

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.



John 8:32 and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

**January**

**7**

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## **LEARNING FROM METAPHORS**

*By Jim Stauffer*

In His effort to teach us just who we, His believers are, God teaches us by using metaphors of our daily lives that we understand already. We are disciples of Christ in that we follow in His footsteps (**1 Peter 2:21-24**). We are saints since being sanctified in Christ (**1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:11**). We are priests as our role is to offer spiritual sacrifices to God (**1 Peter 2:5**). As such we will find our roles in the church and come to understand how those roles direct our lives.

### **The church - The body**

As we consider the church to be the body of Christ, we learn He is its head (**Ephesians 1:22,23**). As the head He controls the body since He purchased it with His own blood (**Acts 20:28**). He is preeminent and therefore the members of the body are subject to Him (**Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:23,24**). We then as members of the body are taught our relationship to one another by the use of physical body parts. We learn each part of the body performs a role peculiar to it, that is each member of the Lord's body has a different gift (**1 Corinthians 12:15-20; Romans 12:4-8**). Because of their connection to each other, members love one another – **Rom. 13:8** – they edify one another – **Rom. 14:19** – they comfort one another – **1 Thess. 4:18** – they admonish one another – **Rom. 15:14** – Serve one another – **Gal. 5:13** – they bear one another's burdens – **Galatians 6:2** – they forgive one another – **Ephesians 4:32**.

### **The church - the kingdom - Acts 20:28; Revelation 5:9,10**

Scripture teaches us there is a usage of the term kingdom to be synonymous with the church. We realize the kingdom of God encompasses the entire universe. Yet within that universe there is the part that is "the power of darkness" and that which is, "the kingdom of His dear Son." (**Colossians 1:13,14**). The two

passages above teach us His kingdom is His church as they were purchased with His blood.

### **Christ is the King – Acts 2:33-36; Matt. 28:18**

He is on David's (the eternal) throne (**Luke 1:31-33; 1 Cor. 15:24-26**). As result of His elevation to the right hand of God He has all authority (**Hebrews 1:3,8**).

### **Citizens are those spiritually redeemed – Heb. 12:22,23,28; Colossians 1:13,14**

Our citizenship is in heaven - **Philippians 3:20; Colossians 3:2** - because His kingdom is not of this world - **John 18:36,37** - and we are born into this kingdom with the incorruptible seed, which is the word of truth from God - **1 Peter 1:22-25**.

### **The Realm**

This word/seed of the kingdom is sown in the hearts of men (**Matthew 13:18-23; Luke 8:11**), therefore the Lord reigns in the hearts or the souls of men (**Luke 17:20,21**). As spiritual beings we learn this seed of the kingdom brings forth the fruit of the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22-25**). The church, that is its members, are delivered from the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son by receiving the seed/word of the kingdom into their hearts. This word/seed is that incorruptible spoken of by Peter that lives eternally and is that by which the subjects of this eternal spiritual kingdom are begotten.

### **THE CHURCH – THE TEMPLE – 1 Cor. 3:16,17**

### **Temple language originates in Old Testament – Ex. 40; 2 Chron. 7**

Both the tabernacle in the wilderness and the temple of Solomon were sacred places of divine worship and service. It is from this literal, physical temple the illustration of the church as the temple of God is derived. We, the church, are a holy nation, a royal priesthood – **1 Pet. 2:4-10** - built on the foundation of the apostles, prophets and Christ as we grow into a holy temple - **Ephesians 2:19-22**. Christians, thus the church, are stones built on Christ and the apostles, a

spiritual house sacred and holy, dedicated to God, a dwelling place of God signifying fellowship with and reconciliation to God.

## **THE CHURCH – THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD – 1**

### **Timothy 3:14,15**

The word house carries the connotation of either a dwelling place or a family. In this context it refers to the family as a building of God. We already know from our study that this household (the church) is a spiritual house (**1 Peter 2:4,5; Ephesians 2:19-22**). It is God's house and Christ His Son is over it (**Hebrews 3:6**).

### **The Father**

Jesus identifies Him and our method of access (**Matthew 6:9**). He is our provider of all blessings in Christ including any discipline we need to provide guidance (**Matthew 6:33; Hebrews 4:14-16; 12:4-11**). Our inheritance then, comes from our Father (**Romans 8:17**).

### **Children**

Due to the necessity of our redemption from sin, we become His adopted children (**Galatians 4:4-6; Romans 8:15**) It is only by the love of God we were able to be adopted. We were lost in sin and His love led Him to the merciful act of extending His grace in the person of Jesus to die so we could be adopted into His household. Paul tells us we became sons of God through faith when we put on Christ in baptism (**Galatians 3:26,27; Romans 6:3,4**).

### **Brothers/sisters**

We then become brothers/sisters and are each other's keepers (**Genesis 4:9**). We are responsible to help one another. We help bring each other back from sin and error - **James 5:19,20; Galatians 6:1** - and when necessary we reprove, rebuke and exhort each other as Paul told Timothy - **2 Timothy 4:2,3**.

It is easy to understand how we are to live our lives when we realize how God and Christ extended mercy to redeem us from Satan. When they did, we became children of God. We are members of His body, citizens in His kingdom and priests serving in the Temple of God. And we must remember the responsibilities we have to our brethren.

## **HOW JESUS VIEWED THE SCRIPTURES**

### ***Bobby L. Graham***

For many years it has been the contention of religious liberals that the Bible is not the very word of God, but that the existential moment that one has with that word can sometimes make it God's word to him for that time. They have historically viewed the scriptures as the

product of man's search for God, setting forth man's ideas about God rather than God's will for him.

In more recent time liberals among God's people have contended that Jesus is our pattern instead of New Testament scriptures. This contention has been born out of the crucible of religious controversy, which also have produced a call for a "new hermeneutic." It is for the benefit of all, particularly those who insist that He is our pattern over scripture, that we here address the idea that Jesus viewed the scriptures in a certain way. Of course, the scriptures available to Him were those of the Old Testament. A later article will examine His use of the scriptures, in relation to the recent call for this "new hermeneutic."

First, Jesus viewed the scriptures as the word that came from God. In **Mark 7:10-13** it becomes clear that this is Jesus' understanding of them. He dealt with the Jewish practice of neglecting parents in need by a dedicating of their means to God. In the context He referred to what Moses had said in the accounts of Exodus and Deuteronomy, and He then accused the Jews of making void the word of God through their tradition in this matter and in other matters. Jesus obviously said that the writings of Moses were equivalent to God's word. He did not here refer to its becoming God's word to them at some time when their awareness of its impact suddenly dawned. It was God's word even while they were guilty of rejecting it in their lives.

Second, Jesus viewed the scriptures as the inerrant and verbally inspired word of God. By "inerrant" the writer means "free from error," and "verbally inspired" means the very words employed by the writers were endorsed by the Spirit as the product of God's mind. In **Matthew 22:31-32** Jesus replied to the enigmatic case of the woman married seven times, as presented by the Sadducees to overcome any idea of a resurrection from the dead or of a spirit surviving death. His reply began with a citation of what God said to Moses at the burning bush: **"I am the God of Abraham,"** because Jesus desired to stress the present tense of the verb **"am"**. His point was that God is eternally existent, and He based this contention upon the tense of a verb. If Jesus did not believe in the inspiration and inerrancy of the words used in the scriptures, then His argument falls flat. A similar instance occurs in Paul's explanation of Jesus Christ as the singular seed of Abraham through whom the entire world can be blessed. He built his case on the singular (as opposed to plural) number of the noun

used. So not only did the Lord view the scriptures in this way, but the apostles did as well.

Third, Jesus understood the scriptures to be authoritative and obligatory. In **John 10:35** He declared, *"The scripture cannot be broken."* The traditions of the fathers did not begin to approach this same level. It is quite impossible to deny successfully that Jesus accepted the scriptures absolutely as the word given by the Father - undiluted and undiminished. Before anyone trifles with the word of truth found in the Bible, he must first contend with Jesus' teaching that it bears the authority of God on its face and is incumbent upon all human beings in its declarations, promises, and warnings. In this connection He often said that either certain events in His life or His entire ministry fulfilled various Old Testament passages (**Matthew 4:14; 21:5; Luke 4:21; 24:27**).

Fourth, Jesus believed the scriptures to be historically true. How else can anyone explain His use of the Old Testament incidents in efforts to teach people? He obviously accepted the historical accuracy of Moses and other Old Testament writers without reservation. His allusions to the creation in **Matthew 19:4**, to the flood in Noah's day in **Matthew 24:37-38**, to the incident of Jonah and the great fish in **Matthew 12:40**, and to the repentance of the people in Nineveh in **Matthew 12:41** all depend upon His acceptance of the historically accurate accounts of which they are a part. Other Old Testament events/persons (Abel, Elijah, Elisha, and Daniel) could also be cited in His teaching as sharing in this endorsement.

Fifth, Jesus believed that the scriptures were divine teaching in their entirety and vitally beneficial in their effect. Jesus said that people should live by the words coming from God; life is dependent upon them. **Matthew 4:4** says, *"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."* In the immediate context we see Satan's misuse of the scriptures pitted against Jesus' correct employment of them, forcing the conclusion that there are right and wrong ways to interpret and to use the scriptures. Satan obviously wrongly construed them in some instances, whereas Jesus interpreted them correctly and used them accordingly.

The view that Jesus held of the scriptures - a high and lofty one - should dictate our view. Such a high regard for the words that God has given will affect our interpretation of them, our use of them, and our response to them.

## Remember the Words of the Lord

### Jesus

David Cox

*"I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." — (Acts 20:35)* Paul, in his concluding remarks to the Ephesians as he says, *"remember the words of the Lord Jesus,"*

There is no doubt that we would do well to remember the teachings of Christ. We have no way of knowing when Jesus spoke these words or how Paul came to know about Jesus speaking these words. Still, we know that he reminded the Ephesian elders of these words, which were recorded by inspiration for our use and instruction.

Let us notice what we learn from these words:

**Exalted Teaching of Jesus** *"It is more blessed to give than receive"* reminds us of the noble character and teachings of Jesus. Having a mind that thinks in this way is diametrically opposed to the world's thinking. The world says, "receiving or getting is better than giving." Jesus said that giving was *"more blessed."* The word "more" carries an idea of something higher, deeper, and fuller than just mere happiness. Jesus is teaching that in giving, there is a more lasting satisfaction that comes to the one who gives than the one who receives. Jesus' own life taught and practiced the great blessing of giving (**Matthew 20:28; Acts 10:38**).

**The Unselfishness In Life** The greatest hindrance in an individuals giving is that of selfishness. "It is mine" philosophy. Jesus, however, did not see life in that way. He saw life as a transitory thing to the exaltation and glory of what was after this life. Paul is reminding the brethren on this occasion that the Lord taught that giving was the better thing. While Paul was on this third journey, he collected benevolent help for the poor saints in Jerusalem. He wrote to the church at Corinth and told them how the churches of Macedonia, even in deep poverty, had abounded in their giving. Not only had these brethren abounded in the financial help of the needy saints, *"but first gave their own selves to the Lord"* (**2 Corinthians 8:5**). Indeed, giving can be monetary, but we must also understand the blessedness of non-monetary giving, the giving of one's self to God and His cause (**Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:21**). May we *"remember the words of the Lord Jesus"* that it is *"more blessed to give than receive."* When we learn this secret about life, we will find more enduring happiness and peace in our lives here on earth.

**Psa. 1:1** *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

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## **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10