**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

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**Jesus: The Bible Fundamentalist (Part 1)**

Thank you and good morning. Welcome to Bible Talk.

People say all kinds of things about the Bible today. Some people treat the Bible as an ancient relic that really isn’t that important or useful to us. Others are critical of the Bible. They claim it is something men came up with, filled with bizarre stories about world-wide floods and men being swallowed by great fish – stories that they would say are obviously myths. Still others would not be critical of the Bible itself, but they would be critical of the way we use it. They accuse us of being too strict with scripture as we try to address some religious error or immoral behavior. In fact, we are often accused of being Bible fundamentalists, a sort of wacky fringe collection of people who actually believe that all the Bible is true and try to carefully follow it. A lot of people, even many religious people, are not all that interested in the Bible. They are embarrassed by many of the stories of the Old Testament and do not want to be strictly bound by the laws of the New. But they still want Jesus. They still want this loving, gracious Savior and the salvation He offers them.

Actually, this raises an interesting question. If these people still believe in Jesus, then perhaps we should consider what Jesus believed about the scriptures. Now I realize that the New Testament scriptures had not been written when Jesus was alive on the earth. It was written after Jesus death, burial, resurrection and ascension into heaven. But Jesus did have scripture – the Old Testament scriptures. In fact, He frequently talked about the Old Testament and used the Old Testament in His teachings. As a result we are able to examine His use of the scriptures and know how Jesus viewed them. But I will warn you, as we examine His use of the Old Testament scriptures, we encounter a Jesus the world is not expecting. We encounter a Jesus that the world would be forced to label…a Bible fundamentalist.

Today and next week, the Lord willing, I want to consider how Jesus viewed the scriptures. What did Jesus believe about the Bible?

First of all, Jesus believed the scriptures were important. Consider how He used the scriptures. He often cited scriptures in His disputes with His enemies. In Matthew 4 when Jesus was tempted by the devil, He cited scripture. Every time the devil tempted Him to sin, Jesus counteracted the temptation by quoting a passage of scripture. In Matthew 22 when challenged by the Sadducees about the resurrection of the dead, He accuses them of not knowing the scriptures, and goes on to cite scripture to make His point.

In Matthew 19 when responding to a question from the Pharisees about divorce, He pointed them to scripture asking, *“Have you not read…?”* and then He quoted scripture. In fact, in John 5:39 Jesus pointed His enemies to the scriptures claiming that they testified about Him.

And consider also what we never see Jesus doing. We never see Jesus criticizing scripture. He never claimed that something that Moses or Isaiah wrote was wrong. He never pointed to an Old Testament story and scoffed at it, claiming that it was just a myth. He never questioned the trustworthiness of those who wrote it down or cast doubt on whether it had been accurately transmitted. It is clear that Jesus had a much different view of scripture than modern critics. He considered scripture to be important. When you believe the Bible is important you are standing with Jesus.

Secondly, Jesus believed the scriptures were inspired by God. To Jesus, these were not just ancient writings important to His people. Jesus believed them to be the very words of God. Keep in mind that He certainly understood that men penned the words, but He also recognized that God was behind these words, that these men who wrote them were moved by the Holy Spirit. In Mark 7 Jesus shows how the Pharisees and scribes laid aside the word of God for their traditions. Listen as I read from Mark 7:9-13, *“He said to them, ‘All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, ‘Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban’-' (that is, a gift to God), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.”* Notice, in verse 10 Jesus quotes from two passages of Scripture written by Moses. He quotes from Exodus 20:12 where the Ten Commandments said, *“Honor you father and your mother…”*  He also quotes from Exodus 21:17 where it says, *“And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.”* In verse 13 Jesus calls what Moses had written *“the word of God.”* In verse 9 he calls them *“the commandment of God.”* Jesus understood that these scriptures written by Moses were inspired of God.

Also in Matthew 22:43-44 Jesus quotes from Psalm 110:1, a Psalm written by David. Jesus is speaking to Pharisees and He says to them, *"How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying:* (and then He quotes from Psalm 110:1) *'The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool’”?* Notice, Jesus says that David said this *“in the Spirit.”* Jesus understood that what David wrote was moved by the Holy Spirit. He believed this passage to be inspired of God.

This is in keeping with what His apostles of the New Testament wrote. Paul wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:15-16. *“and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,”* The “Holy Scriptures” that Timothy had access to from the time he was a child were the Old Testament Scriptures. Paul says that these Scriptures are inspired of God. Peter also affirmed that these scriptures are inspired of God. He wrote, *“knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”* (2 Peter 1:20-21). This passage is talking about the origin of the scriptures. Yes, men wrote them, but the men who wrote them did not write from their own thinking, but as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

And so, when you take a stand that the Bible is the very word of God, realize that you are standing with Jesus and His apostles.

But let us take all of this a step further, because Jesus believed the Old Testament was inspired by God, this means that Jesus believed that the Old Testament stories were true. This is interesting because so many people today (even people who say they believe in Jesus) reject and even mock these stories. For example, we are told that the creation story recorded in Genesis chapter one is a myth and contrary to science. We are told that the story of the flood in Genesis chapters 6 through 8 was borrowed from other ancient myths…that it didn’t really happen. And critics will laugh out loud at the suggestion that Lot’s wife becoming a pillar of salt, or Jonah spending three days in the belly of a great fish was something that really happened. They would argue that these are clearly ancient myths and no up-to-date, thinking person could ever believe that these things actually happened.

Now, I think it is important that we understand where these criticisms come from. Many of these critics begin with the assumption that supernatural events do not happen. Thus anything in the Bible that is supernatural must be a myth. However, if you believe in God and believe that He has the power to perform miracles, this stuff is no big deal. A world-wide flood, Jonah being swallowed by a great fish are well within His power.

The real problem for these critics is Jesus…because He clearly believed that these stories were true. In Matthew 19:4-6 as He is talking to the Pharisees about divorce, He points them back to the creation story in Genesis. He quotes for Genesis chapters one and two. He says to them, *“Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,'* (this is a quote from Genesis 1:27), *and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?”* (This is a quote from Genesis 2:24). Clearly, Jesus believed in the creation story of Genesis one and two.

In Matthew 24:37-39 Jesus compares His coming to the days of Noah, specifically mentioning the flood. He says, *“But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”* Jesus believed that Noah actually entered the ark. Jesus here gives His stamp of approval of the story of Noah and the flood.

In Luke 17:28-29 He cites Lot and the destruction of Sodom, and then in verse 32 He warns His audience to remember Lot’s wife. Evidently, Jesus believed the story of Lot’s wife turning into a pillar of salt.

In Matthew 12:39-40 He references the three days that Jonah spent in the belly of the great fish. He says, *“For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”*

You will never find Jesus mocking the stories of the Old Testament. He never cast doubt on their authenticity. He doesn’t even ignore them. Instead, He uses them as a vital part of His teaching, demonstrating that He believed in the stories of the Old Testament. Here’s the bottom line, if you want Jesus, then you will have to accept Jonah, Lot, Noah and Adam as well.

So, when you take a stand that the Bible is important, that it is the very word of God, and that its stories are true, even the stories of Noah and the flood, and Jonah and the great fish, and people call you a Bible fundamentalist, just remember, you are standing with Jesus. He believed the same thing you do.

We want to talk more about this next week, the Lord willing. So join us next week.

If you have questions about the divine inspiration of the Bible, we would like to hear from you. Or if you have any Bible question you would like to discuss with us, we would be more than happy to talk with you.

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There are three ways you may contact us to ask your questions are to make your requests:

You may email us: Our email address is sjchurch@fidnet.com.

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