

## ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS OUTSIDERS MOST OFTEN ASK US

### Part II: Answering The Five Questions Believers Most Often Ask Us

#### D. Answering The Question On Knowing The Right Interpretation Of Scripture

##### I. Introduction

- A. Though many people have many questions about our Christian faith, we have noticed over the years ten questions that people outside of our Church *most often* ask us, and 1 Peter 3:15 calls us to **answer** them.
- B. Five of the questions come from unbelievers, and five from believers, so we answer them in this lesson series, and I am indebted to Josh McDowell, A Ready Defense, 1991, p. 405-424 for the format of the lessons.

##### II. Answering The Question On Knowing The Right Interpretation Of Scripture.

- A. We state the question as follows: "Since there are so many different interpretations of Scripture, isn't one who claims to be sure he has the the correct interpretation speaking from pride, and thereby speaking wrongfully?!"
- B. In answering this question, we first note that Jesus said in John 8:31-32 KJV: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Christ Himself expects us as His disciples to be sure that we understand God's liberating Scripture truth!
- C. Second, 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 reveals that there are spiritual dynamics that affect whether people effectively interpret Scripture, revealing that the question we face in this lesson actually arises from a false spirituality:
  1. In 1 Corinthians 2:6-9, Paul claimed he taught the spiritual wisdom of God among mature believers, which wisdom is secret and hidden to even the rulers of this world. (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 5:11-12)
  2. Paul explained that this wisdom is revealed unto believers by the Holy Spirit Who indwells them (1 Cor. 2:10a with Rom. 8:9), and that the Spirit searches everything, even the deep truths of God, 1 Cor. 2:10b.
  3. The Spirit thus equips believers to understand the spiritual truths God freely gives them, 1 Cor. 2:11-12.
  4. Paul added that he imparted this wisdom in words not taught by human wisdom, but by the Holy Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual, 1 Cor. 2:13 ESV; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 510.
  5. However, the natural man, one who functions by his sinful nature, does not receive the truths of the Spirit, for they are foolish to him, and he cannot know them because they are spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. 2:14.
  6. Conversely, the spiritual believer judges all things, yet he himself is judged of no man, meaning the spiritual person can discern the truth and error in any given situation around him where the unspiritual are unaware of the truth and undiscerning about the difference between truth and error, 1 Corinthians 2:15-16.
  7. Thus, for a professing Christian to critique another believer as being proud because he says he is sure he has the right interpretation of a Scripture passage is for the critic to expose his own lack of discernment due to his own lack of the Holy Spirit's discerning ministry, a revelation of the carnality in himself!
- D. Third, Christ exemplified objective guidelines on properly interpreting Scripture in Mark 12:18-21 (as follows):
  1. The Sadducees tried to corner Jesus into having to deny the resurrection by presenting Him with a case of a woman who had been widowed seven times over, trying to show how a resurrection would force God to raise her into an adulterous state, Mark 12:18-23.
  2. Jesus replied that the Sadducees did not know (a) the power of God to raise the dead into asexual bodies (Mark 12:24b-25) nor (b) the Scriptures where Exodus 3:6 shows God stating that He was still the God of the long-dead fathers though they by then had been dead for four hundred years, Mark 12:24a, 26-27. (The Sadducees denied the resurrection since they denied the soul existed after death (Z. P. E. B., v. Five, p. 214), so when Jesus proved the fathers still lived though long dead, He revealed the Sadducees erred.)
  3. However, for the purpose of this lesson, we focus on the fact that Jesus' argument in this event **rests** on the **literal, grammatical, historical METHOD** of interpreting Scripture (as follows): His argument rests on (1) the *literal* interpretation as Jesus utilizes the present tense of the verb "am" in Exodus 3:6; His argument rests on (2) the *grammatical* interpretation, for the Hebrew text there, though not having the written verb "am" as seen by the KJV's italicized "*am*", still leads one to understand the verb exists in the present tense, thus grammatically supporting Jesus' argument, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 81; (3) and Jesus' argument rests on viewing Exodus 3:6 *historically*, that it was spoken long after the fathers had been dead.

***Lesson:*** According to Scripture, every believer who is rightly related to God will learn and be sure he has the right interpretation of any given Scripture passage, for the Holy Spirit will reveal it unto him. Thus, failure to know the correct interpretation and/or criticizing others because they are sure they know it only exposes one's own carnality.

***Application:*** May we walk with God and know the Scripture's right interpretation, and answer questions about it.