

PathLights

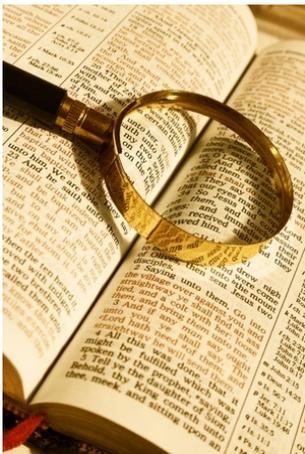
*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

September 11, 2016

"That's Just Your Interpretation"

by Frank Himmel

Who among us has not had the experience of stating a point and citing the Bible passage that makes it, only to be met with, "That's just your interpretation"? This retort implies that alternate interpretations, including those which deny the clear meaning of the text, are equally valid. The result is that each one can believe what he wants and feel good about it.



Admittedly, some Bible statements are subject to two or more interpretations, either of which is completely consistent with both the immediate context and the rest of what God's word says. But these are certainly the exception, not the rule! The Bible is written in understandable terms (2 Corinthians 1:13;

Ephesians 3:3-4). Most of this interpretation business looks suspiciously like an attempt to dodge its truth.

Incidents

God instructed Adam, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of knowledge of

good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die" (Genesis 2:17). Eve interpreted that to mean she and Adam could not eat of the unique tree. However, Satan came along and reinterpreted it to mean they could (Genesis 3:4-5). That devilish interpretation was dead wrong – literally!

When God first brought the nation of Israel to Mt. Sinai, He told them, "You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:6). Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and 250 others evidently interpreted these words to mean that they could be priests in the formal sense, despite God's command to separate Aaron and his sons to that function (Exodus 28:1). Korah's group argued before Moses and Aaron, "You have gone far enough, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is in their midst; so why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly?" (Numbers 16:3). God buried some of them alive and consumed the rest with fire from heaven (vv. 31-35). So much for that interpretation!

God ordered Saul, "Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey" (1 Samuel 15:3). Saul interpreted that to mean broadly defeat them but spare the best of the animals and the king; at least, that is what he did. He then boldly affirmed to Samuel, "I have carried out the command of the Lord" (v. 13). The Lord's judgment was that Saul had not carried out His command (vv. 11, 19, 23). As a result, Saul lost his throne. ▶

Analysis

How shall we interpret these events? Do they not illustrate that God says what He means and means what He says?

Jesus never attributed differences in belief and practice to varied interpretations of Scripture, each one equally valid. His analysis was that the Sadducees misunderstood God's word (Matthew 22:29) and the Pharisees exalted their own rules above it (Matthew 15:3, 6). That gets to the heart of the problem. ■

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Tomorrow

by Frank Himmel

The Bible has a few reminders for us about tomorrow.

Don't worry about tomorrow. Jesus cautioned, "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matthew 6:34). So often, the things we worry about never occur. Today has enough challenges. Don't add to them with imaginary ones from tomorrow.

Don't plan on tomorrow. It likely will come, but it may not. "Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor, that appears for a little while and then vanishes away" (James 4:14). The point is not to splurge and just live for today. It is, don't plan too much on tomorrow, making that your whole focus, like the rich fool in Jesus' parable (Luke 12:16-21). And don't count on having another day to do what needs to be done. That brings us to...

Don't wait until tomorrow. Don't wait until then to do good. "Do not say to your neighbor, 'Go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it,' when you have it with you" (Proverbs 3:28). Don't wait until then to reconcile. "Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity" (Ephesians 4:26-27). And most of all, don't wait until then to make things right with God. "Now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:3). ■

Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	Greg Winget	Carlos Garcia	Adam Gibson
SONG LEADER	Bruce Williams	Albert Lee Harrison	Greg Winget
OPENING PRAYER	Brian Wilson	J B Williams	
LORD'S SUPPER			
BREAD	Gary Hagler	Gary Hagler	
CUP	Kerry Gray	Kerry Gray	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Adam Gibson		
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Frank Himmel	John Baucom
CLOSING PRAYER	Don Rapp	John Baucom	Ian Brown