**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

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**Jesus: The Bible Fundamentalist (Part 2)**

Thank you and good morning. Welcome to Bible Talk.

Last week on our program we mentioned that 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. But what is interesting is that many of these people who criticize the Bible, or who criticize us for our strictness in following the Bible say that they believe in Jesus and that they follow Him. If these people still believe in Jesus, then perhaps we should consider what Jesus believed about the Bible. Now, as we mentioned last week, we 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. Last week we began looking at how Jesus viewed the scriptures. What we find is a Jesus that the world would be forced to label...a Bible fundamentalist.

Last week we talked about the fact that Jesus believed scriptures were important. He often cited scriptures in disputes with His enemies. We never see Jesus criticizing scripture. Jesus also believed the scriptures were inspired by God. He called them the word of God, the commandment of God. Jesus also believed that the Old Testament stories were true, stories such as the creation story of Genesis chapters one and two, the story of Noah and the flood, the story of Jonah being swallowed by a great fish. These are stories that many people today mock and make fun of, but Jesus believed them to be true.

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, just remember, you are standing with Jesus. He believed the same thing you do.

But let us talk about some other things Jesus believed about the Bible.

Jesus believed in strict obedience to the laws of God. This is interesting, because one of the quickest ways of being labeled a Bible fundamentalist today is to insist we must be strict about obeying the laws of God. Just suggest that the practice of homosexuality is sin, or that fornication is the only scriptural cause for divorcing your spouse and someone will label you a Bible fundamentalist. Even many who claim to be Christians resist the idea that Bible commands must be strictly followed. When we suggest that baptism is necessary for salvation, or that singing in worship to God must be without mechanical instruments of music, many people will accuse us of being too strict with the Bible. They may even say that we are being pharisaical, that is we are like the Pharisees that Jesus condemned in the Bible.

But Jesus believed that the laws of God should be followed precisely. Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, *“Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”* He warned the people of terrible consequences if they did not obey. Look at what Jesus goes on to say in this passage. He said, *“Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'”* “Lawlessness” is action or behavior outside the law of God. Because they were not strict in keeping the law that God had given them, Jesus will say to them in the judgment, “depart from Me.” It sounds to me like Jesus is emphasizing strictness in keeping the law of God.

In fact, contrary to popular myth, Jesus never condemned the Pharisees for strictly following the law. Let me say that again, Jesus never condemned the Pharisees for strictly following the law. The fact is He encouraged their careful obedience to the law. Look in Matthew 23:23, Jesus says, *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.”* Jesus is not condemning the Pharisees for their being strict about tithing, but rather because they had left undone weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy and faith. He said to them, *“these you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.”* In other words, Jesus is saying all of God’s law is important to observe. It was wrong for them to emphasize one part of the law and leave the other part undone. They were not as strict toward keeping God’s law as they should have been.

We see Jesus’ attitude toward the keeping of the law in His sermon on the mount. He said, *“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”* (Matt. 5:17-19) Jesus is emphasizing here that we are to be strict about keeping the law of God.

Now, the law of Moses that Jesus was under is no longer in effect today. It was taken out of the way, nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14). Jesus’ death brought an end to that law. But this does not mean we are not under law. Paul makes it clear in 1 Cor. 9:21 that he was *“under law toward Christ.”* Paul makes mention of the “law of Christ” in Galatians 6:2. Jesus shed blood dedicated and New Covenant and we are under the law of this New Covenant. It is called the law of Christ. Jesus Himself emphasized the importance of keeping His commandments. He said in John 14:15, *“If you love Me, keep My commandments.”* In Luke 6:46 He said, *“But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?”* A disciple of Christ will be strict about doing what He says, and all that He said.

So, when you take a stand that we ought to strictly follow the Bible and do exactly what it says, realize that you are standing with Jesus.

Also we see that Jesus argued from details in scripture.

Sometimes people criticize us when we do this. When we make a point from a detail in the text many people will protest, “You’re being too picky, too detailed with the text.” We sometimes explain how baptism is an immersion in water by pointing out that the word “baptize” comes from the Greek word “baptizo” which means “to immerse.” We point out that “both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him” (Acts 8:38); or that Paul refers to it as a burial in Romans 6:4. We sometimes explain that the apostle Paul instructs us to speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord (Eph. 5:19), and that there is no mention of the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship. But when we try to emphasize what is stated in the text others will dismiss it all by saying, “I just think you’re being too picky. I don’t think Jesus meant for us to treat the Bible that way.”

What many do not realize is that this is exactly the way Jesus used scripture. Jesus frequently responded to His opponents by taking them to the text. When the Pharisees asked Jesus a question about divorce, He said to them, *“Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' 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'? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”* (Matt. 19:4-6) Jesus quotes from two passages from Genesis chapters 1 and 2. He quotes from Gen. 1:27 where it says that God made them male and female and then He quotes from Gen. 2:24 *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”* From these two statements from scripture Jesus draws two conclusions: number one – God is the one that joins husband and wife together. And number two: what God joins together man is not to separate. Jesus reasons from the words of the text and draws His conclusions concerning marriage and divorce.

In addition, Jesus sometimes based His arguments on very fine points of the text, on the details of the text. Look with me in Matthew 22:31-32. Jesus here is speaking to Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. He says to them, “*31 But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying,* (and then Jesus quotes from Exodus 3:6) *32 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?* (and then Jesus says) *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living*.” Now, in Exodus 3:6 when God said to Moses “I am the God of your father -- the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,” Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were dead. But God says in the text, “I am” (present tense) their God. And then Jesus said, “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living,” proving that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were still living even after their physical death. They continued to live in that their spirits continued to live. This consequently proves a resurrection. Jesus’ argument here hinges on the present tense of the verb “I am.” He makes His argument, not on one word, but on the TENSE of one word. If Jesus reasoned this way from scripture, then certainly no one should object to our careful analysis of a text to be sure we have God’s will for us.

So, when you take a stand based on some detailed point found in the text of scripture, and you get criticized and ridiculed for it...just remember you are standing with Jesus.

We need to expect these attacks on scripture, even from some who claim to follow Jesus, but remember when you are ridiculed for being a Bible fundamentalist, Jesus would have been called one too.

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