

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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“That is just your interpretation...”

(Jerry Fite)

When explaining the meaning of a passage, have you received the response: “*That is just your interpretation.*”? With such a response, the person is usually dismissing the teaching you are offering. So, does this mean the interpretation is dismissed because “your” interpretation is always wrong? The person dismissing you probably is not so unkind as to think of you as always being wrong. He or she really believes one can interpret a passage one way, while another person can see it mean something totally different, and both interpretations are acceptable. The one responding is a product of the times where truth is “relative and “subjectivism” rules the day.

When we study the Scriptures we should strive to ascertain the “correct” meaning of a passage, because there is only one correct meaning. When a football sportscaster claims, “All roads to the AFC Championship pass through New England”, what is the correct interpretation? The sports analyst is saying the New England is a superior team in the AFC, and if a team is going to

win the Championship, they will have to play the Patriots.

Jesus claims, “*I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*” (John 14:6). When Jesus says He is “the way”, the context helps us see the proposed destination – coming “to the Father”. The correct interpretation of Jesus’ words is similar to that of the Patriot sportscaster: all roads to the Father pass through Jesus! No one comes to the Father without coming through Jesus who is the true and living way.

People who dismiss your remarks may really have a problem with application, not interpretation. Have you merely read a passage, and someone immediately responds with, “*That is just your interpretation*”? You have only read the words. You have interpreted nothing. They have probably interpreted the words correctly, but do not like how it will apply to them. A Houston Texan fan who desperately wants his team to have the home field advantage through the playoffs may disagree with the application

of the Patriot sportscaster’s statement, but correctly interprets his exclusive claim. Those who want to come to God through other beliefs and religions may not like the application of Jesus’ exclusive claim, but they understand the correct meaning of His words in their context.

Peter writes, “*no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit*” (2 Peter 1:20-21). Peter is not saying you cannot determine the meaning of Scripture for yourself, but need “professionals” to do the interpreting work for you. Notice the context is emphasizing the source for Scriptures, not their meaning. Peter is telling us that Scripture did not come through men speaking from their own will, placing their own construction for its meaning. Men of God spoke as they were directed or moved by the Holy Spirit. Scripture is inspired of God for us to interpret correctly, according to Him, not subjectively.