

What Did Jesus Mean?

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Many years ago there was a popular clothing and jewelry line called WWJD (What Would Jesus Do). Some years later a new so called catch phrase began to gain in popularity; "What Did Jesus Say".

Now I believe it is time to take the next logical step in the evolution of people attempting to discover the true Jesus Christ. That is to ask the question:

What Did Jesus Mean?

You see it's simply not enough to wonder what Jesus would do in a particular situation or even know what He said under certain circumstances.

What is of the utmost importance however is understanding what Jesus did and what He said within the context in which they were done and said!

For example:

What did Jesus mean when He said:

(Mat 13:13) **Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.**

(Mat 13:14) **And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:**

(Mat 13:15) **For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.**

(Mat 13:16) **But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.**

(Mat 13:17) **For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.***

Many believe that Jesus is talking about His disciples being blessed their eyes and ears saw and heard the mysteries of the parables when He really was talking really about himself.

Many prophets and righteous men understood the old testament and desired to see and hear the first Messiah, Mashiach ben David but did not live long enough to witness His arrival.

But the apostles, and ALL who saw Jesus work miracles and heard Him speak, were beholding Mashiach ben David. The apostles were especially blessed because they ate with Him, walked with Him, talked with Him, handled Him and learned from Him.

The fact is that the parables of Jesus were just as confusing to the disciples as they were to anyone else who heard them at the time. That is why Jesus had to take His disciples off to the side to explain the parables to them .

Therefore they were also blessed, not because they understood what Jesus initially said, but because He was with them to shed light into the intentional darkness of His words!

You see the disciples were not yet apostles. They, as was Jesus, were living under the old covenant, and the Spirit of Truth, the indwelling Holy Spirit, had not yet come, so their eyes were still dull of hearing, their ears dull of hearing and their minds unable to understand his sayings.

(Joh 6:59) These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

(Joh 6:60) Many **therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?**

(Joh 6:61) When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, **Doth this offend you?**

(Joh 6:62) *What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?*

(Joh 6:63) **It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, *they are spirit, and they are life.***

The disciples, at the time, could only understand the sayings of Jesus if He explained them. The words of Jesus are not just words they are spirit and they are life. Within scriptures Jesus words are not letters written with ink on parchment, they are spirit and can only be truly seen and heard in the Spirit.

The carnal mind can not receive the deep things of God!

(1Co 2:9) But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

(1Co 2:10) **But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.**

(1Co 2:11) For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

(1Co 2:12) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

(1Co 2:13) Which things also we speak, **not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.**

(1Co 2:14) **But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.**

The disciples of Jesus were natural men while they walked with Jesus. They had not received the Holy Spirit and their spirits were not yet been quickened. But they had Jesus himself there with them to teach them and guide them in all things.

But even then there were limitations to what they could see, hear, and understand:

(Joh 16:12) **I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.**

(Joh 16:13) **Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.**

(Joh 16:14) He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

(Joh 16:15) All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

Jesus himself said that He has MANY THINGS to say to them that they could not bear (lift up, understand, take hold of), HOWBEIT when HE, the Spirit of Truth, IS COME, HE WILL guide you unto ALL TRUTH! Amen! Glory be to God!

Therefore, when Jesus said “blessed” are their eyes and ears He was telling that they were blessed to have Him with them to explain things to them, not that they could have seen and heard anything under their own power!

Another example is:

(Mat 15:21) Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

(Mat 15:22) And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, *thou* Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

(Mat 15:23) But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

(Mat 15:24) But he answered and said, **I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**

Did Jesus come just to save the lost sheep of the house or Israel?

By Jesus own words His personal earthen ministry was unto ONLY (not sent but) unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel!

But Jesus also proclaimed:

(Joh 3:17) For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.

When Jesus used the expression “through Him” he was saying that this saving work would be channeled through Him.

“Through” - *dia* - a primary preposition denoting the channel of an act.

Therefore the personal earthen ministry was ONLY for the lost sheep of the house of Israel but the rest of the world, the Greeks and Gentiles, would be saved “through” Him by way of His apostolic ministry.

(Joh 17:20) Neither pray I for these (*His disciples*) alone, but for them also (*us*) which shall believe on me through their word;

The apostolic ministry of Christ truly came into being when the promise of the Father, the giving of the Holy Spirit, was fulfilled. When this took place Jesus continued His earthen ministry through the apostles, through the Holy Spirit.

Our Lord did not lie when He promised that He would always be always with us and never forsake us because He lives in us and through us through His Holy Spirit who does not speak of himself but speaks only what He hears Jesus speak, who in turn only speaks what the Father commands that He speak.

To understand what Jesus means when He speaks in scriptures one MUST keep (*tēreō* - guard, protect from suffering injury or loss) His words within the context that they were spoken.

It is important to understand that every word that Jesus spoke was done so under the old covenant and expressly to the Jewish people (the lost sheep of the house of Israel). Subsequently it is of vital importance that we first determine if what He is saying is applicable to Greeks, Gentiles, and born again believers.

For Example:

Within Jesus's sermon on the mount our Lord instructed the people how to pray. Within that prayer we find these words:

(Mat 6:12) And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

(Mat 6:13) And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

(Mat 6:14) **For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:**

(Mat 6:15) **But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**

Are these words intended for the born again believer?

No! Of course not!

Now this is not to say that it is not a good thing to forgive others their trespasses (*paraptōma* - a side slip (lapse or deviation), that is, (unintentional) error or (wilful) transgression: - fall, fault, offense, sin) or even that it is not a command, only that it is not a means of our sins being forgiven.

Is the forgiveness of our sins based on the shed blood of our Lord or on our works?

(Eph 4:30) And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, **whereby ye are sealed** (*sphragizō* to stamp with a signet or private mark for security or preservation) **unto the day of redemption.**

(Eph 4:31) Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

(Eph 4:32) And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

We are forgiven our sins for Christ's sake not our own sake. We are sealed unto the day of redemption by the Holy Spirit, through Christ, not by our works.

Therefore Jesus words in Mat 6:14 are for another people of another time. Not for us!

Again, this does not give us permission to hold a grudge against anyone. In fact it is a command of our Lord that we love all man/women including our enemies. But this too can ONLY be accomplished through Him, with the power of the Holy Spirit. We can not love anyone in and of ourselves.

It is only through God in us that we can love unconditionally because God is Love (agape) (*1Joh 4:8*).

Yet Another Example:

(Joh 20:21) Then said Jesus to them again, **Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.**

(Joh 20:22) And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, **Receive ye the Holy Ghost:**

(Joh 20:23) **Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.**

Does this mean what it says?

Again let us put these verses into their proper context:

The apostles, when they were His disciples, abandoned Jesus when He was taken captive, Peter denied Him three times, they did not believe that He had resurrected, they were all hold up in the upper room in fear of being captured by the Jews because they were His disciples, and when He appeared to them in His glorified body the first words that He spoke were, “**peace be with you**” (you are forgiven).

What were the conditions of their forgiveness?

There were none!

Were the apostles given the authority to retain or remit the sins of another?

What Jesus commits to the disciples, and to us, is the power and privilege of giving assurance of the forgiveness of sins by God by correctly announcing the terms of forgiveness. They were given the anointing of the Holy Spirit to go put and preach the gospel, the good news of Jesus's resurrection and the forgiveness of sins!

They could rightly judge that those who have not repented and received Christ as the propitiation of their sins, their sins are retained and that those who have received the saving work of Christ have their sins remitted.

(Joh 16:8) **And when He (*the Holy Spirit*) is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:**

(Joh 16:9) **Of sin, because they believe not on me;**

Again, context is key!

When Jesus “breathed” on the apostles He gave them an anointing (a smearing) of the Holy Spirit. This was not the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit it was a temporary gifting.

But when the Holy Spirit came to indwell man, He is the one who reproves (elegchō - to convict, refute, confute) the world of sin and that single sin is not believing in Christ.

Notice that in John 20 Jesus, before making the statement about remitting or retaining sin, says. "receive ye the Holy Spirit (Ghost)". So even then it is the Holy Spirit leading them to make righteous judgment not the apostles in and of themselves!

It is an unpopular biblical precept that, when we get right down to it, there is only one sin which remains in the world, only one sin which retains the power of death, and that sin is not believing in Jesus the Christ, The Lamb of God, as the payment for ALL sins.

Again, it is important to note here that albeit the penalty for sin has been paid in full, that we were made whole by His stripes, that sin itself has been nailed to the cross and perished when the flesh of Jesus perished, we can still fall short of the glory of God, we can still miss the mark, and we can still displease our Father through our willful and unrepentant sin.

Be that as it may, over the course of this brief study of God's word we can see how important it is to rightly divide the word of truth and to keep the words and sayings of our Lord within their proper context so that we can do them and disseminate them correctly.

Today we see and hear so many within the church who are believing and spreading doctrines that are in error simply because they do not understand that some of Jesus's sayings were ONLY intended for the Jewish people, and that others were ONLY applicable under the old covenant, and that others still were spoken ONLY for the born again believers who live under the new covenant, and under the dispensation of grace where ALL THINGS HAVE BEEN MADE NEW!

Be Blessed!

