

-INTERPRETATION-

God has spoken. He has spoken by His holy Word. He said what He meant. He meant what He said. To try to interpret plain facts is foolishness. Any interpretation that man may try to put upon anything God has written will involve either adding to or taking from. An interpretation is an idea or thought suggested by what is written. If it differs in the least from what is written, it is wrong. Man's ways are not God's ways. We may reason something out our way, and it may seem right, but it may be the opposite of God's way. Let us follow after God, read the Word for ourselves, and believe it as it is. At times I may seem to be quibbling about some unimportant point of Scripture, but I am aiming at making you see the importance of careful reading of all Scripture. It is easy to read an idea into a Scripture passage and then read it right back out again. An example is reading in the word WATER for the word DEATH in Rom. 6.

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-YEA, HATH GOD SAID-

This is a rhetorical question. According to the rules of English, a question mark is not needed after it. When the SHINING ONE, (Nachash) asked it of the woman in the garden, (Gen. 3:1) the implication was plain. He was questioning the wisdom and goodness of God. His purpose was to implant a doubt in human mind as to the fairness and justice of forbidding the fruit of the tree.

Satan still works along the same lines. He is the slanderer. He would accuse God. We must always be on guard lest he whisper to us in an unguarded moment and cause us to criticize God.

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-TRADITION-

Practically every organization that calls itself a church makes claim that it had its beginning at Pentecost. What do they mean by THE CHURCH? We find in Scripture that there was a church of Israel in the wilderness, (translated THE

CONGREGATION OF ISRAEL). There was a CHURCH OF GOD during the Acts period. There is a church which is HIS BODY in the prison epistles. Which began at Pentecost? Or did any begin then? If you can find a word or even a hint in your Bible that any church began at Pentecost, I would like to know about it. I have not been able to find it in mine.

They also tell us that Gentiles, as well as Jews were saved in the great meeting of Pentecost. What does the Word say about it? It does speak of Jews from 14 different nations being there, but I do not find a word concerning Gentiles. No Jew ate with a Gentile until Acts 10, (see Acts 11:3). Peter had to have a special call and vision to open the kingdom to the Gentiles 8 years after Pentecost.

No Jewish believer ever had the slightest idea that a Gentile could be saved without first becoming a Jew until Peter had to give an account of his actions at the house of Cornelius before the elders in Jerusalem. In chapter 10 they were amazed when they saw that the Holy Ghost was poured out on the Gentiles as it had on the Jews at Pentecost. In chapter 11 we read, "They held their peace, and glorified God, saying, 'Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.'"

Which shall we believe, vain tradition or the plain truth of God's Word?

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-IS IT A PARABLE?-

About every time the seasons change we hear a sermon on the story of the rich man and Lazarus. You had better read it again. It is in Luke 16. Always, without any variation, this story is cited as actual fact, something that really happened. They make deductions and conclusions as if this were plain spiritual truth, even in spite of the fact that such a point of view nullifies every other Scripture on the same subject. The only way they can make any other Scripture support what they read into and out

of this passage is to take a text out of its context and make it mean something entirely different. Other Scripture is plain in its statements concerning the state of the dead.

Let us examine some near and remote contexts of this story in Luke. For example, Matt. 13:34; "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in PARABLES; and without a PARABLE spake He not unto them." The audience which made up those who heard the story of the rich man and Lazarus was publicans and sinners (15:1) and Pharisees (16:14). This was the multitude to which He spoke in parables.

Now a nearer context is Luke 8:10; "Unto you (He is speaking to His disciples) it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but to others in PARABLES; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand." Nowhere do we find the Lord giving out spiritual truth to the Pharisees, and this passage in Luke is no exception.

The parable is so plain and the meaning so obvious that it scarcely needs any interpretation. The Pharisees got the point. It was a bitter pill of truth for them to have to swallow. It just added in with other things they had laid up against the Lord which finally ended in their crucifying Him.

See whether you can get the true meaning. Who is represented by the rich man? Who were getting rich at that time at the expense of the poor anyway? Who is represented by Lazarus? What was the duty of the rich toward the poor according to the law? What does the purple signify? The linen? Did the Pharisees have any right to either the purple or linen? What is hell? (Study SHEOL and HADES as used in the Word of God) Where is it? What is meant by Abraham's bosom? If it was actually a place, what was it before Abraham? What does the great gulf represent? Do we have any such caste systems in the world today?

Now maybe you can see how the

Lord condemned those wicked Pharisees right out of their own mouths.

Did not verse 31 finally prove to be true of even these very Jews?

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-THE DIFFERENCE-

Most people suppose that the difference between Jew and Gentile in Scripture is a racial one. A close examination reveals that such was not the case. The difference was because of promises, not a difference of race. The Jews were Semites (from Shem). They were Hebrews (descendants of Eber or Heber). The Arabs are from the same root. Those to whom pertained the promises were children of Abraham thru Isaac, thru Jacob, and thru the 12 sons of Jacob.

The Jews were, "...Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the PROMISES; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came." Rom. 9:4,5.

All others were, "Gentiles.... who are called the Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made with hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of PROMISE, having no hope, and without God in the world." Eph. 2:11,12.

Now Romans was written during the time of the CHURCH OF GOD which ended at the end of the time covered by Acts. Even then there was no difference between Jew and Gentile as far as sin and salvation were concerned. Both had sinned and come short of the glory of God. But positionally it was the Jew first.

But now, as shown in Ephesians, this position has been changed. In the church which is HIS BODY there is no difference in position. The middle wall of partition has been broken down. The far off are made nigh. Both are heirs and joint-heirs with Christ, not Abraham. All members are equal.

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THE BELLY-GOD

Would you have ever thought that a Christian could be an enemy of the cross? Not all enemies are on the outside; some are within.

"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things." Phil. 3:18,19.

Here Paul is speaking of those who are believers and called Christians. They are the ones who have a walk. But they do not walk worthy of their calling. Paul in this same context speaks of his own example. He also speaks of some whose walk must not be imitated. He is not talking of the unsaved. They would be no snare to the Philippians who run for a prize.

These are believers who have been redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb. They are saved. They are justified. But they have not gone on to realize the deeper teaching of the cross. They have not learned the circumcision of the flesh. Poor unfortunates, their God is their belly. Their mind is set on earthly things. The word DESTRUCTION here means spoil, mar, or deprave. It is somewhat parallel with I Cor. 3:15-17. There we find some who have built of the wrong material. Their work is lost in the fire. They are saved, yet as by fire.

The teaching of the cross involves self-denial. To take up our cross and follow Him means to give up the world, not to mind earthly things. It even involves loving Him more than any person or thing on this earth. Such teaching is foolishness to them that perish. A worldly person can never understand why anybody would deny himself anything. The cross means the crucifixion of the flesh.

So a believer may indulge himself in the flesh and fail to walk spiritually, and by his influence and example become an enemy of the cross. The end of such is loss.

The man who lives his life for himself, who seeks to save it for his selfish desires will lose all joy of life. The man who loses his life in the service of the Lord, (I mean to live unto God, not to die) will find life and joy in living it.

The failure of the redeemed Israelites, including Moses, to enter the promised land was because they drew back to destruction or loss.

There is a threefold failure that cause them to be enemies of the cross. Their God is their belly. They glory in their shame. Things of the earth occupy their mind. But can a believer have an idol or a god? Beware of covetousness which is idolatry. Never yield your members unto sin, but unto God.

Belly; how can that be a God? When you are called for a certain line of duty for the Lord, do you shrink and say, "Well, one must make a living." Man does not live by bread alone. We are not to be too anxious about what we are to eat or drink. Eve was tempted when she saw something that looked as if it would be good to eat. The Israelites in the wilderness were murmuring because of something to eat. Our Lord's first temptation was in the realm of something to eat. Can one become so fond of good eating that he will become a glutton and make a God of his belly? It seems so.

Can a bread-and-butter reason be back of some of our failures? Let us be careful that we do not glory in shame. The Lord endured the cross, despising the shame. Let us not mind earthly things, but keep our eyes on the prize of the high calling.

It is right that we should be diligent in business. It is right to provide for the family. It is right to labor with the hands. But business, family cares, and the things necessary to daily life must not take first place. Let us not be as Martha, but as Mary.

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-THE EDITOR'S DESK-

It is just about as badly cluttered up as ever. This week I have answered some letters received in September. Just about the time I think the end is in sight, some more bob up. But we are so glad to hear from folks that we want you to keep right on writing.

Some time ago a family near Warsaw said they would like to attend a Bible class in Warsaw, if I got one started. No one in Warsaw yet has volunteered to open his home for the class for a few weeks, so we are still waiting. Maybe you have something to suggest along this line.

We still have the class at my home each Sunday afternoon at 2:30. Some new folks came in during the last month. Of course if the lane here drifts full of snow, we may have to skip a meeting. It is about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile long and gets bad sometimes. If you come from Warsaw on #25 toward Mentone, turn west at the second cross roads and go four miles. That will put you at about my lane which goes south from the road. For some time we have been following the general topic of "All Truth."

You are welcome to come to the WRSW studios when I broadcast on Tuesday nights. A few have dropped in and we were glad to have

them come.

If this paper is marked SAMPLE on the front page, it is probably the only one you will get unless you write asking to have it sent regularly. A postal card will do. There is no charge for it. I am glad to be of any help to you.

If you have some friends that you would like to have on the mailing list, just send me the names and addresses.

The purpose of TRUTH FOR TODAY, the printed word, the radio ministry, and the Bible classes, is to get you to study the Bible. In it are great treasures which you may never have suspected were there. Most cults have substituted some other book or books for the Bible. The denominations have mostly followed the same example. In most Sunday Schools they study from a quarterly magazine with the notes and comments that are put out by the leaders of the church. That way much truth can be suppressed, and it will never be used as a subject of study in the Sunday Schools. It is just another way of keeping people from knowing their Bibles. Many who have gone to Sunday School for years cannot readily find references in the Bible. They have no idea where many of the books of the Bible are.

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