

## Jesus and the Scriptures

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### Introduction:

As we look across the religious landscape of our modern world, we see all kinds of differences. People worship differently. People teach differently. People believe differently. We could argue over thousands of different opinions on thousands of different topics. But almost without fail when the discussion is pushed to its root source, the ultimate difference that causes all the others is what are we actually supposed to do with the Bible? Is it merely a love letter from God? Is it a pattern for life? Does it only condemn what is wrong? Does it provide authorization for what is right? How does it teach us what to do? What exactly should we do with the Scriptures? As followers of Christ, we realize one natural way to answer this question is to see how Jesus used the scriptures. Examine some of the passages in the Gospel accounts to learn how Jesus did and how we should use the Scriptures.

### Discussion:

- I. Jesus viewed the Scripture as authoritative.
  - A. In **John 10:35**, Jesus said, “Scripture cannot be broken” (ESV). The word translated “broken” (“luo”) refers to something that has been unbound, loosed, broken or deprived of authority. For instance in **Matthew 5:19**, the word “relaxes” (ESV) or “annuls” (NASU) is translated by the same word. Jesus’ point was that the Scripture is always binding. It is always authoritative. It is always the governing document and it is never wrong.
  - B. I think this is particularly interesting considering the passage Jesus is discussing in **John 10:35**. Jesus quotes **Psalms 82:6**. In which God spoke to the judges of Israel and called them “gods.” Let’s face it, for a monotheistic culture that can’t handle someone coming into the world as the Son of God, this had to be a troubling passage. Further, when every other passage in the Old Law declares that there are no gods but Jehovah alone, this passage seems to be contradictory on the surface. Yet, Jesus recognizes that this passage is just as authoritative as all others. Why? Because it is Scripture and Scripture cannot be broken. Thus, the Jews could not simply get rid of this verse because its surface message didn’t fit with their outlook. Rather, they had to figure out how it fit with everything else.
  - C. Some folks believe the Scriptures were merely one community’s view of God and how they related to Him. We, however, must see the Scriptures as authoritative. **II Peter 1:20-21** explains Scripture was not a man’s opinion or even a community’s opinion. It is the revelation of God. Scripture is, therefore, binding, unbreakable. No matter what we think of any particular verse, whether it fits with our preconceived notions or not, we must view the Scripture as the final say on all matters. Our think-sos don’t matter. Our ideas and notions don’t count. What God said on the matter through Scripture is what holds true on all issues. We must view the Scriptures as the final authority on matters of life and service to God.
- II. Jesus believed the Scriptures governed His life.
  - A. In **Matthew 4:3**, Satan tempted Jesus saying, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread” (ESV). Jesus responded by quoting **Deuteronomy 8:3**: “Man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord” (ESV). The point of Jesus’ response was to demonstrate that He refused to rely on His own strength or power but relied on the Word of God.
  - B. However, the interesting point for us to note is this Scripture was written about 1500 years before Jesus lived. It was written to a completely different culture in a different time. Yet, for some reason, Jesus still believed the Scripture established a pattern for His life. Jesus did not believe the Scriptures were merely a love letter letting all Jews know how much God loved them. He believed the Scriptures governed His life. He was not allowed to act unless the Scripture authorized it. We live based on the Word of God.
  - C. Some folks claim we shouldn’t be too dogmatic with what the Bible says. After all, it was written to a different culture in a different time and we can’t allow our lives to be hindered by the provincial thinking of those unenlightened communities. However, we must be like Jesus. Though the Bible was completed nearly 2000 years ago, it is still the Word of God. It still governs our lives. We must use it as a guide and pattern for how we will live.

- III. Jesus believed the Scriptures should unite us in our disagreements.
- A. In **Matthew 19:3**, some Pharisees asked Jesus if it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason. Historically, we are told they were bringing up a long time controversy between two schools of thought. The school of Hillel allowed divorce for any reason. The school of Shammai only allowed it for the cause of adultery. The two schools had debated for some time. The Pharisees came to stump Jesus by trying to get Him embroiled in this controversy. No matter how He answered, He would upset someone.
  - B. However, we are not so concerned today with His answer as we are with the basis for His answer. In **Matthew 19:4-5**, Jesus quoted **Genesis 2:24**. Jesus believed He could turn to book, chapter and verse to end disputes. He did not offer opinion. He did not offer the pop-psychology of the day. He did not offer the majority opinions. He simply said, "Here is the Scripture—God joined the married. If God joins the married, who is man to think he can separate them?"
  - C. Sadly, the Bible is often missing from modern spiritual debate. We hear about what preachers have said. We hear about what the majority thinks. We hear about modern views among scholars and professors. We hear ideas and opinions. We hear what people are convinced God will think about particular issues. Rarely, however, do we hear, "Here is the book, chapter and verse about what God thinks." Whatever discussion we are in, we need to bring the Bible in and base our answer upon it. That is what Jesus did.
- IV. Jesus believed the Scriptures could be misused, but must be used properly.
- A. In **Matthew 4:6**, Satan tempted Jesus a second time saying that **Psalms 91:11-12** taught that God would protect His servant from harm. The verse does in fact say God will charge His angels to take care of His servant and keep him from striking his foot against a stone. However, Satan had taken this verse out of its Biblical context. Jesus responded saying, "It is written again." That is, "In another scripture we find a principle that modifies what **Psalms 91:11-12** says." Jesus then cited **Deuteronomy 6:16**, "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test." That is to say, "Certainly, God has said He will protect His servants. However, we are not to specifically put ourselves in harm's way to test God's faithfulness to His word."
  - B. The real point for us is that Satan misused Scripture and Jesus called Him on it. Jesus believes Scripture should govern our lives. Jesus believes Scripture applies to our lives. Jesus believes Scripture can answer our questions. However, He also believes we have to use it correctly to accomplish all these goals. People can misapply Scripture. People can misunderstand Scripture. However, we are responsible to make sure we are using it correctly.
  - C. From this exchange we learn two similar principles about how Jesus used Scripture. The first principle is that we cannot base our opinions on one passage from Scripture. Rather, we must take everything the Scripture says. Our understanding from one passage must harmonize with all other Scriptures. The second principle is we must use Scripture as our primary source for interpreting Scripture. Jesus didn't cite the Jewish scholars' opinions on **Psalms 91:11-12**. He didn't discuss what everyone thought about the passage. He turned to another passage in Scripture to provide greater understanding. Again, Jesus demonstrated that the ultimate authority and guide for us, answering all our questions about serving God is the Scripture and the Scripture alone.
- V. Jesus used the Scriptures provide authorization for work and action.
- A. In **Matthew 12:2**, the Pharisees accused Jesus' disciples of doing what was unlawful or unauthorized. Jesus did not respond that authorization was unnecessary. He did not ask, "Where did God condemn what they are doing?" Instead, He turned to the Scriptures to establish authority for their actions. Jesus believed He should be able to show Scriptural authority for acting and working. In fact, as we look at how Jesus used Scripture, we find that He used three different means to establish His authority to act and work.
    1. Jesus believed the Scriptures authorized Him to act through Direct Statement. In **Matthew 4:9**, Satan offered Jesus to rule all the nations of the world if He would merely worship Satan. But Jesus knew what was commanded and authorized. He knew what **Deuteronomy 6:13** said, "It is the Lord your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve..." (ESV). By Direct Statement fearing, worshipping, serving Jehovah God was authorized and nothing else.

2. Jesus believed the Scriptures authorized Him to act through Approved Example. In **Matthew 12:3-5**, when Jesus responded to the Pharisees who accused His disciples of breaking the Sabbath because they plucked heads of grain to eat, Jesus cited the example of David eating the bread of the Presence that was not lawful for him to eat and also cited that the priests worked on the Sabbath. Granted, we have an awful lot of debate about Jesus' specific point in this passage. However, one thing is absolutely clear. When Jesus wanted to demonstrate that what His disciples were doing was authorized, He turned to examples found in Scripture.
  3. Jesus believed the Scriptures authorized Him to act through Necessary Inference. Many folks today despise this terminology. When I discuss Biblical authority with brethren, this is always the principle they hone in on to repudiate. Yet, this is actually the principle we see Jesus use the most as He offers authorization or discusses Scripture. Consider **Matthew 12:9-14**. In this passage, Jesus demonstrates that with all the laws about the Sabbath, there is a necessary inference that saving a life is allowed on the Sabbath. If saving the life of a sheep is allowed on the Sabbath, how can healing a man be any less so. That is necessary inference. Also, in **Mark 7:9-13**, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for violating God's commandment. He did so based on Necessary Inference. All the Scripture said was honor father and mother. I have yet to find a passage that said children were to take care of their aging parents. However, Jesus inferred necessarily that taking care of parents was part of honoring Father and Mother. Jesus actually viewed this Necessary Inference as a command. Consider also **Matthew 19:6**. Jesus restricted divorce based on an inference from the text. There is no text that says man is not to separate what God has joined together. But Jesus viewed it as a natural inference from the stated principle. God joined the married couple, man did not. Therefore only God is to separate the married couple, man is not to do so.
- B. Interestingly, a lot of people, especially among the younger generations are rejecting the three principles we have just seen Jesus use. As I recently heard brother Shane Scott point out, perhaps one of the problems we have today is we have acted like these three principles were inscribed on a rock somewhere and handed to us as the prescribed way for using the Bible. That is not the case. Rather, as we study Scripture, we see this is how Jesus and His servants used the Scripture, so we have determined to do the same thing.

#### VI. Jesus used the Scripture to rebuke those in error.

- A. Finally, folks today will tell us that we should only ever use the Scripture to determine what we will do. We should not rebuke or reprove others but simply let them study for themselves. Some will even strive to use the Biblical teaching of congregational autonomy to support their view. However, in **Matthew 15:8-9**, Jesus used **Isaiah 29:13** to rebuke the Pharisees who had dismissed the commands of God in favor of their traditions. Further, in **Matthew 22:29**, Jesus rebuked the Sadducees because they did not know the Scriptures and therefore did not base their teaching on the Scriptures.
- B. As Paul said in **II Timothy 3:16**, the Scriptures reprove and correct us. When we see someone is wrong based on Scripture, we should use the Scripture to reprove and correct them. Of course, this does not mean we are to be busybodies trying to hunt down everyone who is doing something wrong. However, it does mean when we see someone doing wrong or talk with someone we believe is wrong based on Scripture, then we should use the Scripture to teach them so. We are not to sit back and say we all just get to do whatever we want.

#### Conclusion:

Jesus believed the Scripture was His guide. No doubt, He knew based on Scripture that God loved Him. However, first and foremost, He viewed the Scripture as a pattern for His life and service to God. We should do the same whether we are talking about the work of the congregation or our individual lives. Let us learn the Scripture that we may not be rebuked by Jesus in the end and let us use the Scripture to determine how we should live. When we do that, then we are really following in the footsteps of Jesus.