

Confuseth Says... (Revised)

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No, the title of this message is not a misspelling of the name of Chinese educator Confucius. Many people have used his name jokingly with the words, "Confucius Say..." followed by some often-humorous tidbit of philosophical wisdom. Although his teachings eventually morphed into a religion of sorts, Confucius actually was a wise and respected man in history. His teachings focused primarily on morality in government, relationships, and much more. However, this writing isn't about Confucius; I merely used his name to get your attention figuring many would be quick to point out the perceived error in the title. What I really want to talk about is some of the writings and teachings that are prevalent in our time, some of which may be good, others having the sole purpose of creating confusion, especially among people seeking God. In past writings, I have brought out the fact that Satan is basically, in the business of creating confusion through deception and distraction, sometimes using subtle tricks as I did in the title of this message. The Devil comes in many forms and some of them can be attractive in many ways, even to a person searching for truth. Most of the time there is more truth than deception in the mix, but deception is deception nevertheless. For example, read the following passage from the Bible:

John 1:1-3 (New King James Version)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

This is a very familiar passage to even the casual reader of the Bible. Most would agree it is a passage very clear and to the point. On my Bible study program, just for "kicks and giggles" as my wife would say, I put up 19 different translations of this exact passage on my computer screen. Each one translates the passage exactly the same way except the "Amplified Bible" which says "and the Word was God Himself." This variation does not change the meaning of the passage; in fact, it enhances the meaning of the passage. However, a lone religious sect among us, which first appeared in the eighteen hundreds, added a single letter word (A) to this passage in their "self proclaimed" only accurate translation of the Bible. This seemingly benign addition, changes the entire meaning of one of the most quoted passages in the Bible! It causes confusion for many, and doubt concerning the credibility of the rest of the entire Gospel of John, in fact doubt concerning the entire Old and New Testament for others! The letter was added before the last word in verse one which in essence implies that Jesus (The Word) was not (God) as is translated by virtually all other Theologians and Bible Scholars throughout history, but rather (a) god. A single letter word inserted in the right place can change everything as this profoundly illustrates. I also observed that all the translations I am referencing, all use capital letters when referring to the *Word* (Jesus) and *God*, a practice among translators denoting Deity. This other *radical translation* I am comparing is called "The New World Translation." It also uses Caps in the first part of verse one, except after the word (a) which makes the word "god" (also *not* capitalized in this translation) to refer to a false or secular god according to standards set by translators throughout history.

The following passage reflects the *common translation* of John 1:1-3. I used the Geneva Bible, as it is one of the oldest English translations, thereby reinforcing another president set by translators throughout history. Pay particular attention to verse seven below which I underlined. This passage underscores the concept of the "Trinity" which is a doctrine also denied by the writers of the New World Translation but is however, in agreement with the 19 others I have referenced previously.

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1 John 5:4-8 (Geneva Bible)

⁴ For all that is born of God, overcometh this world: and this is that victory that hath overcome this world even our faith. ⁵ Who is it that overcometh this world, but he which believeth that Jesus is that Son of God? ⁶ This is that Jesus Christ that came by water and blood: not by water only, but by water and blood: and it is that Spirit that beareth witness: for that Spirit is truth. ⁷ For there are three, which bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the holy Ghost: and these three are one. ⁸ And there are three, which bear record in the earth, the Spirit, and the Water and the Blood: and these three agree in one.

A Simple One Letter Word vs. Many Words

So far we can see that even one letter can have a profound effect on how we comprehend not only the Word of God, but just about anything! During a recent study I experienced the opposite. I was exploring the writings of Flavius Josephus being curious as to what this famous Jewish historian had to say about Jesus. This is what I found:

3. Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.

The Works of Flavius Josephus, trans. William Whiston, (Hartford, CN: S. S. Scranton, 1905), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 548.

I wanted to share this with you because it is so important in that it was written by a Jewish man who was believed connected to the Pharisees (perhaps being one himself). He also became a Roman Citizen, and because of this, considered a traitor to the Jewish people. He is indeed a complex man to be studied. As for the passage above from his writings, I consider the words to be clear and to the point. I came across a web site that gives a commentary on this passage among others. The quote of Josephus contains 126 words; the commentary "related to it" contains 5118 words! The commentary goes off on so many different tangents and chases down so many rabbit trails, I could not honestly tell you what it says, or whether or not it defends the writings of Josephus or condemns them! The point I want to make here is that if anyone were to thoroughly research the commentary to validate what it brought out concerning this simple passage from the writings of Josephus, they would not have time to read the actual Word of God for at least a year! Talk about confusion! Talk about diversion! There are many writers and commentators out there that although they might on the surface, come across as serious truth seekers I believe many are working for the "enemy," drawing attention away from the actual truth. Many commentators are glory seekers, not for the glory of God, but rather for themselves. I feel that when someone devotes 5000 plus words to comment on a 126 word passage, there is an ulterior motive at work.

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When Jesus walked the earth, the majority of the people He spoke to were average people just like you and me. Most of the time, when He spoke to the religious leaders, (the theologians of the day) it was to point out where they got it wrong. There is however good news! You do not need a degree in theology to understand the Word of God. I once heard it said that man says to God, "Show me and I will believe," God says, "Believe and I will show you." I will admit that there are some things in the Bible that to a non-Christian might come across as confusing even contradictory, but they are not, especially if you simply apply even the smallest amount of faith. It is like jumping out of an airplane with a parachute. It takes a little faith that the parachute will open. You probably wouldn't know who packed the parachute but you trust it was done properly.

Why not trust the one whom not only created humankind and the entire universe; but also the one who gave His life that you and I might live forever? If you do that, He will give you all the understanding you desire through His Spirit... but only if you trust Him.

John 16:13-14 (Amplified Bible)

¹³ But when He, the Spirit of Truth (the Truth-giving Spirit) comes, He will guide you into all the Truth (the whole, full Truth). For He will not speak His own message [on His own authority]; but He will tell whatever He hears [from the Father; He will give the message that has been given to Him], and He will announce *and* declare to you the things that are to come [that will happen in the future]. ¹⁴ He will honor *and* glorify Me, because He will take of (receive, draw upon) what is Mine and will reveal (declare, disclose, transmit) it to you.

In conclusion, if you become confused either by something someone may have written or said pertaining to anything concerning God's word, you have at your disposal the ultimate resource of truth, God's Word! The Bible will always ultimately explain itself, but there is an obligation on your part... You have to read it! If you have received the gift of salvation through faith in the finished work of Jesus, you have an additional resource at your disposal, the Holy Spirit! It is so important to read The Bible on a regular basis. There are so many false teachings being imposed on our society these days and you cannot trust the so-called "fact checkers" as most of them are on the side of the enemy in one form or the other. Check everything you see, read, and hear against God's Word, The Bible! There are many people and groups out there that can sound very convincing, some are subtle as illustrated in this writing, others, are blatant liars! You are the best "Fact Checker," but it takes a little effort on your part. God's Word contains the facts... The Holy Spirit is there to help you to find them, and apply them to your life.