

JESUS BROKE WITH THE CONVENTIONAL

By Keith Greer

“Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, ‘Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?’ But He turned and rebuked them, and said, ‘You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.’ And they went to another village.” {Luke 9:51-56} Unfortunately, Jesus’ methods were not what the Jews expected, or wanted. Jesus broke with:

Showing religion to be seen by others. *“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.” {Matthew 6:5}* One of the constant themes of Jesus’ preaching was the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. Their main goal was to be seen by others. Outwardly, they appeared to be pious and reverent. Paul also rejected such attitudes and actions in his letters to the early disciples {Galatians 1:10; Philippians 1:9,10; 1 Thessalonians 2:3-5}. The Lord does not accept mere outward appearances of religion—not then and not now.

Returning like for like. *“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also.” {Matthew 5:38-40}* God does not tolerate personal vengeance in His kingdom. He wants His people to be humble, longsuffering, kind, patient, and accepting of evil treatment when it is given. Paul’s remarks in his letter to the church at Rome touched on this same theme {Romans 12:17-21}.

Profession without practice. *“...The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.” {Matthew 23:2-4}* Religion is useless if it has no substance behind it. On numerous occasions, Jesus addressed the problem of accepting Him as Lord but rejecting His commands {Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 6:46; Matthew 15:7-9}. Such religion is hollow and shallow and confusing to those who witness it.

Previous Standards for Greatness. *“But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” {Matthew 23:11,12}* A person’s greatness is not determined by his work or words, but by a humble servant spirit like that of a king’s child. Jesus said we must have hearts like children {Matthew 18:1-4}.

Anxiety about tomorrow. *“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” {Matthew 6:33,34}* The true child of God doesn’t worry about the future; he works on today. God’s people should demonstrate to others their complete dependency on their Father in heaven. None of us knows what the future holds or what

obstacles may come our way as we travel down the pathways of life. If we trust God, He'll help us deal with difficulties!

Busy in the Lord's Work—Not Our Own. *"Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.' {Matthew 9:37,38}* We are God's hands and feet and only true Christians can take the saving gospel to the lost and those dying in sin. Committees, special groups, titles, and gimmicks cannot help lead men to the cross—only the truth has the power to save the soul, *Romans 1:16*.

Please examine the above list. We should break with those things not associated with the truth, no matter how popular they may be with men. Let God's truth rule in your heart. ***