

# Jesus: The Bible Fundamentalist

## Introduction

- A. Did you bring your Bible this morning? Go ahead and take it out because you're going to need it. We will be studying from the Bible. People say all kinds of things about the Bible today. I suspect you've heard some of these.
1. Some treat the Bible like an ancient relic that really isn't very important or useful to us.
  2. Others are critical of the Bible. They claim that it's just 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.
  3. Still others would not be critical of the Bible itself, but they would be critical of the way we use it. Have you ever been accused of being too strict with scripture as you tried to address some religious error or immoral behavior?
- B. In fact, people like us are often accused of being Bible fundamentalists, a sort of wacky fringe collection of people who actually believe that all of the Bible is true and try to carefully follow it.
1. A lot of people – even many religious people – are not all that interested in the Bible. They are embarrassed by the Old Testament stories and do not want to be strictly bound by the laws of the New.
  2. But they still want Jesus. They still want this loving gracious Savior and the salvation He offers them.
- C. Actually, this raises an interesting question. If these people still believe in Jesus, then perhaps we should consider what Jesus believed about scripture.
1. I realize that the New Testament scriptures had not been written when Jesus was alive. It would be written after He returned to the Father.
  2. 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 teaching.
  3. As a result, we are able to examine His use of scripture and to know how Jesus viewed scripture.
  4. But I will warn you, as we examine His use of the Old Testament, we encounter a Jesus that the world is not expecting. We encounter a Jesus that they world would be forced to label...a Bible fundamentalist.
  5. I want you to notice how Jesus viewed the scripture.

## Jesus believed the scriptures were important.

- A. To illustrate, considered His use of scripture.
  - 1. He often cited scripture in His disputes with His enemies.
    - a. When tempted by Satan (Matthew 4), Jesus answered with scripture.
    - b. When debating the Pharisees about divorce, He pointed them to scripture asking, "Have you not read..."
    - c. When challenged by the Sadducees about the resurrection of the dead, Jesus rebukes them for not understanding the scripture and goes on to cite scripture to make His point.
    - d. How many times did Jesus say "it is written" and then go on to cite scripture in His teaching?
    - e. In fact, He pointed His enemies to the scripture claiming that they testify about Him.
  - 2. Jesus clearly saw scripture as important used it often in His teaching.
- B. But consider also what we never say Jesus doing.
  - 1. We never see Jesus criticizing scripture. He never claimed that something Moses or Isaiah said was wrong. He never pointed to an Old Testament story and scoffed at it.
  - 2. He never questioned the trustworthiness of those who wrote it down or cast doubt on whether it had been accurately transmitted.
  - 3. He used the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures (the Septuagint), clearly demonstrating His believe that the scripture had been accurately translated into other languages.
  - 4. It is clear that Jesus had a much different view of scripture from modern critics. He considered scripture to be important.

Summary: When you believe the Bible is important, you are standing with Jesus.

## Jesus believed that the scriptures were inspired by God.

- A. To Jesus, these were not simply ancient writings important to His people. The scriptures were the very words of God.
  - 1. Keep in mind that He certainly understood the men penned the words, but He also recognized that God was behind those words.
  - 2. For example, Jesus tells His critics that ISAIAH prophesied about them (**Mark 7:6**). He mentions what Moses said (**Mark 7:10**).

3. And yet, He says that this instruction from Moses was "the commandment of God" (**Mark 7:8, 9**) and the "word of God" (**Mark 7:13**).

B. What is this telling us?

1. Jesus believed the same thing about scripture that we believe.
2. Though men may have been the words, they were guided by the Holy Spirit so that they were writing the words of God (**II Peter 1:20-21**).

Summary: When you take a stand that the Bible is the very word of God, realize that you are standing with Jesus. But let's take all of this a step further...because Jesus believe the Old Testament was inspired by God, this means that...

## **Jesus believed that the Old Testament stories were true.**

- A. This is interesting because so many people today (even religious people) reject and even mock these stories.
  1. For example:
    - a. We are told that the creation story is a myth and contrary to science.
    - b. We are told that the flood story was borrowed from other ancient myths...that it didn't really happen.
    - c. And critics laugh out loud at the suggestion that Lot's wife becoming a pillar of salt or Jonah spending three days in the belly of a fish was something that really happened.
  2. They would argue that these are clearly ancient myths and no up-to-date, thinking person could ever believe that these things actually happened.
  3. Let me remind you of where this criticism comes from.
    - a. Many of these critics begin with the assumption that supernatural events DO NOT HAPPEN. Thus, anything in the Bible that is supernatural must be a myth.
    - b. However, if you believe in God and believe that He has performed miracles among men in times past, this stuff is no big deal, well within His power.
- B. The problem for these critics is Jesus...because He clearly believed that these stories were true.
  1. Jesus constantly referenced the Old Testament in His teaching, citing the very stories that give the critics so much trouble.
    - a. In **Matthew 19:4**, as He's debating the Pharisees about divorce, He points them back to the creation story in Genesis.

- b. In **Matthew 24:37** He compares His return to the days of Noah, specifically mentioning the flood.
  - c. In **Luke 17:28** He cites Lot and warns His audience to remember his wife.
  - d. In **Matthew 12:39** He references the three days that Jonah spent in the belly of that fish as He discuss the three days that He will spend in the grave (hardly a time to bring up an ancient myth).
2. You will never find Jesus mocking the stories of the Old Testament. He never casts doubt on their authenticity. He doesn't even ignore them.
  3. Instead, He uses them as a vital part of His teaching, demonstrating that He believed in the stories of the Old Testament. Here's the bottom line, if you want Jesus, then you will have to accept Jonah, Lot and Adam as well!

Summary: So, when you take a stand that the Bible is true, including those Old Testament stories about the creation and Jonah being in the belly of that fish, just remember that you are standing with Jesus.

## **Jesus believed in strict obedience to the laws of God.**

- A. Now this is interesting...because one of the quickest ways to be labeled a Bible fundamentalist is insist that we must obey the laws of God.
  1. Suggest that homosexuality is a sin and will cause someone to lose his soul or that adultery is the only reason for divorcing your spouse and someone will label you a Bible fundamentalist.
  2. Even many religious people resist the idea that God's laws should be strictly followed. Suggest that baptism is necessary for salvation or that it's not the work of the church to build a gym for the teens and some very religious people will accuse you of being too strict with the Bible.
  3. They might even call you a Pharisee, suggesting that you're just too picky (**Matthew 23:23a**).
- B. The problem for those who discourage strict obedience to the laws of God is...Jesus.
  1. Jesus believed that the law of God should be followed precisely.
    - a. He taught people to obey the law (**Matthew 7:21**).
    - b. He warned of terrible consequences if they did not (**Matthew 7:22-23; John 12:48**).
  2. In fact, contrary to popular myth, Jesus never condemned the Pharisees for strictly following the Law of Moses.

- a. He encouraged their careful obedience (**Matthew 23:23**).
- b. What He actually condemns is their DISOBEDIENCE to the law. In fact, they were neglecting some of the basic principles of the law.
3. Jesus recognized that His enemies would accuse Him of being lawbreaker. So He would state clearly His attitude toward the law (**Matthew 5:17-19**). God's commands are to be kept, right down to the last detail.

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

## Jesus argued from details in scripture.

- A. This gets us into trouble too.
  1. Start making a point from a detail in the text and many people will protest, "You're just being too picky, too detailed with the text."
  2. Have you been there?
    - a. Perhaps you were explaining how baptism is immersion by pointing out that both Philip and the Eunuch went down into the water (**Acts 8:38**); or the Paul calls it a burial (**Romans 6:4**).
    - b. Or perhaps you were trying to explain that benevolent help from churches was extended only to fellow disciples; that the church is not a general relief agency for the whole community (**I Corinthians 16:1**).
    - c. But as you tried to demonstrate this from the text, the other guys dismisses 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."
- B. What many do not realize is that this is exactly the way Jesus used scripture.
  1. Jesus frequently responded to His opponents by taking them to the text. In addition, He sometimes based His arguments on very fine points of the text, on the details of the text.
  2. Go back for a moment to His dispute with the Sadducees over the resurrection (**Matthew 22:31-33**). Do you catch what He is saying?
    - a. He takes us audience back to something God said in **Exodus 3:6**.
    - b. He argues that, although Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had long since died, in some form that must still be living because in that passage God says He **IS** (not **WAS**) their God.
    - c. He makes His argument, not on one word, but on the TENSE of one word.

3. If Jesus reasoned this way from scripture, then certainly no one should object to a careful analysis of text to be sure we have understood God's will for us. The only thing that has to fear careful examination is error.

Summary: So, when you take a stand based on some detailed point found in the text, and you get criticized and ridiculed for it...just remember that you are standing with Jesus. He believed the same thing you do.

## **Conclusion:**

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

We need to hang on to scripture. It provides the only path to eternal life.

- David A. Banning