

PART THREE: UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

CHAPTER 2

CAN THE BIBLE BE MISINTERPRETED?

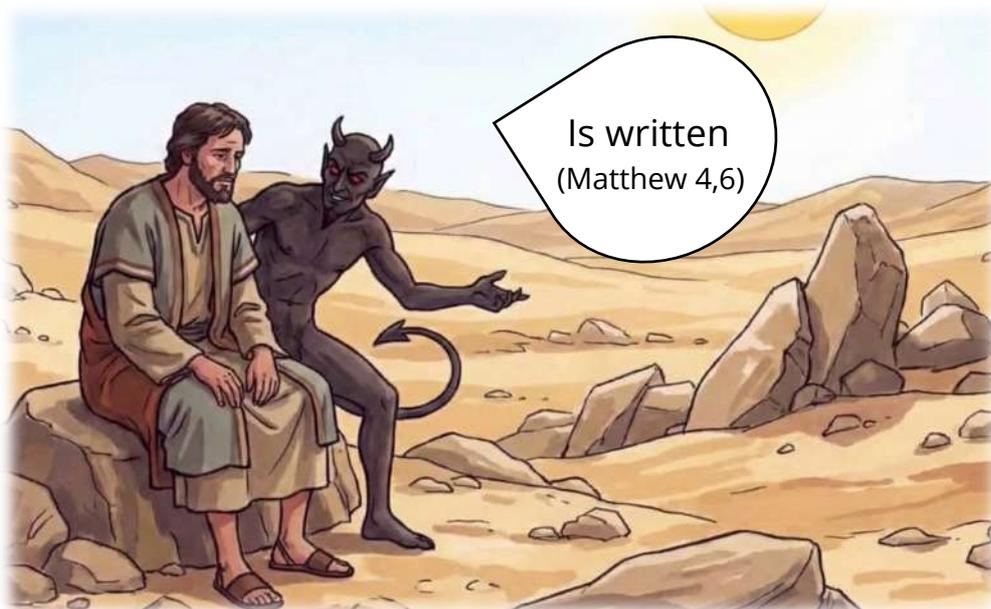
Yes. Both the literal and spiritual senses can be misinterpreted. The Bible itself teaches us that it can be misinterpreted or misread:

1. Jesus told the Pharisees several times that they did not understand the Scriptures well, even though they dedicated part of their lives to reading and studying them:

*You are misled because you do not know the scriptures
or the power of God
(Matthew 22, 29)*

Then it is possible that a person who tries to live a life with God, reads and even studies the Bible, may misunderstand it and not understand it correctly.

2. The devil, in his temptations to Jesus in the desert, used biblical texts to distort their meaning.



In this way the Bible warns us that the devil could give us the wrong sense of some texts of Holy Scripture to confuse and tempt us.

3. In the Acts of the Apostles we see that Philip, while walking along a road, guided by the Holy Spirit, approached the chariot of an Ethiopian who was reading a text from the prophet Isaiah. Then he asked him:

¿Do you understand what you are reading
(Acts 8, 30)



¿How can I, unless someone instructs me?
(Acts 8, 31)

Philip explained to the Ethiopian the meaning of the text he was reading. And so, the Bible teaches us that many times we will need someone to guide us in reading Sacred Scripture so that we do not fall into a wrong interpretation.

4. St. Peter, speaking of the letters of St. Paul, says:

In them are some things hard to understand that the ignorant and unstable distort to their own destruction, just as they do the other scriptures
(2 Peter 3, 16)

In other words, the Bible can be distorted, changing its meaning.

5. Finally, St. Peter himself warns:

No prophecy of scripture that is a matter of personal interpretation, for no prophecy ever came through human Will; but rather human beings moved by the Holy Spirit spoke under the influence of God (2 Peter 1, 20-21)

The teaching is clear: to correctly interpret a book that has been supernaturally inspired by God, God's help is needed.

We are going to see in the next chapter the keys to interpreting the Bible correctly.