



The Harmony of Christ's Life and Teaching

By Keith Greer

What made the teaching of Christ so powerful? He lived what He taught! Jesus' life perfectly and consistently mirrored the words He spoke as He lived among men. This harmony between what He said and how He lived refutes any theory that Jesus was a hypocrite. Let us examine five areas of his teaching and life that show this to be true.

His teaching and its relation to sin. Sin is a transgression of the law or failure to act when one knows what is right (1 John 3:4; James 4:17). About sin, Jesus taught: "...Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin." {John 8:34} He taught that the penalty man pays for sin is spiritual death. "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." {John 8:24} How can a man achieve freedom from this condition? "Therefore, if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed." {John 8:36} He made freedom from sin possible, but how did He accomplish this? "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." {John 3:14,15}

Jesus also condemned the source of all sin. "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it." {John 8:44} Jesus challenged His accusers to find sin in Him! "Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears God's words; therefore, you do not hear, because you are not of God." {John 8:46,47} No one met His challenge!

His teaching and its relation to the law. What did Jesus say concerning Moses' Law? "...Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods"'? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken)." {John 10:34,35} The law is equivalent to scripture. What was His purpose concerning the law? "For I have

come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." {John 6:38} "...My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me." {John 7:16} "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him – the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day." {John 12:48} He had the right to give new commandments (John 13:34,35). In His time, many tried to show that He failed to keep the law. But they failed, because He kept the law to the letter! Why is this important? It shows that the law was not the problem; the people's attitudes and hearts needed adjusting.

His teaching and its relation to the kingdom. God's kingdom was not physical, but spiritual. How do we know? Entrance requires a spiritual birth. "...Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." {John 3:5} Worship is different than it was under the Old Law. "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." {John 4:24} Its citizens are not of this world. "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world." {John 17:14} Jesus is king. "...My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here...You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." {John 18:36,37}

What did Christ do when they tried to make Him an earthly king? "Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone." {John 6:15} He wanted no part of such a proposition! Even at the height of His popularity, He tested the people's desire for a spiritual kingdom and king (John 6:22-71).

His teaching and His relation to man. One of the aspects of Jesus, which even today confuses some, is the fact that He was more than God's Son. He was also man. Being human, He revealed to all humans the will of His Father. Did Jesus know He was human? Did it change His perfect relationship with His Father? Jesus knew He was a man. "But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man." {John 2:24,25}

He also experienced human limitations. "Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour." {John 4:6} "After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" {John 19:28} He felt human emotions. "Jesus wept." {John 11:35} He was a man. "But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this." {John 8:40} Man was under bondage to sin, and Jesus, because He knew no sin, was the deliverer who could free man (John 8:31-36). Do not try to understand, or even explain, it. Just accept what the record says – He was both God and man!

His teaching on, and relation to, God. He is God. "I and My Father are one." {John 10:30} He knew God. "But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me." {John 7:29} To know God, one must come to know Christ. "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on, you know Him and have seen Him." {John 14:7} Man, without knowledge of God and His Son, cannot hope for eternal life. "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was." {John 17:3-5}

How can anyone look at the things Jesus taught and the life He lived without seeing the perfect harmony that existed between the two? Jesus did more than reveal God's will to man – He also lived it before him. During His life, while dealing with His disciples, dealing with His enemies, and even while dying on the cross, Jesus taught men how to live lives of faithful service to God. While we are not Sons of God who literally possess Deity, we also can strive to live before God so as not to make our teaching less effective because we fail to live as we teach. Jesus left for us a perfect example of teaching and living. All of God's children should strive to follow that example.

Christ Jesus taught us the true meaning of exposing "the beauty of Jesus" for others to witness. Backing up our teaching with day-by-day godly living will make our teaching that much more effective. It was not just Jesus' words that drew men to His side. It was the way He spoke "picture sermons" by living a faithful life before men, and before His Father. Dear reader, are you "practicing what you are teaching?"