

Is Biblical Truth No Different Than the Yanny vs. Laurel Debate?

The Yanny vs. Laurel debate has taken the internet by storm. What did you hear when you heard the robot audio clip?

As I listened, there was no doubt that the word was “Laurel,” no matter how many times I listened. It was “Laurel,” clear as a bell.

For others, the word was definitely “Yanny.” How, they wondered, could anyone hear anything else?

The offshoot of all this is simple (and scary): Two sincere people can hear (or see) two different things at one and the same time, even though they’re hearing (or seeing) the very same thing.

But does that mean all truth is up for grabs? Perish the thought. The Yanny vs. Laurel debate actually underscores this.

“How so?” you might ask?

Well, we’re having a conversation about this issue, and everyone understands what we’re talking about. In other words, if you followed the Yanny vs. Laurel controversy the last few days, you know what’s dividing us.

We listened to the same clip, and some of us heard one thing and others heard another thing. The reason we know this is because when we choose to communicate clearly, we can.

That’s how we know there’s a national controversy. We’ve been communicating about it with each other. And our communication has been simple and clear.

That's why no one reading this column thinks I'm talking about the NBA playoffs or the Middle East conflict or alpine skiing or favorite pets. When we want to communicate clearly, we can.

That's why we have traffic lights and traffic signs. (Does anyone think that STOP means "Accelerate now"?)

That's why we have tests with questions and answers.

That's why we have menus with descriptions.

An optical (or auditory) illusion is one thing. Intentional, clear, black and white communication is another thing.

Unfortunately, I can already see what's coming down the pike based on the Yanny vs. Laurel debate. It's going to sound something like this: "You have your truth and I have mine. Remember Yanny and Laurel! Your reality may be real for you, but it's not real for me."

How much more will we hear this argument when it comes to biblical truth: "Remember Yanny and Laurel!"

Now, as a lifelong student of the Scriptures (from the age of 16 until today), I'd be the first to admit that there are verses in the Bible that are hard to understand. Some are even downright difficult just to translate. And some are subjects of debate to this moment.

At the same time, I'd be the first to affirm that some things are as clear as day, and it is only if we choose not to see what is written that we will remain blind.

That's why so many people hate God's Word: The message is all too clear! As the old Mark Twain saying goes, "It ain't those parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand."

Let's take John 14:6 and Acts 4:12 as examples. In John, Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to

the Father except through Me.” In Acts, speaking of this same Jesus, Peter said, “There is no salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

Does this sound like, “All paths lead to God”? Do these verses say, “Even if you reject Jesus, God will receive you”?

Certainly not. This is not one of those Yanny vs. Laurel examples.

And on and on it goes, in verse after verse through the Scriptures. There is a clear message about the one true God. A clear message about the sinfulness of our race. A clear message about the holy standards of the Lord. A clear message about our need to be forgiven and redeemed. A clear message about a Savior and Redeemer. A clear message about the consequences of rejecting that Savior and Redeemer.

The words are not ambiguous and the message is not unclear. Rather, the truth is staring us right in the face, if we only humble ourselves and believe.

Again, this doesn't mean that every verse in the Bible is easy to understand. And it doesn't mean that serious students of the Word won't have some differences. And, obviously, it doesn't mean that everyone recognizes the Bible as God's Word, even though it is His Word.

But it does mean that the objection we're sure to hear in the days ahead is no objection at all. There's a massive difference between an auditory illusion and eternal, unambiguous, clearly-communicated truth.