

## **Interpreting the Bible Metaphysically**

By Rev. Paul Hasselbeck, Dean, Spiritual Education and Enrichment, Unity Village

When faced with a change or challenge, many people use the technique of closing their eyes and randomly opening the Bible, pointing to a scripture, and then reading it to find some guidance. Much comfort can be found in simply relating to the story as it is; other times it might not make any sense at all.

Knowing how to metaphysically interpret a scripture can add more depth to scripture that is already literally understood and perhaps give meaning to those scriptures that, on the surface, do not make sense. There is an extra bonus too! If a person can metaphysically interpret a scripture, then other books, movies and even songs can be metaphysically interpreted. The possibilities are endless.

Take, for example, the African-American spiritual, "Go Down Moses." That song, based on Exodus 5:1 is rich in meaning, which might not be fully appreciated initially. Here are some of the words:

Go Down Moses

Go down Moses  
Way down in Egypt land  
Tell 'ole pharaoh to  
Let my people go!

When Israel was in Egypt land...  
Let my people go!

A person randomly selecting these words by the "open-and-pick" method might not get anything useful from the literal understanding of the words. However, a metaphysical interpretation of these words results in a goldmine of meaning.

One method of Metaphysical Bible Interpretation uses a straightforward seven-step process:

1. Center into the awareness of Oneness (meditation or prayer) putting God first; this puts Christ Nature first.
2. Read the passage.
3. Paraphrase using your own words, if necessary, to create a simple framework and flow to the text. At this point all the minute details are not necessary. These may be added later to fill out the interpretation.
4. Place the nouns and pronouns and the action words into a metaphysical interpretation table (see example).

5. Look up the meanings of the words and put them in the table. A useful tool for the names of places and people is the *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary*, written by Charles Fillmore. Another tool from the Charles Fillmore Reference Library Series, *The Revealing Word*, gives meanings for more common words such as mountain, river, house, for example. These meanings are a starting point much like the meanings one can find for aspects of dreams. Other meanings of the words might occur to as you go along.
6. Read and/or write down a "clunky" version of the interpretation by simply reading down the interpretation column. Reading the words aloud can be helpful at this point.
7. Refine the interpretation.

In the example of the song, "Go Down Moses," it really was not necessary to paraphrase the passage as it is pretty simple just as it is. However, a bit more had to be added because some of the information is implied; for example, someone is speaking to Moses. And, who are "my people" in the phrase? Also, since we are familiar with the story, we know that the people are being held captive in Egypt by the Pharaoh.

<b>Noun, Pronoun, Place, Action</b>	<b>Metaphysical Definitions</b>	<b>Reading down the column on the left</b>
[God] (implied)	God Nature Christ Nature Christ Consciousness	Christ Consciousness tells, directs
[said] (implied)	Tells, directs, informs	
Go down		Go down Denial Draw forth Draw out
Moses	The "thou shalt not" side of the Law (denial) Draw forth Draw out	
Way down in		Way down in Material/sense consciousness
Egypt land	Material consciousness (a state of mind based on the belief in the reality of materiality, or things as they appear) Sense consciousness (a mental state that believes in and acts through the senses)	
Tell		Tell long-term ruling thought of material/sense
'ole pharaoh	Ruler, executive faculty Long-term ruling thought	

	(of Egypt–material/sense consciousness)	consciousness
to let	To release	To let, to release, Christ ideas, Spiritual thoughts, true ideas about Being Go.
my people [the people of Israel]	Christ Ideas Spiritual thoughts The thoughts of reality or the true ideas about Being that have to be brought out in every part of man's consciousness.	
go.		

*Employing a graph in which key words from scripture are listed (left column) and then given a metaphysical definition (middle column), one can understand these passages with new insight (right column).*

To get the “clunky” version, simply read the far right column out loud from top to bottom. Next, try to make some sense of it from your own level of consciousness and understanding. And, this is important: This story—all the characters, places and action—is taking place within your own consciousness! This is the exciting part because you are creating the meaning for yourself that makes the most sense for you. In a way, there is an intersection between the literal words, their meanings, and your state of consciousness. There are metaphysical interpretations of many stories that Unity has published. And, there is not a single right interpretation. The only requirement is that you keep to the story line and its components.

Indirectly, this song based on scripture tells us that spiritual thoughts can be held captive by our material/sense consciousness. This happens simply by what we focus on and give our attention. When the song is metaphysically interpreted it can now be understood as a method of how to release Spiritual thoughts that have become entrapped by material/sense consciousness. In a refined version it can mean something like this:

*Use Christ Consciousness to direct the use of denials deep into material/sense consciousness to root out, deny giving power to, an old “ruling” belief that has been holding spiritual thoughts (or true thoughts of Being) captive.*

Let’s look at another very familiar example from Matthew 18:20 from *The New Interpreter’s Study Bible, 2003*: “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” Many of us have taken much comfort from this scripture that instructs us to gather together in the name of Jesus and,

when we do, he will be there.” Even more meaning and helpful instruction can be gleaned from this scripture when it is metaphysically interpreted. Again, this one really does not need to be paraphrased and like the one from the Hebrew Scriptures, we have to add information. We have to add two or three what—people. And, who is speaking “in my name” and “I” referring to? Jesus Christ.

<b>Noun, Pronoun, Place, Action</b>	<b>Metaphysical Definitions</b>	<b>Reading down the column on the left</b>
Whenever	Whenever	Whenever two or more thoughts are gathered in Christ Nature
Two or three [people]	Two or three thoughts	
Are gathered in	Are gathered in	
My name	After Jesus Christ nature	
There shall	There will	There will Christ Nature Be
I	Jesus Christ	
Be	Be	

Again, read the right-hand column out loud from top to bottom. Then make some sense out of it to create a refined version. It might be something like this:

*Whenever two or three Christ-like thoughts come together, Christ Nature is there.*

We could refine it even more since we know that Christ Nature is always present; it is just that we have put our attention elsewhere. So, we could say,

*Whenever two or three Christ-like thoughts come together, Christ Nature comes into my awareness.*

This is very useful information! This is a method of getting out of negative thinking, error thinking, and sense consciousness. The moment we are aware, all we have to do is string together two or three Christ-like thoughts (affirmations) to shift awareness from negative thinking to the awareness of Christ Nature.

Metaphysical Bible interpretation is an effective tool to learn about our own states of consciousness and how to apply Spiritual Truths and Laws in order to rise to a higher state of consciousness. In these two examples it is easy to discern how denials and affirmations can be used to raise to a higher level of consciousness.