

In search of...

Truth & Right

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Someone's Own Interpretation

2 Peter 1:19-21 states, "And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

The definition of interpret is to explain the meaning of information, words, or actions. For example, if you were to be in a foreign country and did not speak the language, you would be in need of an interpreter. Also, there are times when a friend may behave in a strange way, and if you do not know the reason why, then you would try to interpret their behavior. But therein lies the problem: any interpretation that we might come up with is ultimately not reliable. We might interpret someone not speaking to us as them being upset over

something we said or did. Many times this creates drama and leads to hurt feelings for all when in fact they did not speak to us because of some innocuous detail that we are ignorant of. So often we create scenarios in our minds that have nothing to do with the truth, and why? Because when what we have seen or read or heard is **vague** we try to draw our own conclusions based off of what we think we know.

Why is it that we are vague with what we say or do? Why do we leave out details? One thought is that we presume that the little details are not important, and so we focus on what we think matters; for example, when making plans with friends, we say where to meet, and on which day, but not at what time. Another possibility is that we are unclear with our words & actions simply because we have convinced ourselves that we do not have time to sit down and give clarification. In the common culture today, we are more impatient than

ever, even though we have more free time than any previous generation. Always on the go, always running late, so who has time to go into detail? Perhaps what is even worse is that we blame others for our own shortcomings, by rationalizing it to the tune of "Well they should have known what I meant!" Ridiculous!

Communication is a gift from God; He created us to be able to think, speak, and exchange ideas and beliefs. "Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete." (2 John 12) But as wonderful as it is to be able to express ourselves, we make a mess of things and disrupt the lines of communication more often than not. How many books have been written on the subject? Men and women not communicating, employers and employees not communicating... the list goes on. So, again, with the lack of clear meaning, we find ourselves trying to interpret what someone else said, why they said it, and so forth.

Saddest of all is when people come to such a conclusion about God. A vast majority of people in the world today firmly believe that the Scriptures and even the very existence of God and His divine nature is "up for interpretation." Some would interpret God as not a being, but just a force that lives within all of us. This blatantly ignores all passages where God speaks, especially "I AM." In addition, this is an interpretation of convenience, because if God is not a being, then He certainly cannot give

commands or judge.

When it comes to the Bible, two people can be sitting and reading the exact same words and yet disagree as to what those words mean for their lives- this has to do with application; and remarkably enough, this is seen as normal in the religious world today! Passages like Matthew 7:1, wherein Jesus said, "Judge not, that you be not judged." After John 3:16, this is arguably the most well-known verse in the Bible, because so many are quick to quote it in an attempt to prevent others from telling them what to do or making them feel bad about their words or actions. Even more, those who cannot quote the verse word for word will readily spout, "Jesus said we shouldn't judge!" They interpret His words as condemning all judgments, as if He left that up for debate. Looking at the context it is easy to see that Jesus was telling us that IF we judge, we will be judged by the same standard of judgment- basically, He was cautioning against hypocrisy.

Another verse that is misinterpreted and used to spread false doctrine is Romans 5:12-14, "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned- for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come." If you cannot tell, these verses are used to try to reinforce the doctrine of inherited sin, that we are all born

as sinners because of the sin in the garden of Eden. And while in this chapter the contrast is made that Adam's actions brought whereas Jesus's actions brought life, the conclusion that we are all born sinful because of Adam is not supported by this passage.

The problem comes here with people being confused, throwing out a theory, and running with it without seeing if it holds true with the context. IF those verses were saying that we are all guilty of sin not through anything that we have done, but because of Adam, then logically, they are ALSO saying that we are saved from sin just because Jesus died on the cross. Not through faith (Mark 16:16), or confession (Rom. 10:9). No, we can all just go about our lives however we please, not thinking about God or even having to believe in Him, because according to that interpretation, we are all saved anyway because of Jesus sacrificing Himself.

Do you see the fallacy with God's word being up to "your own interpretation?" It does not hold water. And the main reason why has already been stated: the Lord is not vague. We can be and often are, but He is not. Some parts of the Bible are harder to understand than others, but the idea that ten people can come up with ten different interpretations of the Scriptures and they can all be right is ludicrous. God does not need us to explain what He means. He made His word simple enough, and He created us with minds to understand, use common sense, and examine the context. Read the Bible. Study it. Obey it.

Jarred Currence

Happy Moments,
Praise God.

Difficult Moments,
Seek God.

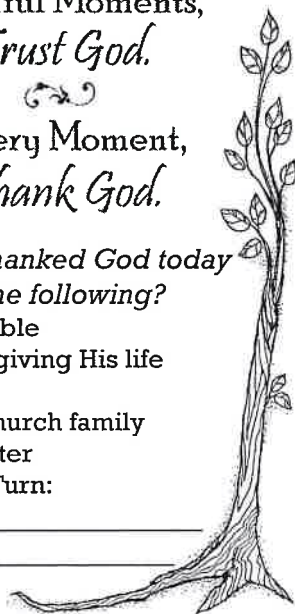
Quiet Moments,
Worship God.

Painful Moments,
Trust God.

Every Moment,
Thank God.

*Have you thanked God today
for any of the following?*

- The Bible
- Jesus giving His life for us
- Our church family
- Laughter
- Your Turn:



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BIBLE Trivia!

DIRECTIONS: After searching through your Bible, circle which answer is correct.

1. The serpent in Eden was the first talking animal in the Bible. What was the second?

- a) the dove on Noah's ark
- b) Balaam's donkey
- c) the lions in the den
- d) the swine who were possessed

2. What king of Gerar took Sarah away from Abraham?

- a) Ahab
- b) Agag
- c) Abimelech
- d) Aminnadb

3. What king called Elijah the worst troublemaker in Israel?

- a) Ahab
- b) Solomon
- c) Manasseh
- d) Zimri

4. Who told Pilate that a worrisome dream made it clear that Pilate was to have nothing to do with Jesus?

- a) His son
- b) Caesar
- c) His wife
- d) His advisor

5. What emperor had a bevy of magicians and psychics who could not interpret his strange dreams??

- a) Darius
- b) Belshazzar
- c) Artaxerxes
- d) Nebuchadnezzar

6. In what priest's home did the enemies of Jesus meet to plot against him?

- a) Caiaphas's
- b) Zaccheus
- c) Eleazar
- d) Aaron

7. What color was the sun in Revelation when it became like sackcloth?

- a) Blue
- b) Black
- c) Purple
- d) Red

8. Who moved with Naomi to Moab to escape famine?

- a) Boaz
- b) Ruth
- c) Orpah
- d) Elimelech

9. Where did Peter cure Aeneas?

- a) Lydda
- b) Joppa
- c) Thyatira
- d) Caesarea

10. What building, mentioned by Jesus, killed 18 people when it collapsed?

- a) The praetorium
- b) The tower of Siloam
- c) The foolish man's house
- d) The house where Job's children were feasting

LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS & VERSES:

- 1) A, Reference: Esther 1:1
- 2) C, Reference: II Kings 18:1-8
- 3) B, Reference: II Samuel 3:7
- 4) D, Reference: Obadiah
- 5) C, Reference: Gen. 25:1,4

- 6) B, Reference: Luke 17:32
- 7) A, Reference: Matt.3:17
- 8) A, Reference: I Thess. 5:4-8
- 9) D, Reference: Acts 8:27
- 10) C, Reference: Philippians 4:3