

Why Are There So Many Different Interpretations?

Eph. 3:3-5

Introduction

- One of the most commonly asked questions in view of all the differences that are observable in religion.
- Why so many different interpretations, when all claim to follow the same Bible?
- Why don't those who claim to be following the word of God come to the same conclusions?
- It is not because...
 - ...the Bible cannot be understood. (Eph. 5:17)
 - ...God wants us to reach different conclusions about what it teaches. (I Cor. 1:10)
 - ...there is no absolute truth. (Jn. 8:31-32; I Jn. 4:6; Jn. 17:17)
 - The answer lies not in God or the nature of his word, but in man, who often does not approach the word as he should.
- There is only one interpretation, anything else is a misinterpretation: Interpretation: when the thought in the mind of the writer is accurately transferred to the mind of the reader.
 - This is interpretation; all else is missing the point.
 - God is the ultimately the author of His word. (II Tim. 3:16) When the meaning he intended is accurately transferred to our minds then we have interpreted it.

I. Lessons From Some Bible Examples:

- Matt. 22:23ff → The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection; Jesus did.
 - They were wrong for two reasons: (v-29)
 - They did not know the scriptures → approached with a preconceived notion, hence were “ignorant” of those that did not agree with that position.
 - Did not know the power of God. Did not think God could do it, hence did not think it could be done.
 - Many today who 1) do not know the scriptures, and 2) do not know the power of God.
- John 21:18 → those who put different meanings on the words of Jesus here.
 - Some said that Jesus said that John would not die.
 - Others the truth...If I will that he tarry...
 - Why would some jump to the conclusion that John would never die...
 - Why some today would so misinterpret the words of Jesus...
 - It has a sensational quality to it.
 - The false teaching of premillennialism
- Matt. 4:5 → The Devil's use of scripture, and the difference Jesus has with him over that use.
 - What caused the misinterpretation of the passage by Satan? He wanted Jesus to sin, and the scripture was going to be used to justify that sin. Here he took it out of context and twisted the verse. (II Pet. 3:16)
 - People misinterpret the scriptures because they have pleasure in unrighteousness. (II Thess. 2:9ff)
 - Those who will try to justify/rationalize nearly every sinful practice by the scriptures.

Concl.

Jn. 7:17 → A requirement for properly understanding the word of God. (Matt. 5:6)