

Intended Meaning

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[The] goal of Bible interpretation is to determine the original meaning of the text. This is called exegesis, reading the meaning out of the text, and is the opposite of eisegesis, reading a meaning into the text. If one person can make a Bible verse say what he wants it to say, and another person may say it means something else, something he wants it to mean, and if neither meaning is derived from the actual statement of Scripture, then we destroy the ability of the Bible to communicate as a normal piece of literature. Unless we accept the normal or natural sense of Scripture we have no controls in our approach to the Bible.

An issue sometimes discussed by biblical scholars is whether the goal of interpretation is to determine the intended meaning of the author or the intended meaning of the text. In one sense this is a fine distinction that some consider unnecessary. The “intended meaning of the author” or the “intended meaning of what the author wrote” would seem to be the same. However, can we really know what was in the mind of the biblical authors apart from what they have written? We cannot get **behind** a person’s writings to know his intentions. All we can do is look at what he actually wrote; it is in this way that we know his intended meanings.

(Basic Bible Interpretation: A Practical Guide to Discovering Biblical Truth by Roy B. Zuck, Kindle, Page 158 of 863)