

The Bible According to Jesus 5

We've looked at various passages quoted by Jesus and seen His own interpretation and understanding of Scripture. In doing so we have seen some principles that we might also apply when considering passages. The Scriptures can be misused as we saw in our first study when Satan quoted Scripture. The Spirit behind the letter is important. It is also important to compare Scripture with Scripture to get at the heart of the matter. We must use applicable passages as Jesus did. In this study we will see the teachers of the Law challenging Jesus' interpretation of Scripture. They are trying to claim that He is misusing or not keeping the Scriptures. We have seen the topics before but today we have a direct confrontation of understanding of the same portions of Scripture.

Matt 15:1-9 (NIV) 1 Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, 2 "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat!" 3 Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? 4 For God said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' 5 But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,' 6 he is not to 'honor his father' with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. 7 You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: 8 "'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. 9 They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.'"

Notice how Jesus answers a question with a question. How does His question answer theirs? Can you find the Old Testament quotes? Verse 4 is quoting Exodus 20:12 or Deuteronomy 5:16 and Exodus 21:17 or Leviticus 20:9. Verse 9 is a quote from Isaiah 29:13. Three quotes in rapid succession. The Pharisees had a tradition whereby you could ignore the command to honor your parents. If you took the money or animals or goods, and devoted them to God, you could get out from under the obligation of honoring your parents by caring for them. What principles are at work here? What is Jesus trying to teach them? What is His main point? Obedience to God's will should be an act of worship, not just conforming to the expectations of others.

Do we have traditions that override the Law of God? Can you give an example? Do you ever struggle with worship versus expectations of men? Have you personally learned traditions from your family or church experience that override the Law of God?

Matt 19:3-9 (NIV) 3 Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" 4 "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' 5 and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and

be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? 6 So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." 7 "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?" 8 Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. 9 I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."

Jesus quotes Gen. 1:27 and Gen. 2:24. They have confronted Jesus on this issue before. It was a hot topic in their day. One group argued that Moses allowed it. The other group argued that it was not God's intention. Jesus seems to fall in the latter group. Though the Pharisees are quoting Scripture, Jesus explains that sometimes God gives permission because of the hardness of hearts. God's perfect plan was stated in Genesis when He created woman for man. Man was to care for the woman and the two become one. Men were using Moses law to escape their responsibility and fulfill their lusts.

In some sense, many of the Laws were created because of the hardness of our hearts. Many of the Sabbath Laws that restrict our activity were written because man was not Spirit led to take the time to worship. Since the Spirit has been poured out, we are under a stricter Law – the leading of the HOLY SPIRIT. Do we do what men of that day did by saying we are led of the Spirit as an excuse to ignore what God would require of us? Give an example.

Matt 21:12-13 (NIV) 12 Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. 13 "It is written," he said to them, "My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'"

Jesus quotes Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11. Both quotes are cut short, and reading the full passage even adds to the impact. Jesus used Scripture that described His heart and His action. The Isaiah quote tells of His desire for the nations to worship and pray there. The court of the Gentiles was used as a market, loud with the hawking of goods and exchange rates. Could the world come and pray there? It was the same problem referred to in Jeremiah. They Jews were being a bad example to the world. The end of the Jeremiah quote says, *"but I have been watching."* Jesus went to the temple every year as He grew up and observed the way they turned the place of prayer into a market, giving the wrong impression to the world of His Father. Jesus use of Scripture here shows that His heart was one with the Father. I hope we can use Scripture in the same way.