

WHAT JESUS TAUGHT - PART 2
What Jesus taught about the Scriptures
Dr. Derek Morris

Preaching passage: Matt 4:4, Jn 5:39-40
Subject: What Jesus taught about the Scriptures
Complements: they are the Word of God
a defense against the enemy
a testimony about Himself
Exegetical idea: Jesus taught that the Scriptures are the Word of God which provide a defense against the enemy and testify about Himself
Homiletical idea: **Spend time with the Word of God.**
Purpose: To encourage my hearers accept the Scriptures as the Word of God and to motivate them to read the Scriptures in order to draw closer to Jesus.

Introduction

If I believe the words of the author of this article which I downloaded from the American Humanist Association, I'm a deluded fool. He would probably label me as "a promoter of deceptive and destructive teachings!" The author of this article entitled "Some reasons why humanists reject the bible" is the president of a chapter of the American Humanist Association, and he confronts us with these words: "...." ([Http://www.americanhumanist.org/humanism/thebible.html](http://www.americanhumanist.org/humanism/thebible.html))

Perhaps even more shocking is that fact that even some Christians are losing confidence in the Scriptures. Many Christian theologians have embraced a methodology where, and I quote, "critical reason decides what is reality in the Bible, and what cannot be reality." (Eta Linnemann, *Historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideology*, p. 88). And so the Scriptures are being demythologized. Christians are abandoning the creation account are unscientific. Miracle accounts are being discarded or explained away based on what seems reasonable to the reader. Some of you have probably heard the rational explanation for the feeding of the 5000. It is, according to those who adopt a critical approach to the Scriptures, irrational to believe that Jesus

could feed 5000 men, plus women and children, with 5 loaves and 2 fish. What really happened was this. Everyone actually had food with them, but no one wanted to share it. When the young lad demonstrated a willingness to share his lunch with Jesus, the hearts of the people were touched and they all shared their food with each other. Isn't that a miracle? The miracle of love! Well, I believe that love is a miracle. But that's not what the Bible says happened. And the crowd didn't want to make the little boy king immediately after this miraculous feeding of the 5000. They wanted to make Jesus king. Even the enemies of Jesus could not deny the supernatural signs and wonders that he performed. And yet today, many try to explain them away or discard them as fictitious.

So what is the truth about the Scriptures? And how should we respond to this erosion of confidence in the Scriptures? If we choose to base our convictions on current popular opinion, we're in serious trouble. I want to suggest that it would be wise to carefully consider what Jesus taught about the Scriptures.

This is the second sermon in our series on What Jesus Taught. Last week, we considered what Jesus taught about salvation. This morning I would like to explore with you 3 important truths that Jesus taught about the Scriptures.

The first important truth that Jesus taught about the Scriptures is this: **The Scriptures are the Word of God.** The Scriptures are more than a helpful collection of religious ideas. The Scriptures are the Word of God. When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, Jesus responded to Satan's temptation by quoting from the Scriptures. He said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" Matt 4:4 (Deut 8:3) And how do we receive that word which proceeds from the mouth of God? Through

the oral and written testimony of the prophets.

Jesus accepted the testimony of the Scriptures by faith as the word of God. He had undoubtedly heard the story of the young prophet Jeremiah. The LORD called Jeremiah to be a prophet and Jeremiah responded, in Jer 1:6, “Ah, LORD God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.” And the Lord said to Jeremiah, “Do not say, ‘I am a youth,’ for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you,” says the LORD. Then the LORD put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me: “Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.” Jer 1:7-9

For Jesus, the testimony of the prophets was much more than helpful religious counsel—it was the Word of God, transmitted through a human instrument. And the disciples of Jesus expressed the same conviction. The apostle Peter reminds us that no prophecy, no prophetic word 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 Pet 1:20-21

Many unbelievers, and even some Christians, do not accept the early chapters of the book of Genesis as reliable history, but Jesus accepted those Scriptures as the reliable Word of God. Jesus said, “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female.’” Matt 19:4 Jesus spoke of the blood of righteous Abel, Matt 23:35, and the days of Noah when “Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.” Lk 17:27

Why did Jesus believe that those events really happened? He couldn’t prove their historicity based on human logic or reason. Rather, Jesus accepted the Scriptures by faith as the reliable Word of God. That’s why He could recount the story of Jonah being in the belly of a

great fish for three days and three nights as a historical fact. It doesn't make sense to human reason. From a human perspective, the story of Jonah sounds like a preposterous fish story. But Jesus accepted the story by faith as a historical fact because it was recorded in the Scriptures. And Jesus accepted the Scriptures as the Word of God...a reliable testimony from God to the prophets by the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Palestinian revisionists and biblical minimalists are saying that Bible characters like Moses and King David never existed. They are simply a fabrication of those who desire to promote a Zionist agenda. But Jesus believed in the historicity of Moses and of King David. Jesus spoke of Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness, Jn 3:14 and He also spoke of King David, quoting the words of David recorded in Psalm 110 as being spoken "by the Holy Spirit." Mk 12:36

Yes, Jesus believed in the reliability of the Scriptures. He accepted the Scriptures as the word of God. And that's why He memorized the Scriptures. Because they weren't simply the pious musings of religious leaders. The Scriptures were, and still are, the Word of God. That's one important truth that Jesus taught about the Scriptures. And it's my prayer that it might be said of us, as it was of the Thessalonian believers, in 1 Thess 2:13, "We also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe."

A second important truth that Jesus taught about the Scriptures is this: **The Scriptures are a defense against the enemy.** Let's look again at the Word of God in Matt 4 where Jesus is attacked by the enemy. On every occasion, Jesus responds with the Word of God. When Jesus

is tempted to turn stones into bread, he says, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” Matt 4:4 (Deut 8:3). When Jesus is tempted to presume upon the mercy of God, He replies, “It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’” Matt 4:7 (Deut 6:16). And when Jesus is tempted to bow down and worship Satan with the deceptive promise that the whole world will be given to Him, Jesus replies, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.” Matt 4:10 (Deut 6:13, 10:20) The Lord Jesus Christ demonstrated in this encounter with Satan the truth of the Word of God recorded in Eph 6:17 that “the sword of the Spirit..is the word of God.” The Greek word used both in Matt 4:4 and Eph 6:17 is not the common word $\bar{\omega}$ (≅H, which is used in Heb 4:12 where it says “The Word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword.” Rather, the Greek word used both in Matt 4:4 and Eph 6:17 is the word $\Pi\uparrow:\forall$, a specific word or saying. Jesus doesn’t just hold up the Bible, or a Bible scroll like some kind of lucky charm and say, “The Bible, the Bible, the Bible.” No, Jesus responds to the attacks of Satan with specific words from the Word of God.

And why is it that the Scriptures are a defense against the enemy? Because Satan is a liar and a deceiver, but the Word of God is truth. So when Satan comes to you and says, “You’re a sinner. You’re a loser. You might as well just give up and be damned,” the Word of God tells you the truth in 1 Jn 1:9. “If we confess our sins”.....say it with me, brothers and sisters.....”If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse from ALL unrighteousness.” 1 Jn 1:9 And the truth of the Word of God dispels Satan’s lie. When Satan comes to you and tries to intimidate you and fill you with fear, the Word of God tells you the truth: “Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will

strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” Is 41:10
When Satan tries to discourage you because the way ahead seems uncertain, the Word of God tells you the truth: “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.” Ps 32:8

Yes, Jesus taught that the Word of God is a defense against the enemy. And we have proved that to be true in our own lives, haven't we? I remember an incident that happened when I was about 10 years old. I was living about a mile from the campus of Newbold College, in the village of Binfield, England. It was a Friday evening, and apparently I had gone to a vespers program at the church. I'm not sure why I was allowed to walk home by myself. It seems a little dangerous in retrospect. But we lived less than a mile from the campus, down a country road. On my way home, after a brief detour to escort a young lady to her front door, I was passing the ruins of an old building. All of a sudden, I heard a blood-curdling scream. I was terrified. Even as a ten year old, I clearly saw this situation as an attempt by the enemy to intimidate me. But something amazing happened. The words of Psalm 23 came immediately to my mind. I had memorized them for Pathfinders. And I embraced those words, not simply as the words of David, but as the words of God. “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want...even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.” And as I repeated that psalm, God's Word became to me “the sword of the Spirit.” Eph 6:17 The Lord kept me in perfect peace as my mind was focused on Him. Is 26:3 I learned that night, and I have learned many times since then, that the Scriptures are a defense against the enemy.

But there's a third truth that Jesus taught about the Scriptures: **The Scriptures are a testimony about Jesus Christ.** There were religious leaders in Jesus' day who thought that they

could find life by knowing the Scriptures. And so they became experts in the Torah. I've been told that there were Rabbis who knew that Hebrew Scriptures so well that they could push a pin through a sacred scroll and tell you what letters it would pierce. Now, I'm not sure if that's true. But these religious leaders were experts in what the Scriptures said. Tragically, in their lifelong quest for Biblical knowledge, they were missing the whole purpose of the Scriptures. Listen to the words of Jesus in Jn 5:39-40. "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life."

That's a bold claim. Jesus says, "The Scriptures are a testimony about Me!" When the Risen Jesus gave a Bible study to the two disciples that He met on the road to Emmaus, Luke records that "beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, Jesus expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Lk 24:27 What a Bible study that must have been! I'm going to ask Jesus if He would give that Bible study again in the Kingdom of Heaven. And the purpose for reading the Scriptures is not just to gain more information about Jesus. Satan and those angels who followed him in his rebellion have lots of information about Jesus. Many of those who will be lost have lots of information about Jesus Christ. Jesus says that the reason we should come to Scripture is that we might come to Him and have life.

The apostle John tells us that he wrote his gospel record for that very reason. Listen to his words in Jn 20:30-31. "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." We see, in the Scriptures, a picture of Jesus. And we read the Scriptures that we might do more than know

about Jesus. We want to know Him, whom to know is life eternal. We read the Scriptures in order that we might draw closer to Jesus.

Conclusion

What have we learned this morning? What does Jesus teach about the Scriptures? We have discovered 3 important truths this morning from the teachings of Jesus. First, the Scriptures are the Word of God. We need to receive that Word by faith. Secondly, the Scriptures are a defense against the enemy. That's why we need to hide God's Word in our hearts, so when the enemy comes upon us like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will raise up a standard against him. And a third truth that we have learned about the Scriptures is this: the Scriptures are a testimony about Jesus Christ. They point to Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the Savior. And when we read the Scriptures, we should read with the prayerful desire to draw closer to Jesus Christ. We want to know Him, to have an intimate relationship with Him, whom to know is life eternal.

I want to challenge you this morning to make a commitment to **spend time with the Word of God**. Does that sound like a worthwhile challenge? **Spend time with the Word of God**. Now some are already doing that. Praise God. Keep doing what you're doing. Some may be thinking, "Pastor, I've been reading the Bible regularly, maybe even every day, but I feel like I've just been gathering information." If that's you, then I want to challenge you to read the Word of God daily with a different focus: read the Word of God daily with the prayerful desire to draw closer to Jesus. And there may be some, perhaps even many, listening to my voice right now who are not reading the Bible at all. I want to encourage you to begin some systematic reading of the Scriptures. Begin with the Gospel of John. Pray for the gift of faith to receive

what you read as the Word of God. That Word will become a light to your feet and a lamp to your path. That Word will provide a defense against the enemy. But more than anything, that Word will reveal to you a picture of Jesus. And as you read that Word of God by faith, pray that you will be drawn closer and closer to Jesus, your Savior. Not all of your questions will be answered. But we're not saved by having all of the answers. Praise God. We are saved by knowing Jesus, our Savior and Lord, whom to know is life eternal. And when we find Him, when we enter into intimate fellowship with Him, the purpose of all Scripture will be fulfilled.

Bulletin insert:

WHAT JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT THE SCRIPTURES

1. The Scriptures are _____.
2. The Scriptures are _____.
3. The Scriptures are _____.