

Subject: *Christ and Scripture*

Scripture: *Matthew 5:17-20*

Our text is part of Christ's Sermon on the Mount. Those who heard Jesus preach this sermon were eager to hear what He would say and they probably had some questions on their minds: What does Jesus think about the Scriptures? Will He base His teaching on Scripture or some other text? Would He be like the other rabbis or would He teach something new? In this message I want us to look at two things: 1) What did Christ teach about Scripture? 2) How did Christ use Scripture?

1. WHAT DID CHRIST TEACH ABOUT SCRIPTURE?

A. Scripture is precious and He came to fulfill it (vs. 17)

Jesus wanted to remove any idea that He wanted to undermine or replace Scripture from its prominent role in Jewish life. He came not to destroy, but to fulfill Scripture. In referring to the law and the prophets, He was referring to the Old Testament scriptures. This confirms that the canon of Old Testament writings was commonly recognized as Holy Scripture. They were set apart all other books. In His first sermon Christ said that He came to fulfill Scripture.

The four Gospels contain a total of 3,779 verses, and 1,934 of these verses are words spoken by Christ. In 1 out of 10 of the verses in which Christ is speaking, He is either quoting from or referring to the OT, so clearly Christ based all of His life and teaching on Scripture. It was like a roadmap for His life and ministry.

B. Scripture is permanent and it must be fulfilled (vs. 18)

This is one of the most important statements about God's Word. Heaven and earth are temporary and passing, but God's Word is eternal and permanent. Christ said that even one jot (the smallest Hebrew letter similar to our apostrophe) or one tittle (the smallest part of a Hebrew letter) would not fail until all Scripture was fulfilled. Two things were most sacred to the Jews of that time: God's temple and God's Word. When Jesus predicted the destruction of the temple, some people accused Him of speaking against it. But He was never accused of saying one word against the Scripture. He clearly taught that it would remain forever.

C. Scripture is pre-eminent and it must be respected (vs. 19)

This is a powerful statement about the preservation of God's Word and a warning against anyone who trifles with it. Anyone who has a casual or flippant attitude toward Scripture is condemned. Scripture deserves the highest respect and confidence because it is God's Word.

D. Scripture is practical and it must change the heart (vs. 20)

Christ warned against the superficial, self-righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. They replaced the powerful teachings of Scripture with their traditions and interpretations. The Bible produces a new heart and a genuine righteousness that comes from the heart. In the rest of the Sermon on the Mount He expounded on this and applied it. It must have hit home...

Matthew 7:28-29 ²⁸ And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: ²⁹ For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

James 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

2. HOW DID CHRIST USE SCRIPTURE?

Over the course of His life and ministry He read it, quoted it, explained it, and applied it. He never doubted it, downplayed it, or dismissed it as something optional or unimportant.

A. He used Scripture to explain Himself and His mission

From the first to the last of His earthly ministry He pointed people to the Scriptures.

Luke 4:16-21

When He was suffering on the cross He quoted Scripture, "I thirst" (from Psalm 69:21) and "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (from Psalm 22:1).

Luke 24:25-27

John 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

B. He used Scripture to overcome temptation

Matthew 4:1-10

C. He used Scripture to confront sin

Matthew 15:7-9

Matthew 21:12-13

D. He used Scripture to answer moral questions

Matthew 19:3-6

E. He used Scripture to expose self-righteousness

Matthew 19:16-19

F. He used Scripture to correct bad theology

Matthew 22:23-33

G. He used Scripture to challenge unbelief

Matthew 21:15-16

Matthew 21:42-43

Luke 16:22-31

H. He used Scripture to warn of coming judgment

Matthew 24:37-39

In this and many other places, Jesus confirmed the historical accuracy of the Old Testament. He spoke of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah, Abraham, Lot, David, and Solomon. He referred to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. He spoke of Moses and the serpent in the wilderness as historical fact. When they asked Him to give a sign that He was the Messiah, He said, “The only sign is that of the prophet Jonah.”

Jesus loved Scripture. He read and taught it. He quoted and explained it. He said He came to fulfill it. He validated it and referred to it as the final absolute authority. Jesus endorsed the Bible in every way. If Christ had such a high view of Scripture, shouldn't we?