

INTERPRETATIONS

There is something strangely comforting about hearing that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." (Hebrews 13:8) In a world that seems like shifting sand; in a changing world where nothing seems stationary; in a world of misinformation and disinformation the same Jesus brings hope! The solid, immutable and reliable Word of Christ is found in the Bible. To know this brings a breath of fresh air! Friends, truth is precious. Buy the truth and sell it not! (Proverbs 23:23) Aren't you also tired of lies?

Hello I'm Larry Murdock. I preach for the Gandy church of Christ. Good morning and welcome to this program.

God said this about His Son, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. (9) You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions." (10) And, "You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; (11) they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, (12) like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end." [Hebrews 1:8-12 ESV](#) Yes it brings great comfort to think that Jesus will never change, that He is on His throne forever and ever!

Jesus said of His **words**, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." (Matthew 24:35 ESV) On one occasion Jesus cried out and said, "Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment--what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me." (John 12:44-50 ESV) Yes, the heavenly Father gave Jesus the Words, that is the reason those words are eternal; those words are solid rock.

The wise man Solomon wrote a proverb about God's Word. Solomon said, "Whoever despises the word brings destruction on himself, but he who reveres the commandment will be rewarded. (14) The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life that one may turn away from the snares of death." [Proverbs 13:13-14 ESV](#)

You see, Jesus' information, the Bible's information pertains to the greatest piece of news in the world. Eternal life! It is indeed a "fountain of life"! Jesus said, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." (John 10:10 ESV)

This great news written in God's book the Bible can turn you and me away from "the snares of death"! God's great information pertains not only to the life of every human being in **this** world, but it is information that also pertains to the life of every human being in the **world to come**. How wonderful it is that this great news of Jesus Christ is immutable, unchangeable!

Lies often disguise themselves as "interpretations." And so there is "this" interpretation and "that" interpretation. And then comes along "another" interpretation so that finally we have no idea what is TRUE! This is the excessive work of Satan! That's right! Jesus called Satan the "father of lies." (John 8:44).

Jesus' apostle Paul did not want the Corinthian Christians to be "outwitted by Satan" and so Paul did not want the Christians to be "ignorant" of Satan's schemes, his interpretations." (2 Corinthians 2:11 ESV) When Satan tempted Jesus Christ Satan used a Bible verse on Jesus! That's right! Satan interpreted a Bible verse in order to tempt Christ. Satan probably has a different interpretation for every verse that might cause you to serve God. Satan is the father of lies and He is the father of false interpretations!

But it seems that people are fond of saying, "you have **your** interpretation; I have mine." But friends, God has only one interpretation. Are you seeking that ONE? Jesus has only one interpretation and that's the true one! And Jesus never changes! Are you seeking Jesus' interpretation?

The word "immutable" means "unchangeable"! Jesus is the same, yesterday today and forever. That means that you can count on His interpretation. His Word is the truth. What Jesus says and what He gave His apostles to say is the

Truth and their interpretations are in harmony with every other Word of God on the same topic! Furthermore, their truth **blends** with every other biblical doctrine, whatever the topic! Jesus' truth is written in the Bible. In fact, the whole Bible is truly about the Truth that Jesus Christ brought into the world. Jesus is immutable and God's Word found in your Bible is immutable!

When the Bible states a fact or a promise, or issues a command, its opposite is always false! That's right! Isn't it wonderful to be able to know the truth and at the same time to detect a lie? Satan's disinformation and misinformation should have no effect upon human beings who believe God and take Him at His word. But sadly, lies do attack and plague the followers of God.

Well, you may be asking a good question, "If the Bible is immutable and reliable, then **why** do good people **disagree** as to what it teaches?" People disagree because Satan has planted a lie somewhere. Satan is unhappy with people knowing the truth. Jesus told Pilate "**For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world--to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.**" (John 18:37 ESV) Satan cannot stand for truth!

Truth causes unity. Satan loves disunity, diversity! Truth builds a common cause. Satan fragments and fractures Jesus' common cause, the church of Jesus Christ. Jesus knew that division would become an obstacle in the way to believing His truth. In fact, on the night of Jesus' betrayal, disunity had already become a problem among His apostles! That's right!

The night before His crucifixion Jesus prayed to His heavenly Father and told Him: "**I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.**" (John 17:8-9 ESV) But then, Jesus prayed this, "**I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. [And] As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.**" (John 17:14-18 ESV) Then Jesus started praying for you and me! "**I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they**

may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me." (John 17:20-23).

Jesus' apostle Paul heard about the problem of division in the church of Christ at Corinth, Greece. The division was caused by disagreements. Someone from the family of Chloe had told Paul about the divisions in the Corinthian church. The division was exposed in how people were talking. Paul said, "What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Corinthians 1:12-13 ESV) Paul begged these Christians, "I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment." (1 Corinthians 1:10 ESV) Jesus' apostle wanted those Christians to "think" alike, and render the same "decisions" about the way they were supposed to live.

When people disagree today about how to understand the Bible's facts, promises, and commands then they may lay the blame for the division on "interpretation." Furthermore, some people seem to rejoice in the fact that there are competing "interpretations" of something written in the Bible. And so we have competing interpretations"! So we think nothing should be done about competing interpretations! Don't challenge my "interpretation"; just accept the fact that God was not clear!

There are many things found in the Bible that may be "unclear" to us because we may not know all the facts on a topic. It is said in Deuteronomy 29:29, "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." (Deuteronomy 29:29 ESV) If something is written in the Bible, then it is revealed. Therefore, there should be a true interpretation for that which has been written. God intended for that revelation to be understood by us and our children forever.

When competing interpretations arise around a topic we should study even more God's sayings on that topic. We should not accept contradictory interpretations.

We should not leave the interpretations as they are! We should try to get to the bottom of it! We should study more and give more diligence to the task of learning and finding the interpretation that provides the **common ground?**

Harmony is the hallmark of truth and the sign of a truthful interpretation. That's right! So we should look for the interpretation that God Himself gives. And we can find God's interpretations by studying all that He has had written on that topic. Jesus said that God's Word is Truth. (John 17:17) And that truth has a sanctifying effect. To "sanctify" is to set something aside for a particular purpose. God's Word, God's Truth sets its learners aside into a common area where we find common ground. May all of those who believe God find common cause, common ground, a common church, a united people brought into brotherhood for the purposes of God.