
BIBLE TALK

This week our subject is: **When someone says, "That's just your interpretation," how should you respond?**

One time I was having a Bible discussion with a person. We were discussing God's plan of salvation. I was trying to show this person that in order to be saved a sinner has to be baptized in water for the remission of sins. I read the following passage:

Acts 2:38

38 ... "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; ...

That's all I did. I simply read this passage and the person I was studying with interrupted by saying, "*Oh, that's just your interpretation.*"

On another occasion, I was having another Bible study with a different person. This time we were discussing the rules God made concerning women in worship services. I read the following passage:

1 Corinthians 14:34-35

34 Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says.

35 And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.

I promise you, all I did was read the passage. I did not make any additional comments. When I finished reading the passage, the person blurted out, "*Oh, that's just your interpretation.*"

THE IMPLICATION

When people say, "Oh, that's just your interpretation," they are implying something. They are implying that you are twisting the scripture and using it out of context to say something it does not mean.

A RESPONSE

First: let me say: ***"Yes, that is my interpretation."***

- In other words, when I read Acts 2:38 and draw the conclusion that baptism is "for the remission of sins," yes, that is my interpretation." But that does not mean my interpretation is wrong.
- When I read 1 Cor 14:34-35 and draw the conclusion that women must remain silent in the assemblies of the church, "yes, that is my interpretation." But that does not mean my interpretation is wrong.

Some people think if they can label an interpretation as "your interpretation," then that automatically means the interpretation is wrong.

- My interpretation of highway laws is that it is illegal to drive faster than the posted speed limit. This is not only my interpretation, it is also the correct interpretation.
- My interpretation of the tax law is that every tax payer must pay the taxes which are due. This is my interpretation and it is also the correct interpretation.

Second: When people say, ***"That's your interpretation,"*** they are making an interpretation themselves.

Think about this for a moment. When someone says, "That's your interpretation," they are themselves making an interpretation. When they say:

- "You are wrong about how you're interpreting Acts 2:38."
- "You are also wrong about how you're interpreting 1 Cor 14:34-35."

- They are interpreting Acts 2:38 in such a way that it does not mean what it says.
- They are interpreting 1 Cor 14:34-35 in such a way that it does not mean what it says.

What makes their interpretation better than mine? If they get to interpret Bible passages, then why don't I get to do the same thing?

Third: When people say, "*That's your interpretation,*" they are saying interpretation is a bad thing.

Now, we've just proven that everyone is interpreting. The ones who say, "That's your interpretation," are guilty themselves of interpreting. We cannot get away from interpreting scripture. But these people are implying that interpretation is a bad thing. They think they're not guilty of this bad thing called "interpretation."

Interpretation is not a bad thing. Interpretation means "an explanation."

- When Acts 2:38 says, "*Be baptized for the remission of sins,*" that has to be explained. Either it means what it says or it doesn't. If it doesn't mean what it says, why not. Someone has to explain why it doesn't mean what it appears to be saying.
- When 1 Cor 14:34-35 says, "*It is a shame for women to speak in the church,*" that has to be explained. If this passage doesn't mean what it appears to be saying, what does it mean?

Reading the Bible requires interpretation. Interpretation is not necessarily a bad thing.

- There are interpretations which are wrong – incorrect (2 Pet 3:16).
- But there are also interpretations which are correct according to Jesus (Lk 10:28).
- Christians are admonished to "rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15).

In conclusion, when someone says, "That's just your interpretation," just ask them, "Is that your interpretation?"

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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