

SESSION 2

Rules of Engagement: How to Interpret Bible Prophecy

Small Group Study Guide

STEP 1. INTRODUCE THE SESSION

5 minutes

As we journey deeper into the Word of God, how do we keep ourselves on the straight and narrow path of clarity without veering off into the wilderness of error? In this episode, we establish the rules of engagement—not only for studying prophecy—but for all of God's Word.

SESSION GOAL(S)

- Establish basic ground rules for interpreting biblical prophecy.
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STEP 2. WATCH THE VIDEO

23 minutes

Content Summary (with timestamps)

- Rule #1: The pure in heart shall see God (03:50)
- Rule #2: Not all Bible versions are created equal (04:42)

- Rule #3: Build your house on a firm foundation (06:00)
- Rule #4: It all points to the Jewish Messiah (07:09)
- Rule #5: Debate, not division (08:08)
- Rule #6: You're probably wrong (09:22)
- Rule #7: Context is key (11:57)
- Rule #8: In all your getting, get understanding (12:50)
- Rule #9: Balance the literal with the figurative (14:40)
- Rule #10: Biblical numbers can carry esoteric significance (17:38)

STEP 3. DISCUSS

20 minutes

Leaders: You might like to split into smaller groups at this stage so everyone has a chance to respond honestly. Don't feel like you have to hurry through all these questions; they are simply conversation starters.

Q. What did you find most helpful or most challenging in the video?

Q. What is your motivation for studying the Bible?

Q. Have you ever disagreed with someone over an interpretation of the Word? How did you handle it?

Q. When Matthew taught on balancing the literal with the figurative, he gave several examples of biblical metaphor: "clay," "bread of life," "destroy this temple," "Lamb of God," "bride of Christ," "the Lord is my rock," "light of the world," "salt of the earth," "good shepherd," and "I am the vine."

From Scripture, can you think of other examples where symbolic metaphor is used?

(Leader's examples below, if needed.)

- *"The Lord is my high ridge, my stronghold, my deliverer. My God is my rocky summit where I take shelter, my shield, the horn that saves me, and my refuge." (Psalm 18:2)*

- *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by me." (John 14:6)*
- *"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but I do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal." (1 Corinthians 13:1)*

Q. Can you think of any current everyday examples of metaphor?

(Leader's examples, if needed: "scapegoat," "house of cards," "know the ropes," "loose cannon," "smoking gun," "snake oil," "food for thought.")

STEP 4. REPORT OUT [OPTIONAL]

15 minutes

Leaders: If you're a team of leaders taking a class through the course and you broke into small groups in Step 3, regroup at the end and ask each small group to report out on their small group discussion. What were their ah-ha's? What did they struggle with?

Close with prayer.