

1. We all approach the interpretation of Scripture with suppositions we have previously formed as a part of our personal theology
2. The Bible itself "presupposes" that:
 - a) the Bible is a divine book
 - it is supernatural in character
 - God is the author
 - it is absolute in its authority
 - it is completely trustworthy
 - it is a harmonious unity in all its parts
 - Jesus is the Old Testament's fulfillment
 - * in objects = e.g. bronze serpent
 - * in events = e.g. the feasts of Israel
 - * in the messianic prophecies
 - b) the Bible is a human book
 - it is natural in character
 - = from God through men to men
 - it is straight forward communication to be taken in its natural and ordinary sense
 - c) Jesus and the apostles viewed and treated the Bible as natural and also supernatural
 - their overwhelming use was in the original natural sense of the passage
 - d) these two presuppositions about the Bible have been, and are, often distorted and applied incorrectly

(2 Tim 3:16; Heb 4:12; 2 Pet 1:20-21)

3. There are four main faulty ways Christians have approached the interpretation of Scripture
 - you may have been affected by them
 - they may be influencing your current handling of the Word of God
 - we need to be aware of the problems and dangers associated with each of these approaches
4. Approaches to the interpretation of Scripture:
 - I** The **SUPERNATURALISTIC** Approach
 - In this approach
 - a) the interpreter seeks to find hidden meanings
 - hidden meanings are uncovered through intuition or spiritual experience
 - the hidden meaning rules in interpretation
 - the obvious meaning is ignored
 - b) the interpreter does not consider the author's intended meaning
 - the Bible is not its own authority
 - this approach adds to the Word of God
 - only the interpreter's ingenuity and imagination limit the "exciting" meanings
 - c) the interpreter may seek a hidden meaning for personal guidance
 - Scripture is used in a "magical" way to make decisions

- d) the danger = finding and applying meanings never intended by the author
- e) Jesus and the inspired authors are the only ones who can designate a hidden meaning
 - otherwise the interpreter assumes an authority equal to or superseding the author's
 - claiming biblical authority while setting aside the plain meaning is abuse of the Scripture
- f) Scripture is to be taken in its natural sense unless that does not make sense (e.g. symbolism or figures of speech)
- g) this approach was dominant until the 16th century
 - the Reformers took a firm stand against it
 - they were committed to the author's intended meaning

THE RESULT IS:

Hidden meanings rule in interpretation

II The **NATURALISTIC** Approach

III The **EXISTENTIALISTIC** Approach

IV The **DOGMATIC** Approach