
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **Are there 100 interpretations for one passage of scripture?**

On March 9, 2015 a deacon from a local congregation dropped by the church building to visit with me. He was from a congregation which uses individual communion cups when observing the Lord's supper. While visiting, I offered him a tract concerning the communion showing the Bible pattern requires the use of only one loaf and one cup in the observance of this sacred meal. Upon receiving this tract, the deacon made an amazing statement. He said:

If you were to give 100 people a Bible and ask them to read the account of the communion, you would probably end up with 100 different views of how the communion should be observed.

I listened to this and would think about it for the rest of the day. I have two observations I would like to share regarding this amazing statement made by the deacon.

SPEAKING LIKE AN UNBELIEVER

First: This deacon was speaking like an unbeliever.

Unbelievers do not take the Bible seriously. Many disdain the Bible because the scriptures condemn their evil lifestyles.

John 3:20

²⁰ For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

One common effort to discredit the Bible is to claim that the Bible cannot be understood. As this deacon, who should have known better, people say:

- "If you give the Bible to 100 people and ask them what it teaches about **homosexuality**, you will probably come up with 100 different answers."
- "If you give the Bible to 100 people and ask them what it teaches about **salvation**, you will probably come up with 100 different answers."

CAN THE BIBLE BE UNDERSTOOD?

Q#1: Can the Bible be understood?

A: Yes it can.

Q#2: Can men understand the Bible alike?

A: Yes they can. As a matter of fact, if two people understand the Bible, they will of necessity understand it alike. If two people understand a passage differently, then at least one of them does not understand the passage. When properly understood, a passage teaches the same thing to everyone who understands it.

Observe:

Luke 10:25-28

²⁵ And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

²⁶ He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?"

²⁷ So he answered and said, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'"

²⁸ And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live."

Think about this. Here are two men who both understand a passage of scripture alike. However, since Jesus was God (Jn 1:1), what we actually have here is a man understanding the Bible like God Himself!

The problem with Bible interpretation is not understanding what the scripture says. The problem is submission and obedience.

- People today don't want to understand what the Bible says about homosexuality – because they are self-centered and insist on having their own way.
- People today don't want to understand what the Bible says about true-worship – because they are stubborn and refuse to obey that the Lord said.

CAN COMMUNION BE UNDERSTOOD?

Second: This deacon was being unreasonable.

My deacon friend claimed that if you gave 100 people a copy of the Bible and asked each one how to observe the communion, you would receive 100 different answers. Is this true? Is the communion so difficult and ambiguous that no one can agree upon it? No, this is not true.

Observe:

1 Corinthians 11:23-25

²³ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;

²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

²⁵ In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Here is the divine pattern. It is not so difficult that no two people could understand it or agree upon it.

First, Jesus took only one loaf of unleavened bread.

- We know He used unleavened bread because of Mt 26:17.
- We know He used only one loaf because he said, "This is My body." The word "this" is singular. He did not say, "These are My body."

Everyone can understand this. Using one, unleavened loaf is understandable, but some simply do not want to obey this.

Second, Jesus took only one cup.

- We know He used a cup because the Bible plainly says "the cup."
- We know He used only one cup because the passages says, "This cup." The word "this" is singular. He did not say, "These cups are the new covenant." He said, "This cup is the new covenant."

Everyone can understand this. The problem is not in the wording of the Bible. The problem is not in the difficulty of the subject. The problem lies in people being stubborn and refusing to submit to the pattern found in scripture.

I close this short study with this significant question:

Q: How can a deacon expect others to repent and follow the Bible when he himself will not repent and follow the Bible?

- If repentance is good medicine for others,
- My deacon friend should be willing to swallow his own medicine.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Call again next week when we consider a new subject on ***Bible Talk***.