



NO PRIVATE INTERPRETATION; DOES SCRIPTURE PROCLAIM THAT NO INDIVIDUAL CAN INTERPRET PROPHECY?

By George Lujack

Christian institutions and individuals who defend denominational church teachings, throughout millennia, have proclaimed superior knowledge and wisdom over the individual questioning the flawed doctrines of any particular Christian group, often citing 2 Peter 1:20, which states in part that “*no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation.*” This article will address 2 Peter 1:20, a verse which many people use to silence the critic, questioner, or messenger, and will explain the true meaning of the verse.

2 PETER 1:20 (NKJV):

No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation.

When read alone and out of context, it may appear that the individual person does not have any authority or wisdom to interpret Scripture or prophecy. This would mean, of course, that only a collective group of persons or an organization could explain and understand Scripture and prophecy.

This is not so, and Peter himself provides examples which demonstrate that this is not the case at all.

MATTHEW 16:15-17 (NKJV):

He [YESHUA (JESUS)] said to them, “**But who do you say that I am?**” Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Messiah (Christ), the Son of the living God.”

Yeshua (Jesus) answered and said to him, “**Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, FOR FLESH AND BLOOD [PERSONS] HAS NOT REVEALED THIS TO YOU, BUT MY FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN.**”

God the Father revealed the answer of who Yeshua (Jesus) was to Peter.

ACTS 10:28 (NKJV):

“God has shown me that I should not call *any man* common or unclean...”

Peter had a vision to kill and eat, in Acts chapter 10, which unlike many false teachings provided by various mainstream Christian groups, he individually interpreted the true meaning himself, through God. The unclean creatures shown to him were not meant to be killed and eaten, to abolish God’s dietary laws, but were used as a metaphor representing the non-Jewish people, that Peter should no longer consider Gentiles common or unclean.

We are commanded to study the Scriptures for ourselves (2 Timothy 2:15, 3:16-17). Studying the Scriptures would be pointless if we could not receive individual revelation of truths on a personal level, from the Scriptures themselves, but could only receive knowledge and wisdom of Scripture and prophecy through groups.

ORDINATION: A PREREQUISITE THROUGH SEMINARY SCHOOL?

MATTHEW 28:18-20 (NKJV):

And Yeshua (Jesus) came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

What Yeshua (Jesus) did not say to His disciples was to go out and make disciples of all nations, baptizing *and ordaining* them. Baptism itself *is ordination*! A man should not go out preaching on complex doctrinal issues, unless he is prepared, being well studied and versed on the topic, but to believe that only those who are officially ordained can teach God’s word flies in the face of all Scripture, as most saints had no such formal seminary training or ordination, except perhaps the high priests, Pharisees, and scribes, who were often scolded by Yeshua (Jesus) for their erroneous doctrines.

1 CORINTHIANS 1:27-28 (NKJV):

God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame (confound) the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame (confound) the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are.

Fisherman and tax collectors, laborers and civil servants by today’s comparison, were Yeshua’s (Jesus’) disciples. Yeshua (Jesus) did not choose the mighty, the scholarly, or the wealthy, but instead chose the common man to change the world, to spread the gospel message, to confound the wisdom of the scholars of this world, and bring to nothing their false teachings.

Many of the teachings offered in seminary schools are the false doctrines that have been passed down for hundreds or thousands of years, which are used to indoctrinate the ordained scholars of this age. Most often these teachings do not withstand the truth test of Scripture (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Most often the seminary student is not permitted to question the teachings of his seminary school, but is instructed and trained to obey them as unquestionable truths.

THE WORLD RESPECTS DEGREES AND ORGANIZATIONS, BUT HATES THE MESSENGERS OF TRUTH PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD IN THE SCRIPTURES

The Scripture PhD's, the seminary scholars, and their kind all have one thing in common: they expect people to value their opinion because they have obtained some type of Christian theological degree. Many believers in the world often respect a Christian organization or an individual, who possesses a degree from a Christian education establishment, as a bona fide source of wisdom. Sadly, most believers are misguided into worldly standards of thinking, not realizing the great source of wisdom is in their very homes: the Holy Scriptures, which often goes unstudied in an earnest desire for truth, without preconceived denominational or personal misconceptions.

All handed down denominational teachings sprang forth from an individual, then were adopted by a group, then became institutionalized and unchallengeable doctrine. Christian denominational churches, no matter how bad or unscriptural their doctrines may be, typically stand by their incorrect, easily proven false doctrines.

To proclaim that no individual, but only a group or a council can determine truth is easily refuted by basic common sense. There are numerous different Christian denominations worldwide, each with varying different doctrines. These separate groups or divisions of Christian theology cannot all be correct, as there can be only one truth on any particular topic. So, since Christian church organizations have not been successful with collective groupthink interpretations of Scripture or prophecy, anyone who proclaims that the individual cannot privately interpret Scripture is refuted by the fact that organizations collectively cannot interpret Scripture or prophecy with any certainty either.

NO PROPHECY OF SCRIPTURE IS 'OF' ANY PRIVATE INTERPRETATION

Does Peter actually proclaim that no individual can privately interpret Scripture or Scripture prophecy? No, not at all! Peter is declaring that no prophecy of Scripture, no prophecy *contained in Scripture* came by man's interpretation or origin. Prophecy, which has been written and recorded in Scripture, did not come to the prophets who wrote of them by their own will or intellect, but as they were directed, inspired, and moved by the Holy Spirit.

To better understand the words of Peter, one must read them in their full context...

2 PETER 1:20-21 (NKJV):

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture [WHICH IS IN SCRIPTURE] is of any private interpretation [IS OF ANY PRIVATE ORIGIN APART FROM GOD], for prophecy [RECORDED IN SCRIPTURE] never came by the will of man [NO PROPHET RECORDED HIS OWN PROPHECIES IN SCRIPTURE], but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

When carefully analyzing the meaning of Peter's words, they do not proclaim that an individual cannot interpret Scripture prophecy. What is actually written is that no Scripture prophecy (which is in Scripture, otherwise it could not be called *Scripture prophecy*) is 'of' any private interpretation, meaning that no Scripture prophecy recorded in the Scriptures is of, or originates from, any man's private thoughts, apart from revelation received from God. When an individual properly explains a Scripture position or prophecy interpretation, without having expressed preconceived doctrinal or personal bias, correctly using all precept upon precept Scripture related verses to assert an opinion or to refute a doctrine, this is not a 'private' interpretation, but a Scripture-based one.

REVELATION 1:1-3 (NKJV):

The Revelation of Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ), which God gave Him to show His servants - things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel TO HIS SERVANT JOHN, WHO BORE WITNESS TO THE WORD OF GOD, and to the testimony of Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ), TO ALL THE THINGS THAT HE SAW.

John did not write the prophecies of the book of Revelation by His own will, but wrote them according to all the visions he saw. That is, the book of Revelation was not John's private interpretation. John was a holy man of God who wrote what he saw in the visions that were shown to him as the Holy Spirit moved him.

JEREMIAH 23:25-27 (NKJV):

“I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in My name, saying, ‘I have dreamed, I have dreamed!’ How long will this be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies? Indeed they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart, who try to make My people forget My name by their dreams which everyone tells his neighbor, as their fathers forgot My name for Baal [LORD].

REVELATION 22:18-19 (NKJV):

For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Proper discernment and interpretation of Scripture is not prophesying lies. A warning is issued to not add or take away from the end time prophecies written in the book of Revelation. This warning coincides with Peter's writings proclaiming that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, meaning that no Scripture prophecy is of any private origin.

