

Did Jesus Teach Law Or Lifestyle?

For those that accept the Bible, or The Scriptures, as the sole depository of the Divine Teachings of Christ (often called the doctrine of *Sola Scriptura*), I have a few thought provoking questions.

First did Jesus teach us new laws or a new way of living, i.e. a Lifestyle. Laws are written. A way of life is learned. Let's compare the occupations of Carpenter and Pharisee. To become a Carpenter one practiced as an apprentice and learned from a master how to craft a desired item. To become a Pharisee one studied the written Law of Moses and learned how to apply The Law to daily life in an attempt to live by The Law. Carpenters crafted. Pharisees debated, interpreted and judged.

Under the apprentice method one focused on using learning to produce a desired outcome. Under the law, fulfilling the law was itself the desired outcome. A classic case of substance versus form.

If you read the Bible closely, you will find that God gave Moses the Ten Commandments but the rest of The Law was written by man. And as written law it became subject to revision, expansion, interpretation and debate over the Millenia. There can be no debate over the skills and works of a Carpenter. You either do it right and achieve the desired outcome or don't and fail in your attempt.

Interesting that God chose his Son to be raised by a Carpenter and not a Pharisee. Was that because God values substance over form? A way of life over merely obeying the letter of man-made laws?

If Jesus wanted to provide us with a new List of Laws why did he not write them down? Certainly, Scripture tells us He was learned in The Law. Even if we assume that neither Jesus nor His Apostles could write, certainly He could have chosen a follower to chronicle His Teachings and Sermons, His New Law. Yet many scholars today acknowledge that Jesus' Teachings were not written down until years later and then not by the Apostles themselves but by their followers who never met Jesus in person. Even Paul, one of the most prolific writers of doctrine and laws in what we today call the New Testament, was not one of the original 12 Apostles who followed Jesus.

In fact, The Bible we know today didn't exist for hundreds of years after Jesus walked the earth. How did Christianity survive for those first tumultuous centuries? It survived because the teachings of Jesus were passed along as a way of life, the Christian way of life, not simply as written laws.

To those who say the Bible is the sole depository of Jesus' Teachings, I say that if God had wanted to give us New Law to replace the Law of Moses, He would have had Jesus write a book. No. God wanted us to follow His Son's example like an apprentice follows a master and adopt a way of life.

We call it Christianity.

God Bless!

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