

Our second rule of interpretation is the law of *harmony*.

- Jesus’ warning in **Mt 7:15-16** *requires* “forming an opinion or estimation of after careful consideration” [AHD]. What word used in **vv1-2** describes this thought process?
- What did Jesus exhort the people to do? **Jn 7:24**
- What responsibility does a local church have? **1Co 5:12**

Again, note the danger of being intimidated into *failing* to render “judgment” when we should! Also, beware of the danger of *unjustly “judging”* someone of being “judgmental”!