

## Upcoming Events

### Meet Up Class

Thursday, February 3, at 7:00 p.m.  
28561 Sunnyslope St.  
Desert Hot Springs CA 92241

### What's One to Do?

*"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a worker who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth". 2 Timothy 2:15*

*"The conclusion, when everything has been heard, is fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person." Ecclesiastes 12:13*

### February Birthdays

8 Zoie Perales

#### Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.  
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.  
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

#### Preacher:

Jack Critchfield

**Church of Christ**  
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# Indio Informer

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## That's Just Your Interpretation

By Mark Larson

That's just your interpretation! How many times has someone said that to you when you attempted to teach him the truth from the Scriptures? Rather than take the message of truth to heart, it is quickly dismissed as merely your opinion and not taken seriously at all.

If you have ever heard this before, you know that it is sort of like "hitting a brick wall." Further discussion of the truth with such a person can be very difficult. The potential for meaningful Bible study is not very promising.

### What Is Your Interpretation?

The best way to begin in your response to someone who says: "That's just your interpretation" is to hand the passage over to him and ask for his interpretation. An interpretation in Bible study is simply an explanation of the meaning of a particular passage of Scripture. Rather than be discouraged and give up, make this offer instead: "I am willing to hear your interpretation and correct my own position if I am wrong. What is it?" This demonstrates fairness as well as humility, both of which are necessary for Bible study (Proverbs 18:12,13). Be open-minded and willing to hear any evidence that others might have for their beliefs and practices. Just as we hope for positive change in the people we teach, we too must demonstrate a willingness to change our own beliefs and practices when we are corrected (e.g., Acts 18:24-26).

### Speak In Terms of Evidence

When making the offer to listen to other people's interpretation of Scripture, be sure to include this request: "You must have evidence to support your interpretation over mine. What is it?" Before allowing an exchange of interpretations to take place, it is important to come to a mutual agreement that true, saving faith is based on the evidence or the teaching of the Scriptures. *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God"* (Romans 10:17).

We must speak of the importance of providing book, chapter, and verse for the beliefs that we hold (I Peter 4:11; Colossians 3:17). We must emphasize that a fair hearing must be given to all that God has said on the matter to get a proper understanding of God's Will. When studying any subject, "*the whole counsel of God*" (Acts 20:27) should be sought in the pursuit for the truth. Passages must be examined in its proper context. Concordances and Hebrew or Greek Bible dictionaries are very helpful to gather even more evidence.

### **No Legitimate Interpretations?**

Sometimes people reject the truth because they are convinced that no interpretation of Scripture can be relied on as the truth. Many are convinced that every interpretation involves man's opinions and thus everything is spun, biased, or slanted to favor a particular doctrine, practice, or personal viewpoint.

Let us admit the fact that there are indeed many interpretations of Scripture offered today that are according to man's opinions that must be rejected (II Peter 3:15-17). However, not all interpretations are false. There are real differences between interpretations. Many will lead to eternal destruction, yet only the truth will lead to eternal life (Matthew 7:13,14).

Finding the truth requires a recognition that there is ultimately only one faith (Ephesians. 4:5; Jude 3) or one truth (John 8:32; 17:17) that God has revealed to us. God has promised us that we can know what the truth is (I Timothy 2:4; Ephesians 3:4). These facts ought to bring hope to the skeptic who says there are no legitimate interpretations.

### **Will Any Interpretation of Scripture Do?**

Sometimes people take the opposite extreme and declare that though there is only one faith or truth, it is too confusing or difficult to find. Many people, in response to the multitude of religious groups and doctrines, conclude that almost any interpretation will do. Rather than rule out certain religious beliefs based on Scripture, there is the desire to respect every belief as equal in merit or legitimacy. Many people want to "just get along" and do not want to debate or discuss their differences. The preferred "solution" of many is to just choose the interpretation that personally suits you best and call that "the truth."

### **Some Interpretations Are Better or More Plausible Than Others**

The answer to any confusion or challenge that we may have in searching for the truth is not to choose just any interpretation of Scripture! Imagine the trouble we would have in our lives if we handled all our decisions this way.

For example, would we be willing to randomly choose a marriage partner? Would we choose just any car to drive or any house to live in? Would any of us be willing to invest our hard-earned savings into just any type of investment? When we are sick, would we decide that just any medicine or treatment will make us well? Of course not! In making any important decision in life, to choose wisely requires that we learn all that we can about the issue or problem that is at hand. The same is true in deciding what we should believe and practice in religion from the Scriptures.

So which interpretation of Scripture should one choose? To sift through the interpretations that are possible and decide on only one requires that we accept the interpretation that is most plausible, probable, or credible. Rather than foolishly accept just any interpretation of Scripture, let us choose the one that provides the most evidence (e.g., true to the context of the passage, in harmony with parallel passages on the same subject, true to the actual meaning of Bible words, etc.). "*So then do not be foolish but understand what the Will of the Lord is*" (Ephesians 5:17).

### **God Provides Us with Rules for Interpretation**

Thankfully, God provides us with some assistance on how to interpret the Scriptures right in the Word itself! The Lord gives us the help we need to determine the truth for what we are to believe and practice in religion. There are four major rules He provides:

1. Direct Statements or Commands We Must Obey: (e.g., John 14:15; II Peter 3:1,2).
2. Divinely Approved Examples We Are to Follow: (e.g., I Peter 2:21; Philippians 3:17; Acts 2:42).
3. Necessary Implication, Meaning Conclusions We Can Make from What Is Implied in Scripture: (e.g., Matthew 22:41-46).
4. Respect For the Silence of God, Meaning We Restrict Ourselves to What God Has Revealed In The Scriptures To Determine His Will: (Deuteronomy 29:29). We do not add to it nor take away from it (Revelation 22:18,19).

Let us all be true to God and respect His Word in the interpretation of the Scriptures.