

"Kingdom 101 ~ Law vs. Grace" [5.24.09]

Visual aid = Marketing techniques...

Question: have you ever noticed which items @ the supermarket you naturally gravitate to?

Let's try an experiment = which one would you buy or purchase?

You may vote with a simple head nod or smile ☺

_____ or the NEW & IMPROVED VERSION?

A majority of the time we migrate toward the updated or improved version & marketers are very aware of this fact.

Although, new & improved doesn't always translate to better. Do you happen to remember the Coke experiment on April 23, 1985?

[INSERT] Coca-Cola Classic vs. New Coke

Ever notice that we approach the Bible with a similar mindset? We have unconsciously made a clear distinction between the Old & New Testaments:

- OLD has come to mean = tired; worn out; somewhat antiquated; almost dead.
VS.
- NEW carries with it the idea of = being fresh; updated & relevant; alive & active.

Without realizing it, some believers have subconsciously placed the O.T. on a forgotten shelf as if it were a history book = dead with facts.

This is the TENSION we find in our passage today; Jesus was accused of attempting to demolish the sacred writings of the O.T.

I. Completing God's Law

A. (R) Matthew 5: 17 or p. 736 in pew Bible

1. This passage presents the heart of Jesus' message; it demonstrates His love & respect for the Law of God.
 - a. Jesus was falsely accused of wanting to abandon the sacred writings of the Law of Moses & the Prophets (entire O.T.)
 - b. He was falsely accused of introducing a 'New Teaching' that would in essence dismiss; invalidate; discount the 1st 39 books of the Bible.

It's why He said, "Don't misunderstand why I have come."

2. Jesus now gives a definitive answer to these false accusations.
 - a. He had not come to abolish the O.T. but to fulfill it (that is to bring it to completion); to obey it; & supply its true meaning.
 - b. Jesus left no doubt that the O.T. has permanent value until each jot & tittle is completely fulfilled.
3. [INSERT] 1st ALL STAFF meeting @ PCC

- a. 1st time I was exposed to the heresy of the O.T. being antiquated & nothing more than a 'divine history book' was in April of 96.
- b. I was brand new ~ only my 2nd church experience; 1st time on a large multi-staff situation; I couldn't wait to engage & get started.
- c. PCC's Associate Pastor stood up & began teaching the pastor's & office personal a lesson on the 69 books of the Bible
 - i. 1st moments of his lecture he explained that the O.T. was a 'divine history book' with great stories of faith
 - ii. He continued by saying that this is where the value of the O.T. where it began & ended; basically = all O.T. prophecies had been fulfilled: I thought Lee was joking; I laughed out loud ~ but no one else even smiled; they continued to take notes.
 - iii. My 1st exposure was not that positive; I had to choose to confront this heresy or passively dismiss it; Guess which one ☺
 1. I raised my hand & began to explain why the O.T. is not just a 'divine history book' but is living & active!
 2. The OLD Testament is many things - - but tired, worn out, and somewhat antiquated doesn't describe it!
 3. [INSERT] Dr. David Reagan

B. O.T. is jammed-packed PROPHECIES that are currently being fulfilled and are yet to be fulfilled!

1. PROPHECIES currently being fulfilled...

In the last 85+ yrs the O.T. has been coming alive before our eyes

- a. The Jewish people will be regathered in unbelief from the 4 corners of the earth
[Isaiah 11: 11 – 12 or p. 526 in pew Bible]
- b. The state of Israel will be re-established
[Isaiah 66: 7 – 8]
this was fulfilled on May 14, 1948.
- c. The Jewish people will once again re-occupy the city of Jerusalem
[Zechariah 8: 4 – 8 or p. 723 in pew Bible]
this was fulfilled on June 7, 1967.
- d. The land of Israel will be reclaimed from its desolation, becoming once again a land of agricultural abundance
[Ezekiel 36: 34 – 35 of p. 654 in pew Bible]
 - [INSERT] Mark Twain's visit to Israel
- e. The Hebrew language will be revived from the dead
[Zephaniah 3: 9 or p. 717 in pew Bible]

2. PROPHECIES yet to be fulfilled...

- a. The Arab nations of the world will attack Israel in a coordinated effort to annihilate the state
[Psalm 83 or p. 452 in pew Bible]

- b.** Israel will soundly defeat the Arab alliance
[Zechariah 12: 6 or p. 726 in pew Bible]
- c.** A Russian coalition consisting mainly of Muslim nations will invade Israel
[Ezekiel 38: 1 – 17 or p. 656 in pew Bible]
- d.** The Russian coalition will be destroyed supernaturally by God
[Ezekiel 38: 18 – 23 & 39: 1 – 8]
- e.** A number of passages deal with the Antichrist & his involvement in the last days
[Daniel 9: 27 or p. 676 + Zechariah 13: 8 – 9 or p. 726 in pew Bible]
- f.** At the end of the Tribulation; when the Jews have come to the end of themselves, they will turn to God & receive Yeshua=Jesus as their Messiah.
[Zechariah 12: 10 or p. 726 in pew Bible]
[Romans 11: 25 – 27 or p. 865 in pew Bible]

The OLD Testament is to the NEW Testament what promise is to fulfillment.

C. (R) Matthew 5: 18a

Jesus signature = “I tell you the truth”

This phrase occurs in the Gospel of Matthew = 31 times

Jesus spoke with His own authority; He loved to use to use this formula that no ancient prophet or modern scribe had ever used.

D. (R) Matthew 5: 18b

Jesus establishes once for all the last validity of the O.T.

- a.** This fulfillment would extend to the smallest Hebrew letter = the tittle; or in the English language a jot would correspond to the dot above the small case ‘i’.
- b.** Not one mark in the O.T. would vanish until it completed purpose had been fulfilled!
- c.** Jesus gospel “of the kingdom does not replace the O.T. but rather fulfills it as Jesus’ life & ministry” = clarify & complete God’s intent for the entire O.T.

E. (R) Matthew 5: 19

- a.** Some in the crowd were experts @ telling others what to do, but they missed the central point of God’s laws themselves.
- b.** Jesus makes it clear = that obeying God’s law is more important than explaining it!
 - i.** It’s much easier to study God’s law & tell others to obey them than to put them into practice.
 - ii.** How are you doing @ obeying God TODAY?
 - iii.** It’s the biblical line between the least & greatest in God’s kingdom!

Let's close with what seems to be an impossible request from Jesus;

II. New Testament RIDDLE

A. (R) Matthew 5: 20

“Unless you do far better than the Pharisees in the matters of right living,” MSG

B. Upon hearing this, the disciples must have been dumbfounded:

- a. For the teachers of the Law & the Pharisees were the most righteous/religious people on the face of the earth.
 - i. They had taken the 10 commandments & had quickly turned them into 613 rules that you must keep to be good with God!
 - ii. BEST PART = they had the audacity to claim that they had actually perfected this lifestyle and had kept each rule & regulation.

b. How could Jesus make this request with a straight-face; no smile?

“Unless you do far better than the Pharisees in the matters of right living,” (MSG)
YOU WILL NOT MAKE IT!!

The RIDDLE is actually not hard to solve!

C. Christian righteousness is to be greater than Pharisaic righteousness because it is much deeper; it is a righteousness of the heart!

The Pharisees weakness was that they were content to obey the laws outwardly without allowing God to change their hearts = or attitudes.

- a. Jesus was saying that the quality of goodness should be greater than that of the Pharisees; IF NOT we have wasted our time & God's!
- b. The Pharisees looked pious- -did the right religious kind of stuff; they shook their heads in pious compliance but rebelled inwardly not changing their hearts nor their attitudes; no real definable difference.
- c. Miserable life = pretending to be something that you are not; keeping up a religious façade but existing as the same wretched sinner deep down inside ☹
- d. Don't neglect - God judges our hearts as well as our deeds!

GRACE is so much better than the Law; our righteousness now comes from what God does in us, not what we can accomplish by ourselves!

(R) Ephesians 2: 8 – 9 or p. 896