

Many times we get, as you no doubt have too, questions preceded by the phrase: “What do you think about...” or “What is your take on...” and we try to answer all questions asked because more times than not most people do actually want to know more about the Scriptures, and one of our jobs is to help members of the Body of Christ grow and mature in Him. But we run into a slight problem when the question is asked with this phrase attached to it because when that phrase is asking **about Scripture**, it is asking for a man’s opinion, and therein lies a problem and this is the context of this tool. Below I will try to detail why this is a problem and give us all some things to consider when asking questions about the Scriptures.

Everyone alive has opinions about everything and not all opinions are the same, but they are what **that person** either thinks, feels or believes based on education, culture, social circles, religious affiliation, family history, etc. Some like liver, some don’t; some believe in Jesus, some don’t; some like the idea of socialism, where some prefer a free constitutional republic; some like Fords, others like Chevrolets; some like dogs, some like cats, etc., etc. Opinions and preferences are endless in the minds of men because man views everything from the perspective of his own feelings, likes, dislikes, wants and needs, which is an outgrowth of the flesh where the sinful nature has an inclination or leaning toward that which is sinful.

If you want to ask me which color I like best - I have a preference on that. If you ask me what part of the country I like best - I have an opinion on that. If you ask me what I think about football - I have an opinion on that, but if you ask me if I “think” that adultery is a sin, the answer is an unwavering, definite **yes**! Not because I have an opinion and “think” that it is, but I **know** it is because God’s Word says it is, which makes it Truth and it is no longer my opinion but I am answering from a position of knowledge of what God says about it, and if any man “thinks” it is not a sin, then they are wrong. Not because they are disagreeing with me but because they are disagreeing with what God says about it, which takes me completely out of the discussion and places all emphasis on whether they believe God or not. It is not about whether you and I agree or disagree about our opinions of what God says. Rather, it is about whether you and I agree or disagree with a statement God makes or a doctrine by which He instructs us.

God, who is righteous and holy, **created** man and it is **He** who determines who and what is righteous. Unlike man, God views all things as either righteous or unrighteous, and since He is the one and only YHWH, He gets to say what is Truth and what is a lie, not man. He did not ask man his opinion of what is righteous and what is not; He told man what is and isn’t and has instructed man from the beginning how to be righteous in His sight, but man has a will that produces opinions and beliefs of his own, many of which give no consideration to what God says. Scripture states that God must judge all sin, and He is the one who says what sin is and what righteousness is, no matter what man thinks or feels about it. He is not only the creator of man and all things seen and unseen; He is the final judge of all sin and unrighteousness that was and will be committed. Therefore, He is the final authority and say on all things, not me and not you. Praise God, He gave us His Word so that we can know and understand what is sin and what is righteous, and He has provided a way to be saved from the penalty of our sin and be rescued from His wrath. Yet, we still have people who believe that what they think and feel is more important than knowing and understanding the great “I Am” Eternal God. What a shame.

Our stance, on the subject of opinion, is and will remain that: if God’s Word gives clear statements about any particular doctrine, our opinion (what we think) is of the flesh unless it agrees with what God has stated in His Word to Mankind. God’s Word is Truth and when man’s beliefs and opinions contradict God’s, even to the slightest degree, man is wrong and God is right. Truth is Truth regardless of whether we believe it, or not, or of any opinion we may have of it. God has determined that only

those He deems righteous will inherit eternal life, and He very clearly defined the way to be rescued from the penalty of our sin. Satan, through man, has so deceived even the Body of Christ, that vast numbers of the Body do not know what God says on any particular doctrine and therefore do not make decisions based on God's Word but on **their own** feelings and opinions. As a result of this we see the prophesied results: "*They [believers] will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.*" 2 Tim. 4:3-4 and the devastation it causes within the lives of the members of the Body.

In the case of Scripture, we will not answer a question based on what we think but will direct you to the passages of Scripture being rightly divided and in the context in which it was given with grammatical definitions of words considered. Then you can look them up for yourself, along with a dictionary for definitions of words and a concordance, to find more passages that will give more clarity, and you will be able to study for yourself and the Holy Spirit can grow and use you "*according to His good purpose*" Phil. 2:13.

We will not *interpret* Scripture, as it has already been translated into our language from the Greek and Hebrew and does not need to be interpreted, just rightly divided in context. Note: when you hear someone say, "it depends on how you interpret it," you are listening to someone who does not know what it means. An infantile practice that is commonly used in classes and gatherings is this: a Scripture is read and then people are asked a question like: "What does this passage mean to you?" Then after all opinions are given, we should ask which one is right, but that never happens, does it, because we don't want to offend anyone by telling them their opinion was wrong. All, then, go away agreeing to disagree and feeling good because we had a Bible study and most are more confused than when we came because there was no teaching, only opinions, and everybody has one, don't they. The question is not what it means to you but should be: "What does it mean?" God, not you or me, gave it to men to write down, and He knew exactly what He was saying when He gave it to them. He meant what He said and only meant one thing. God is not confused and does not want men to be either, as He wants all men to be saved and live righteous lives. Confusion about what He says does not produce that result which He desires, as it is Satan through man that produces the confusion, not God.

So, do we believe what God's Word says to mankind or not? If we choose to believe God and give diligence to the study of His Word, then our opinions about what He says will slowly fade away as knowledge and understanding will take over and the Holy Spirit has opportunity to grow our faith in ways we have never imagined. Then, what we "think or feel" about the Scriptures becomes insignificant, and the meaning of what He says becomes clear and the only thing that is of any importance. As our knowledge of His Word increases and we grow and mature in Christ, our faith will grow to a point where all of our hope, trust and faith will be in Him (not in ourselves or worldly circumstances), and no event that we encounter in life will be able to shake that faith because we **know** that His Word is Truth and we understand it. On the other hand, for those who choose to "dabble" in Christianity and remain infants because they refuse to study His Word and grow in Christ, it is going to be a very confusing life as a child of God. They will not be able to rightly divide the Word or competently defend the faith to even the slightest opposition and ultimately, most probably, not be able to give someone the Gospel accurately so that person will have the opportunity to be saved. Simply put, they will not know what they believe or even why they believe what they do and must resort to "I think" or "I feel." Infants can be taught most anything. So, the more the Body embraces its own beliefs and feelings, customs and traditions, the farther we move away from the Truth and the easier it is to believe false teaching and be deceived. These are the people, along with false teachers, who bring in false teachings (what they think) and doctrines (what they believe), man's customs and traditions, and embrace all sorts of false religions and cultic teachings, including Eastern religious practices like yoga, Wicca (witchcraft), meditation and other practices that worship gods other than YHWH, the God of the

Bible.

Finally, if we are asked a question about a passage of Scripture or doctrine of teaching, we will not respond with what we think or our opinion unless there is no clear statement or teaching on that doctrine. But, even then, the answer will be based on the Bible as a whole, and God's purpose and plan being considered. Example: who are the two witnesses in Revelation? I have an opinion and others have theirs and great fellowship can be wrought discussing it, but we have no clear definitive statement telling us, so, the final answer, as well as some other topics, is that we don't know because God didn't tell us. There is no shame in not knowing an answer, if God did not tell us; we accept the fact there are things He chose to give us and things He chose not to. Where there is clear teaching, we will only point you to what He does tell us, in the context in which it is given, also within the context of God's plan as a whole and will leave our opinions out of it.

When asking questions about Scripture, what would be wrong with: "What does God say about..." or "What does the Scripture say about...?" Shouldn't we, as the Body of Christ, have more faith in the Words of God than in our own opinions - ourselves? For those who think that their opinion is so knowledgeable and important, you might want to read *Isaiah 14:1-23* and pay attention to *vv.12-14* where Satan has ideas of his own. Keep reading down to *v.23*. Then go to *Rev. 20:7-10* to see what happens to him.

Grace be with you