

# MOST COMMON MISTAKES MADE BY OFFICIALS

*by Bryan Turner*

## **1. Following your heart instead of the rules.**

No matter how good your intentions are some quizzer or team always ends up getting hurt by this. Here is an actual event that occurred. A cell phone rings right in the middle of an answer being given and the quizzer leaves out a key word in a give a complete answer. The Quizmaster calls the answer incorrect and since it was interrupted rereads to the other team. After that, the quizzer who was counted incorrect contested. He contested that he said every key word, but it was clear to all he had left out one major key word. After the contest and response, the judges discussed it for an unusual amount of time and then actually left the room to talk it over with the coordinator. When they returned they announced that the contest was accepted. The opposing team was shocked and appealed the decision. That appeal was denied. The match continued and the team that won that contest won the match on the last question. The coach of the losing team was curious what had occurred on that contest and found out that the judges had given the quizzer who had actually answered incorrectly a break. They ruled with their heart that since the quizzer didn't contest help or hindrance because of the cell phone that belonged to the opposing team they would give him the points even though he did not contest for help or hindrance. That sounds like the nice and admirable thing to do doesn't it? Unfortunately the cell phone ring came from his own team and that's why he did not contest help or hindrance. There are many other examples that could be given for varied situations and rules. The bottom line is no matter how you feel, the best way to judge is always by the letter of the rules, because when you go out of your way to help one you will always hurt another.

## **2. Ruling "give a complete answers" incorrect when every word is not given.**

The problem here is that not every word is required for a give a complete answer to be correct. In the rules on page 16 under "What Makes an Answer Correct" # 4 it is written very clearly that the answer must contain all of the key words, phrases and/or clauses. The main point I will make here is that not every word found in a phrase, clause, verse or verses are key words. That's why this rule continues on to say that the answer does not have to be given "in the exact words of the Scripture", and it also "does not have to be quoted." Further modifying that rule is the rule under the same section (# 7) which allows a quizzer to give an answer in their own words as long as those words mean the same thing.

## **3. Ruling an answer correct or incorrect based only on what was underlined as the answer by the question writer.**

There is a rule that gives us clarification on how to judge an answer when the answer on the official question set is underlined. On page 8 it is rule number thirteen. The second sentence states "The Quizmaster and Judges should base their decision on the rules and on the requirements of the question." It also goes on to say that the question writer's notes and underlining are only supplemental information. In other words, it's there to help, but it is not the judge of what is correct or incorrect. The officials

must make that determination on their own whether the Quizmaster asks for assistance with the ruling (pg. 8 #17 a. 4) or on the ruling of a contest (pg. 21 #3 a.). In each case it always comes down to the "requirements of the question." When this situation comes up ask yourself: What does the question specifically ask for to the answer to be, and what do the rules in chapter 5 say about that type of question and the requirements of its answer?

#### **4. Quizmasters pausing for each punctuation mark in the question.**

The rules don't have anything to say about this. However, there is a difference in reading to yourself, out loud to others, or reading a Bible Quiz question. When a Quizmaster reads questions, consistency is what all quizzers want. It is hard to be consistent and pause for the punctuation marks in the question. Besides, the punctuation marks are there to help with emphasis. They are not there as pauses. We do have a consistency rule on page 6, under "Duties During a Match" #1 in the note "It is important for the Quizmaster to read loudly and clearly and be consistent in his reading style." Across the board, every quizzer I know would rather have a non pausing Quizmaster. Again, there is no rule about this, but remember you are reading Bible Quiz questions, and you are reading for quizzers. It might not be correct grammar or the most comfortable thing to do, but Quizmasters need to learn how to read the questions without pausing because this will benefit the quizzers and it's the most consistent way to read Bible Quiz questions.

#### **5. Not reviewing the rules before officiating.**

This is common sense and courtesy. Each time you plan on officiating at a Bible Quiz event you should review the rules. Purchase your own set of rules so that you can do this at home before the event. It's frustrating for quizzers who spend hundreds of hours studying and reviewing to be ruled incorrectly because of the lack of knowledge of the officials. The rules are much shorter and easier to review than ever before. Literally a couple of hours should be enough to read through and familiarize yourself with the rules.

#### **6. Ruling incorrectly on validity of a question that requires a "chapter analysis" answer.**

This one seems tricky and complex but it really isn't. The key is to figure out what the requirements of the question and answer are for this situation. First, does the question require an answer that in and of itself is a complete chapter analysis answer or answers (a question, exclamation, parenthetical, or Old Testament scripture) and nothing else? If so, it can't be labeled as a complete answer. Look at page 33 under "Requiring Questions, Exclamations, Parenthetical Statements and Old Testament Scriptures." In rule #1 in that section it says that "any question" that asks for one or more of these must require all of the phrases, clauses and/or key words of the required answer. That rule also begins by saying that analysis type answers are "considered Complete Answers in and of themselves." Remember the words "any question" as we continue on in this section of rules. Next, rule #2 in this section starts by again saying "Any question that requires one or more of these answers in its entirety must not be labeled a Complete Answer in the Introductory Remarks." What some think is that the question must be a specific chapter analysis type question

in order for this to be true (for example "What exclamation is found in Acts chapter 4?") That is not true. The question could also be "According to Acts 4:8, what did Peter say?" The only answer to that specific question from Acts 4:8 is "Rulers and elders of the people!" Notice that even though this question did not specifically refer to an analysis type answer, it requires only the entire exclamation and nothing else as the answer. Therefore it falls under the rules on page 33 that were referred to earlier. Again the words "any question" and the requirement of the entire answer being only a complete analysis answer are the keys as to what to do here as far as validity is concerned. It is invalid to label a question as Complete Answer in the Introductory Remarks or the question itself if the required answer is what we have discussed above. Can a question requiring a chapter analysis answer ever be labeled as a Complete Answer? Yes. Read rule #3 in that section.

## **7. Ruling incorrectly on what is the “essential parts of the question” for interrupted questions.**

This is especially true for long scripture text questions. The answer to an interrupted question must comply with everything on page 17 under the section “Interrupted Questions.” The question is what are the essential parts of the question? That is up to each official’s interpretation. This rule really is trying to say this question would still be correct if it was reduced down to the fewest words necessary to still ask the same basic question. Question writers get wordy sometimes at the end of the question especially with the scripture text or with a prepositional phrase. It is unreasonable to expect a quizzer who is trying to get right to the basic question in as few of words as possible to know that there is some wordy portion in the question that is really unnecessary. That is why the rules refer to asking the same basic question containing at least the essential parts of the question. As an official, on an interrupted question, you should break down the question to the minimum required words to still comply with all of the rules of this section.

## **8. Being afraid to call fouls, or just giving warnings all the time.**

This goes back to following your heart instead of the rules. There is a place and time to give warnings that a foul could be given, but that should be limited to special situations and usually very early in the year. Remember the best thing to do is to always follow the rules. What is tragic is for a team to lose on the last question in official competition because of a foul. What would be better for them is to be aware of their fouls early in the year when it isn’t official so that they won’t make that mistake when it counts. Don’t be afraid to call a foul ever. By not calling it you potentially hurt the other team as well as the team who is committing the foul. 9. Being biased about who is presenting a contest. Again, following your heart instead of the rules here can cause real problems. The rules say that a head coach, assistant coach, active quizzer, or inactive quizzer may present a contest and there is good reason for that. The team has the flexibility to determine who might be the best at presenting each contest. The head coach who might have the best understanding of how a certain rule applies to the situation and question might present the contest, or a quizzer who heard exactly what happened and knows intimately what he said could give the contest, or an assistant coach who is best at speaking and explaining things might present it. This flexibility ultimately gives the team the best chance to explain their position to the officials. As an official, there should be no bias as to whom presents the contest be it a coach or a quizzer. Your responsibility is to become totally unbiased and judge what is presented and not the presenter. Judging the presenter is God’s work and he knows how and when to do it the best. Sometimes it is hard to listen to the presenter and that may sway you as an official, but it is unfair to both teams and has no place in officiating in Bible Quiz

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