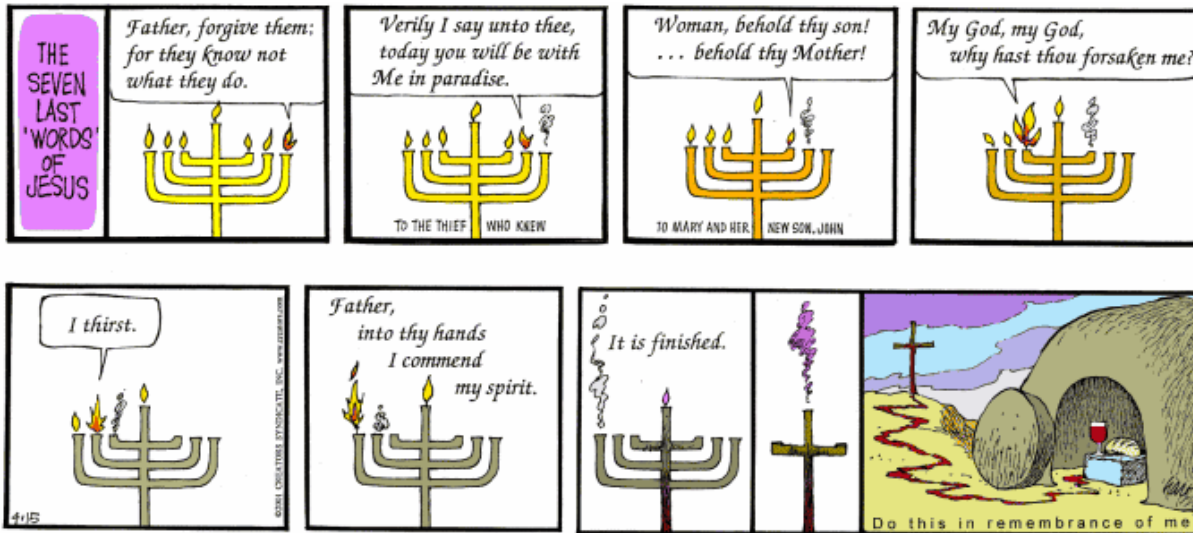
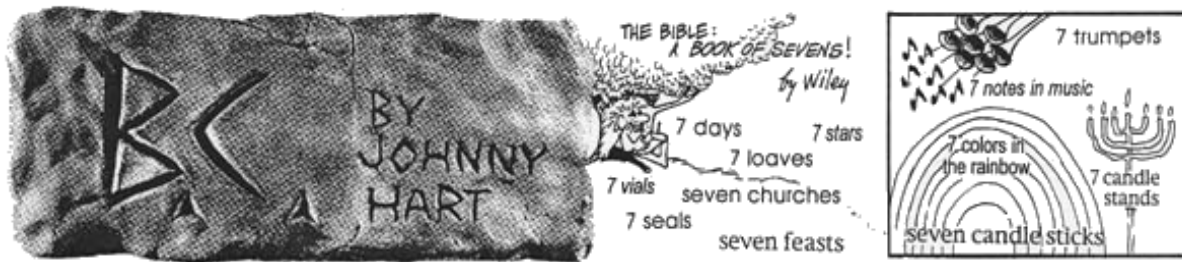


# The Bible Meditator

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## ***B.C. Comic: Hate Speech or Free Speech?***

- ◆ Meditating on the Gospel of Luke
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# B.C. Comic: Hate Speech or Free Speech?

By Wayne Jackson

Liberal journalists apparently think that the First Amendment of the Constitution is their private property. Radical libertarians can display their filth or insult—with a special vengeance—against the religion established by Jesus Christ, and there will be scarcely a ripple of criticism from the broad-minded crowd. However, when something is published that contains a strong Christian affirmation, they immediately abandon their ideological objectivity and assume a lynch-mob mentality.

Consider the recent production of Johnny Hart, creator of the syndicated comic strip, “B.C.” Hart, who professes an association with “Christendom,” composed an eight-paneled series for “Easter” Sunday. It contained preliminary panels depicting the seven-candled Jewish menorah, each accompanied by one of the seven utterances of Jesus from the cross. Each of the Savior’s sayings corresponded to a dying flame on the candle stand. The strip concluded with the extinguished menorah turning into a cross, followed by an additional panel featuring an open, bodiless tomb (with only bread and a communion cup instead). These words accompanied: “Do this in remembrance of me.”

The Jewish Defense League is up in arms, contending that the drawings and text are “highly crude, insulting and an example of outright Jew-hatred.” Mr. Hart was charged pushing “replacement theology,” that is, the notion that “Christianity has replaced Judaism” as the “chosen” religion of divine endorsement. Of course in today’s climate of “pluralism,” that would never do. The 1,300 newspapers that carry Hart’s work were petitioned to excise the strip, or “editorialize” against it—which some dutifully did.

Mr. Hart claims that he was misunderstood; he says it was his intent to “pay tribute” to both Jews and Christians. He has provided his own interpretation as to how his comic strip accomplished this feat.

Though I think his explanation is misguided (with “millennial” overtones), it cer-

tainly is possible to acknowledge honestly the valuable contributions of Judaism to God’s plan for human redemption, as culminated in Christ. Salvation is “from the Jews” (Jn. 2:22). The Hebrew system was wonderful—for what it was designed to do. However, it was never intended to be perpetual.

These are the facts relative to the relationship between Judaism and Christianity.

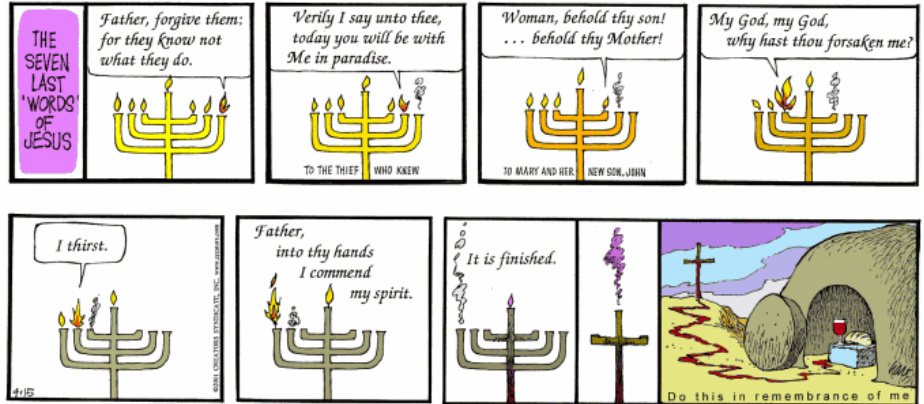
1 It is not an exhibition of “Jew-hate” to contend that Christ was the promised Messiah of Old Testament literature. There is ample evidence of this in scores of prophetic references within the 39 books of Jewish litera-

*When does one’s expressions of belief become “politically incorrect”?*

*Cartoonist, Johnny Hart, had to answer this question when his recent “B.C.” “Easter” comic strip portrayed an extinguished menorah turning into a cross.*

2 One may dispute the issue with Jesus of Nazareth if he wishes, but he ought to at least represent his claim correctly. Christ unequivocally taught that the Jewish nation, due to its rejection of him, was forfeiting its role as God’s “chosen” people. That position was transferred to a new régime, a spiritual kingdom (Mt. 21:33ff; esp. 43; cf. 1 Pet. 2:9; Jn. 18:36). This fresh system would consist of those who had been, physically speaking, both Jews and Gentiles.

In the present age, the new “Israel of God” consists of all who have been obedient to Christ (Rom. 2:28-29;



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ture (Compare Lk. 24:49).

But the historical reality is this: the Jews, by the hands of lawless Gentiles, killed their Messiah (Acts 2:23). Jewish hope now must be centered in the resurrected Christ (Rom. 1:16). Without submission to Jesus’ plan, there is no redemption for anyone—Jew or Gentile (Acts 4:11, 12; Heb. 5:8, 9). This is the message of the New Testament. Would the Jewish Defense League have the New Testament banned under the guise that it is “hate” literature?

Gal. 3:26ff; 6:16). The nation of Israel, as a spiritual entity, has been dead for almost twenty centuries (Rom. 7:1ff).

3 The Old Testament itself previewed the coming day when Jehovah’s covenant with the Israelite people would be replaced by a “new” and “better” system of religion (Jer. 31:31–34). The book of Hebrews, written especially to accommodate the Jewish mind, is designed to establish this very point (Compare Heb. 8:6ff).

**Continued on page 10**

# Meditating on Scripture Daily

Based on the New King James Version



By Don Ruhl

## May 1 Luke 17:5–10 Increasing Faith

<sup>5</sup> *And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."* The apostles have heard much from Jesus, as recorded in the last several chapters, leading them to see the need for increased faith. Greater faith is needed to keep from being led astray, to keep from leading others astray, and to be able to forgive in the manner that God does. Why do we withhold forgiveness? Consider these options:

- We do not trust God that His way will work
- We fear the offender will gain mastery over us
- We think we make ourselves vulnerable to another attack

The apostles recognized that they did not have enough confidence in the Lord. However, with confidence and faith in the Lord, then all other virtues can begin (See 2 Pet. 1:5–7).

## May 2 Luke 17:5–10 Increasing Faith

<sup>6</sup> *So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed..."* Even small amounts of faith are exceedingly powerful. Faith as small as a mustard seed can do things that man without faith cannot do. Is Jesus implying that the faith of the apostles was even smaller than a mustard seed, or that their faith was non-existent, or that if they started to use what little they did have, then wonderful things would start to happen? Abundant and total forgiveness to a repeat offender is like the command to a tree to be uprooted and be cast into the sea. It is possible only through faith. However, such faith could lead to arrogance, so Jesus follows up this teaching by addressing humility.

## May 3 Luke 17:5–10 Increasing Faith

<sup>7, 8</sup> *"And which of you, having a servant..."* Be sure to get the proper order of things. The servant serves the master. The master does not exist for the benefit of the servant, but the master hires servants to do what he wants done. It is his fields, crops, sheep, profits and pleasure. This does not mean the master is necessarily indifferent to the needs of the servants, but their needs are met after they care for the master's concerns.

<sup>9</sup> *"Does he thank that servant..."* The servant is not thanked because he did not do the master a favor. The servant simply fulfilled the master's command or instructions. Likewise, God does not need to thank us for what we do for Him. God blesses men and women when they obey Him, not because they have earned it, but He is helping their feeble efforts.

## May 4 Luke 17:5–10 Increasing Faith

<sup>10</sup> *"... We are unprofitable servants..."* We are the servants and God is our Master. We do what He wants done. It is His church, planet, wealth, life, creation, system and pleasure. Forgiving those who have repented is one of His commands. Therefore, if we perform this normally impossible feat, we have not done the Lord a

favor, but we have simply committed ourselves through faith to His commands. Forgiveness is not our invention, initiative or inclination. It is the Lord's idea. Why then should He thank us? If anything, we hesitate or rebel against this idea of forgiving others. Therefore, we can only conclude that we are unprofitable servants (Ps. 143:2). We are dispensable. Let us put away the doctrine of self first, and accept the Bible teaching of God-confidence. Moreover, "duty" is not a bad word, as I have heard some preachers and Christians mock it, but it emphasizes the Lord's way of life instead of being guided by personal feelings. He lays the duty upon us as opposed to what we may attempt to merit.

## May 5 Luke 17:11–19 Faith Increased

<sup>11</sup> *... He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.* This journey started back in 9:51. Here Jesus is going to meet Jewish and Samaritan lepers. He ignores racial and national barriers because all people have a common need for Him. It is interesting that the Jewish and Samaritan lepers are together. Under other circumstances they would not live in the same neighborhood, but even as animals fleeing fire do not attack one another, so when humans see that they both have the same problems, they will live together and see the Savior.

## May 6 Luke 17:11–19 Faith Increased

<sup>12, 13</sup> *... there met Him ten men who were lepers...* In his comments on Matthew 8:2, Albert Barnes paints this picture of the horrors of leprosy:

No disease with which the human family has been afflicted, has been more dreadful than that which is often mentioned in the Bible as *the leprosy*. It first exhibits itself on the surface of the skin. The appearance is not always the same, but it commonly resembles the spot made by the puncture of a pin, or the pustules of a ring-worm. The spots generally make their appearance very suddenly. Perhaps its appearance might be hastened by any sudden passion, as fear or anger. See Nu 12:10 2Ch 26:19. The spots commonly exhibit themselves, at first, on the face, about the nose and eyes, and increase in size a number of years, till they become as large as a pea or a bean. There are three kinds of leprosy, distinguished by the appearance of the spots—the white, the black, and the red leprosy. These spots, though few at first, gradually spread till they cover the whole body. But though the appearance of the disease is at first in the skin, yet it is deeply seated in the bones, and marrow, and joints of the body. We have reason to suppose that, in children, it is concealed in the system for a number of years, till they arrive at the age of puberty; and in adults for three or four years, till at last it gives fearful indications on the skin of its having gained a well-rooted and permanent existence. A leprous person may live twenty, or thirty, or even fifty years, if he received the disease at his birth, but they will be years of indescribable misery. The bones and marrow are pervaded with the disease. The malady advances, from one stage to another, with slow and certain ruin. "Life still lingers amidst the desolation;" the joints, and hands, and feet, lose their power; and the body collapses, or falls together, in a form hideous and awful. There is a form of the disease in which it commences at the extremities: the joints separate; the fingers, toes, and other members, one by one, fall off; and the malady thus gradually approaches the seat of life. The wretched victim is thus doomed to see himself dying *piece-meal*, assured that no human power can arrest, for a moment, the silent and steady march of this foe to the seat of life. This disease is

contagious and hereditary. It is easily communicated from one to another, and is transmitted to the third and fourth generation. The last generation that is afflicted with it commonly exhibits the symptoms by decayed teeth, and fetid breath, and diseased complexion.

The ten lepers in Luke 17 stood afar off and made their desperate cry to Jesus, as they were supposed to do (Lev. 13:45, 46). After reading the description above, we can understand why these men wanted a healing!

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### May 7 Luke 17:11–19 Faith Increased

14 *So when He saw them...* Jesus noticed them. They have been touched that He was not disgusted by them, as most people would have been. He then tells them what to do, which is the same thing that He told another leper to do (Lk. 5:14). According to the instructions in Leviticus 13 and 14, the priests would make their examination of the leper and then make a declaration of cleanliness. The lepers do as they are told, and because they obey Jesus, they are cleansed as they go to the priest. This is different than what happened in Luke 5:13, 14, because the power is not in a magical or ritualistic formula, but it is in Christ! Therefore, He varied His healing methods so that people would not get the wrong idea. We are likewise healed mentally, emotionally and spiritually when we obey the Lord.

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### May 8 Luke 17:11–19 Faith Increased

15, 16 *And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned...* Look at what happened! One of the lepers thought more of God than of himself. Evidently, the nine cried out for mercy simply for self-comfort. They saw Jesus and could only think that they could now be healed. However, this leper, who was also a Samaritan, recognized Jesus for who He really is. Therefore, the Samaritan humbled himself, falling on his face before the Lord. The Samaritan leper had experienced a double rejection in life. He was rejected for his leprosy and for being a Samaritan. However, he saw in Jesus One who would accept him both as a leper and a Samaritan. He had already been humbled through leprosy, which was involuntary, but now he humbles himself voluntarily. He was not embarrassed or too sophisticated to make this outward demonstration of humility. He was deeply grateful for the blessing of cleansing and acceptance by the Lord Jesus.

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### May 9 Luke 17:11–19 Faith Increased

17, 18 *So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed...?"* Jesus expected God to be thanked. He was bothered by ungratefulness. He even indicates that He was disturbed that the ones who were God's children, did not think of God to glorify Him. Does the world ever put us to shame in freely acknowledging God?

19 *And He said to him, "...Your faith has made you well."* Increased faith led to wholeness. The Samaritan leper did not have faith in faith, but faith in God. Faith is not the power itself, but connects with the power. All ten lepers had faith in God and in Jesus (v. 13), it is just that the Samaritan coupled his faith with thanksgiving and glorification of God (vv. 15, 16, 18). Even as faith led this leper to be well or whole in the body, so our faith can make us well or whole in the spirit. Without faith in God we are lacking and we are diseased spiritually. The nine began with faith, but they did not complete it. Faith caused the ten to cry for mercy, because they could see what God could give to them. Faith completed caused the Samaritan to glorify God, because the Samaritan could see what he could give to God.

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### May 10 Luke 17:20, 21 Coming Kingdom

The end of the ministry of Jesus was nearing. Now He speaks of a return.

20, 21 *Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come...* Prophecies, such as Daniel 2:44, had built anticipation in the heart of the Jews. They were looking forward to the time when all foreign tyranny would end. However,

Jesus reveals that the Kingdom of God is not a physical reality (See also Jn. 18:36). People want a civil power because that is their first interest. Man wants an observable earthly kingdom in great splendor. The truth is, that the Kingdom of God is a spiritual reality. Therefore, we are not in the kingdom by going to a certain land, but we are in the kingdom when the qualities of the kingdom are first in us (Rom. 14:17). Jesus would bring the kingdom, not to make a New World, but to make new people!

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### May 11 Luke 17:22–25 Do Not be Deceived

22 *Then He said to the disciples, "The days will come..."* Interestingly, Jesus quickly shows that the Kingdom of God is not all glory, but great trouble will come with it. They would even desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, that is, they would wish for His judgment upon their enemies. The expression "day of the Lord" or something similar does not always refer to the Second Coming. Notice that Jesus referred to "one of the days," for it is simply referring to a time of judgment, of which the Second Coming of Christ is the Ultimate Day of Judgment.

23 *"And they will say to you, 'Look here!' or 'Look there!'..."* Obviously some people will ignore the description of the Kingdom of God that Jesus just gave. Look at what He said in verses 21 and 22. The strong desire that we may have, as prophesied in verse 22, may cause us to forget what He taught in the previous verses. In spite of what this verse says, the Moonies, Seventh-Day Adventists, "Jehovah's Witnesses," Premillennialists and others preach a materialistic Kingdom.

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### May 12 Luke 17:22–25 Do Not be Deceived

24 *"For as the lightning..."* Compare this verse with what Jesus taught in verse 23. It will not be necessary for someone to show you the day of the Son of Man, because when He does come in His glory, it will be obvious to everyone living. It will be like the lightning. Lightning makes itself so obvious that in an instant it can turn the night into day. When lightning is nearby no one has to show it to you. The Son of Man in His day will be equally obvious. No one will have to point Him out to you. You will not miss that grand event.

25 *"But first He must suffer many things..."* Before that great day comes, the Son of Man had to suffer. Now that He has, then the last great day can come at any time. Jesus prophesied that He would have to suffer many things. He would suffer:

- Physically—beatings, scourging, crucifixion
- Socially—public humiliation
- Emotionally—rejection by His creatures, including both the world and Israel
- Spiritually—separation from God

The pain of rejection is captured in Isaiah 53:3 & John 1:10, 11.

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### May 13 Luke 17:26–30 Sudden Revelation

26, 27 *"And as it was in the days of Noah..."* Normal affairs continued in Noah's days. The world's security was false. A universal flood had never occurred before. Why should they be concerned about one coming in their days? They did not believe Noah.

28, 29 *"Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot..."* Normal affairs continued in Lot's days. Fire and brimstone falling out of heaven had never occurred before. Again, the messenger, Lot, was not believed.

30 *"Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed."* Normal affairs will be continuing in the day of Christ. This is why the signs given by Premillennialists are false. As in the two previous accounts of destruction, the people alive at the Coming of Christ will have a false security (2 Pet. 3:3–7; 1 Thess. 5:1–4).

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### May 14 Luke 17:31–33 Do Not Return

31 *"...let him not turn back."* Do not turn back for worldly things. This may seem to be a strange warning in the context of the Second Coming of Christ, but if we have been consumed with earthly things now, we will be then. Jesus will remind us of this truth in the next verse. Tragedy does not change our character, but

amplifies it (Rev. 22:10–12).

32 *“Remember Lot’s wife.”* Learn the lessons of history! See Genesis 19, especially verse 16. Lot’s wife’s problem was the strength of earthly ties. They can be strong. This is why discipleship in Christ rises above all earthly ties, even the good ones (Lk. 14:26).

33 *“Whoever seeks to save his life...”* This is the paradox of self-salvation. Satan deceives you into believing that you should depend upon yourself. Remember Eve. She sought independence from God. Look what has happened since then. If we do try to save our lives, then we will lose them. Remember Naaman tried to save himself, but when he submitted to God’s plan, the cleansing from leprosy came. When we give ourselves to God, then He gives to us, and He is able to give us more than we could ever give ourselves.

### May 15 Luke 17:34–37 Some Taken

34–36 *“I tell you, in that night there will be two men...”* Jesus shows activities of night and day, because when He returns it will be a worldwide event. He will be able to make a distinction between those who are His and those who are not. Do not fear. You will not be forgotten.

37 *And they answered and said to Him, “Where, Lord?”...* Their question was “Where will they be taken?” We will learn that they will be taken to be with Christ, where He is in heaven. With His reference to the eagles gathering at the body, He was explaining that it would be within God’s wisdom and command. Read Job 39:26–30 to understand this more. These things being true, there are some things God does not tell us (Deut. 29:29). The Judgment will come when God is ready for it. Now the question is, are you ready for the Judgment Day?

### May 16 Luke 18:1 Persistent Prayer

God’s people often come up against seemingly insurmountable odds. Remember David against Goliath. Remember Gideon with 300 against 185,000. What did they do to overcome the odds?

1 *Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.* There is a need for persistent prayer (Compare 11:5–10). Keeping in constant contact with the Father through prayer prepares us for whatever comes. It shows God our dependence upon Him. It helps us to keep all things in perspective. Our inclination is to faint. A problem overwhelms us, and seeing no end, we want to give up. Read the story of Elijah to see how he had lost heart, but how he was strengthened (1 Ki. 19:1–8). Victory happens through prayer (Ps. 27:13).

### May 17 Luke 18:2–5 A Parable on Prayer

2 *saying: “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man.”* The story begins with a heartless judge. He was surely unqualified for this job. A judge is supposed to bring peace, but if he does not fear God and does not care for people, then the judge may cause just the opposite.

3 *“Now there was a widow in that city...”* Will a troubled widow before a godless and uncaring judge, receive help? She had a problem larger than herself. Therefore, she goes to someone with more power than her problem and herself.

4, 5 *“And he would not for a while...”* Her persistence pays off. She did not let his attitude deter her. She was a source of irritation to him, and she probably knew it. However, this was the only way to stop her problem.

### May 18 Luke 18:6 Meaning of the Parable

6 *Then the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge said.”* Did you listen to the parable in verses 1–5? Did you follow the thought of Jesus? Did it make an impression on you? Jesus noted two things about the judge: 1) He did not fear God; and 2) He did not regard man. The unjust judge made his own rules. He was selfish and did not do his job out of compassion for people. However, how did he respond to the woman? He recognized his own selfishness and this woman troubled him. Therefore, he fulfilled her request because he did not want her to wear him out.

### May 19 Luke 18:7, 8 Application

7 *“And shall God not avenge His own elect...”* Based on the parable of verses 1–6, what will God do for His people? He is a righteous Judge who cares for man. He is not troubled or bothered by our continual requests. We cannot wear Him out (Ps. 121:3, 4). Think of what He has done for us in creation and in sending Christ. Do you think He will avenge His elect? Perhaps the greater question is now “Do His elect cry to Him day and night?” Jesus teaches that God bears long with us. He is righteous and we are unrighteous. His patience with us in light of these things is indicative of His further willingness to help us.

8 *“I tell you that He will avenge them speedily...”* Jesus answers His own question. Then notice that Jesus presents the greater question, which is about our faith. God’s speedy help toward us is unquestioned. Whether there will be persistent faith on earth is the unanswered question.

### May 20 Luke 18:9 Self-righteousness

9 *Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves...* Self-righteousness happens when self becomes the focus. When a person believes that he can dictate his own way of life, and determine for himself what is right and wrong, he has become self-righteous. This is a dangerous condition to be in, because it excludes God. When a person becomes self-righteous he automatically exalts himself and that in turn leads to despising others. Self is made to look better when compared with others with less ability. This gives a person the satisfaction that he is not all that bad. This ends up making others and self the standard, which is a foolish trap (2 Cor. 10:12). God is the only standard (Isa. 45:5, 6).

### May 21 Luke 18:10–12 Self-righteousness

10 *“Two men went up to the temple to pray...”* Two men do the same thing, but with different purposes. There is more to worship than just attending the services or being present at the right location.

11, 12 *“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself...”* What is interesting is that much of what the Pharisee said may have been correct. So what is wrong with what he did? Notice first that he stood, bringing attention to himself (Mt. 6:2, 5, 16). He separated himself from others, especially the tax collector close by with a “holier than thou” attitude. Jesus said the Pharisee prayed with himself, as though he was really talking to himself and not God. If we tell ourselves something convincingly, we believe it. It makes us feel good. Who did he thank? He addressed God, believing that God had made the Pharisee superior to others, but his self-advertisement seems to be giving himself all the credit. This man actually bragged to God about being superior than the rest of men! (See Prov. 20:6.) He saw himself as surpassing the standard or at least the majority of men. Have you noticed how we excuse ourselves from our sin by reasoning we are generally better than others are?

### May 22 Luke 18:10–12 Self-righteousness

11, 12 *“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself...”* The Pharisee could see the sins of others, but he could not see his own sin. He convinced himself that he was sacrificial. He was quick to discover his own virtues. He had a hard time seeing sin in himself, and a hard time seeing good in others. This is often the very problem when there is a relationship conflict. Notice it the next time you are in a conflict. Interestingly, Jesus did not indicate that the Pharisee lied, but that he was in love with himself. The sins of verse 11 should be avoided, and the virtues of verse 12 should be practiced, but the heart of religion is the attitude (Jos. 24:14; 1 Cor. 13:1–3). In this, the Pharisee failed miserably. Feelings about self can be deceptive unless they are based on the truth.

### May 23 Luke 18:13 Self-humiliation

13 *“And the tax collector, standing afar off...”* Notice the sharp contrast in the attitude of the tax collector. He stood afar off. He did not want to be seen by men, but only wanted God to see. He stood

apart because of self-unworthiness and not the self-worthiness of the Pharisee. The tax collector would not look to heaven, because he was ashamed of his sin (Ezra 9:6). He understood how one sin soiled his entire self. His prayer is one of unworthiness. He also smote his breast, angered at himself for sinning. The sting of guilt irritated his intense regret. The beating of breasts was rarely mentioned in the Old Testament (Nah. 2:7), and it is mentioned only one other time in the New Testament, which was at the crucifixion of Christ (Lk 23:48). The references in Nahum and at the crucifixion are pictures of deep intensity and sorrow. It is perfectly fitting then that the tax collector begged for mercy from God. The Pharisee saw himself as sufficient to approach God, but the tax collector saw nothing in himself that made him worthy of approaching God. Moreover, the tax collector called himself a sinner. When we see ourselves for what we really are, then we see that we are not loveable, forgivable or valuable. Instead of comparing himself with others, he compared himself with God and found woe in himself (as Isaiah had, Isa. 6:1–5), but he did find justification from God.

### May 24 Luke 18:14 Who is Justified?

14 *"I tell you, this man went down to his house justified..."* Why was the tax collector justified? Why was the Pharisee not justified? What was wrong with the Pharisee? What was right with the tax collector? Is anyone righteous before God? Did the Pharisee or the tax collector recognize his utter dependence upon God? Jesus justified the one who had high esteem for God and not for self! The Pharisee exalted himself, and this violates Proverbs 27:2. Why should God exalt the self-exalted? Contrariwise, the tax collector humbled self. He acknowledged the truth about himself, and this brought exaltation from God. Let us let God exalt us because He can do a better job of it than we can.

### May 25 Luke 18:15–17 Imitate Children

15 *Then they also brought infants to Him... (Lk. 18:15).* Why do you think the disciples tried to keep the infants from Jesus? Did they think that He, such an important person, would not want to be "troubled" with babies? Did they merely view it as "women's" work? While the text does not give us a specific answer, why do people today not like someone "important" to be "bothered" with children?

16 *... "Let the little children come to Me..."* Jesus wants children. It is easier to train them in righteousness while young. Interestingly, He is willing to spend time with children on His way to Jerusalem where He knows that He faces death! He teaches that the kingdom of God is composed of those who are child-like. This is to be contrasted with the parable against self-righteousness that He just gave. Children are humble and love God. That is what He wants to see in us.

### May 26 Luke 18:15–17 Imitate Children

17 *"... whoever does not receive the kingdom of God..."* How easily children want to be a part of the things of God! Jesus urges us to have the same child-like desires for the things of God. Children want to attend Bible class and worship, and will bring their friends. Children are disappointed when they cannot attend. Adults seek excuses not to be a part. They are ashamed for their friends to know. They are disappointed when something spiritual keeps them away from secular pursuits. Let us get back to our child-like loyalty and boldness! Jesus was so strong about these things that He said if we do not have this child-like desire for the kingdom God, then we shall not enter the Kingdom!

### May 27 Luke 18:18 The Greatest Question

18 *"... what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"* A ruler was concerned about eternal life! Let us not assume that all politicians are

corrupt and have no spiritual desires. Moreover, this ruler knew that Jesus had the answers. Therefore, the ruler asks the number one question of the ages. Earlier we read of another man who asked the same question (Lk. 10:25), but his motives were not pure. This ruler is asking for the right reasons, but he does not realize yet that he is only asking half-heartedly.

### May 28 Luke 18:19–21 Obedience

19 *So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good?..."* First, Jesus rebukes the ruler's flippant attitude. He used the word "good" in a loose way, not understanding the power of it. Jesus was not denying His Godhood, but truly He was affirming it.

20 *"You know the commandments..."* Jesus always led people to the word of God. The moment you hear someone teaching that the Scriptures are not important, but only Jesus is, then know that you have encountered a false teacher, a wolf in sheep's clothes. Look at the commandments that Jesus quoted. They are all variations of the second greatest commandment, which is to love your neighbor as yourself. It is crucial to notice this.

21 *And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth."* The ruler was quick to affirm his loyalty to the law. The commandments that Jesus listed in verse 20, under normal circumstances do not require great sacrifice. They were all prohibitions in relations to people outside his family, and the one positive command probably did not make a large demand of him if his parents loved him. Thus, at this point there was not really a whole lot that had been required of him.

### May 29 Luke 18:22, 23 One Thing Lacking

22 *So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing..."* Jesus did not deny the ruler's claim in verse 21. The man was right, he had not violated any of those commands. Therefore, he had only one thing lacking! We would undoubtedly consider this a compliment if the Lord spoke it to us! However, compare Luke 10:42 and Revelation 2:4. To have one thing lacking may or may not be critical. Lacking one arm is not life-threatening, but lacking a heart is. Jesus is not teaching that sinlessness is the only thing He will accept, but He wants our total heart. The one thing the ruler lacked was comprised of four parts. 1) Sell everything. 2) Distribute to the poor. 3) Have treasure in heaven. 4) Follow Jesus. The one thing was a commitment to follow Christ rather than riches.

### May 30 Luke 18:22, 23 One Thing Lacking

23 *But when he heard this...* The commitment required broke this young man's heart. When he called Jesus good, the ruler showed that he failed to understand fully the identity of Jesus. His reaction to selling, giving and following Christ was a further indication of his failure to know who Jesus is. Go back and read Luke 14:25–27. The ruler became very sorrowful, which is what Christianity will do to us if we are not willing to give up our all. The young man's problem was that he was very rich. Riches can be a blessing or a curse depending upon our attitude toward them. For this young man religion had not been a challenge to him, and he failed to see the true riches in heaven.

### May 31 Luke 18:24–27 The Rich & Heaven

24 *And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful...* Riches can be a massive hindrance. Jesus saw how the young man responded, caring truly for him. Your response to Christ affects Him. Riches can hinder our following Jesus because they can become:

- A god (Lk. 16:13)
- A new value system (1 Tim. 6:9, 10)
- A hope separate from God (1 Tim. 6:17).

Once we possess riches we can fear losing them, and so they end up possessing us. ☹

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# Attacking the Root of Secularism: The Creation/Evolution Controversy

## By Don Ruhl

If an infinite number of rednecks, riding in an infinite number of pickup trucks, fire an infinite number of shotgun rounds at an infinite number of highway signs, will these rednecks eventually produce Braille versions of all the world's great literary works?

If not, why not? Yet, this is not nearly as complicated as what evolutionists propose, starting with the Big Bang.

### What evolutionists believe

They call the explosion the Big Bang and believe it took place about 15,000 million years ago. Before then nothing existed. Matter, energy, and space came into being in the Big Bang. So did time (Robin Kerrod, *The Big Book of Stars & Planets*, pages 12, 13).

...in the greatest leap of imagination, most cosmologists now believe that the universe arose from nothing, and that nothing is as certain to give rise to something as the night is to sire the dawn ("Where The Wild Things Are," *Newsweek*, June 13, 1988, pp. 60-62).

What if creationists had proposed this idea? They laugh at us already when we say God made everything. When I was a kid in Monrovia, California, a neighbor friend convinced me that he made himself out of this bucket of yuck he had hidden behind his garage. I did not believe him, and questioned him on how he could do it. He said that he reached his hand from out of the bucket and stirred the yuck and made himself. I believed him, because it sounded good at the time.

Do Big Bang theorists think that I am still that gullible and naïve?

### Nothing, then something?

Even astronomers have a hard time believing that something can come from nothing.

The Universe, and everything that has happened in it since the beginning of time, are a grand effect without a known cause.

An effect without a cause? That is not the world of science; it is a world of witchcraft, of wild events and the whims of demons, a medieval world that science has tried to banish.

But the creation of matter out of nothing would violate a cherished concept in science... (Robert Jastrow, *Until The Sun Dies*, pp. 21, 32).

What is a big deal—the biggest deal of all—is how you get something out of nothing. Don't let the cosmologists try to kid you on this one. They have not got a clue either—despite the fact that they are doing a pretty good job of convincing themselves and others that this is really not a problem. "In the beginning," they will say, "there was nothing—no time, space, matter or energy. Then there was a quantum fluctuation from which..." Whoa! Stop right there. You see what I mean? First there is nothing, then there is something. And the cosmologists try to bridge the two with a quantum flutter, a tremor of uncertainty that sparks it all off. Then they are away and before you know it, they have pulled a hun-

out. Order decreases and chaos increases. Do you own anything that never wears out?

This law says that energy is becoming less and less available. As it is used up, it is not replenished. Chemical compounds left to themselves do not evolve into more complex things, but degenerate. Outside forces can increase order, but how long does this last?

The Big Bang alleges that there is an upward movement toward increasing order and complexity.

What happens after an explosion? Explosions always destroy. They never bring order and complexity. There is never an ordered arrangement. A larger object is disintegrated into smaller pieces.

### A greater cause

The Second Law demonstrates that the universe had to have a beginning. The First Law demonstrates that the universe could not begin itself. Therefore, there had to be a Cause greater than:

1. The universe
2. The First Law of Thermodynamics
3. The Second Law of Thermodynamics

Without this conclusion, there is no way to explain the existence of the universe and everything in it. We cannot observe an adequate Cause within our current universe. Therefore, this Cause must have been one of two things:

- An evolutionary process that is beyond the present space and time experience.
- Or a creative process that brought space, matter, energy and time into existence.

What we affirm is that creation was out of nothing, but there was a Great Cause, known as God, who did the whole thing.

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deep in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast (Ps. 33:6-9).

By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible (Heb. 11:3).

The Big Bang Theory is pure philosophical speculation. It is not science. It cannot be science because it cannot be observed now, nor was it observed. ☹



dred billion galaxies out of their quantum hats (Darling, David, 1996, "On creating something from nothing," *New Scientist*, 151 (2047):49)

### Hard to believe

The First Law of Thermodynamics (the Law of Energy Conservation) says that nothing material is being created or destroyed. If a building is blown up it has been destroyed. However, the material still exists, it is just in a different form, arrangements, and location.

When you see a tree growing where previously a tree did not exist, you know that a seed or transplant was put there; it drew nutrients from the earth, water, and sun.

The Second Law of Thermodynamics (The Law of Energy Decay) is the efficiency of energy transfer and exchange. This law explains why everything gets old and wears

# Jesus, The Master Teacher

By Troy Cummings

**W**hy should we today study Jesus of Nazareth as a teacher? Did He not live nineteen hundred years ago, when the science of education was hardly existent? What did Jesus know of pedagogy? Will the methods He used be effective today?

Such questions as these might naturally arise, especially in the minds of people who know little of Christ and His wonderful Way of life. Those of us who have “tasted that the Lord is gracious” and know that He is “God” in the flesh would not ask these questions. We know that Jesus and everything about Him and His methods are perfect. We know that He is ageless and timeless; there is no such thing as being out of date when we come to Jesus.

Jesus of Nazareth was the greatest teacher the world has ever seen, or ever will see. It is as James F. Cox says<sup>1</sup>: “Practically all the principles of teaching that we have today that are worthwhile have come from the pedagogy of the New Testament.” Not only is Jesus the greatest teacher when it comes to pedagogy, but also in results obtained from His teaching. H. H. Horne says<sup>2</sup>: “The teachings of Jesus affect today nearly twice as many persons as those of any other (one) teacher. As a simple quantitative fact, Jesus is today the world’s greatest teacher.”

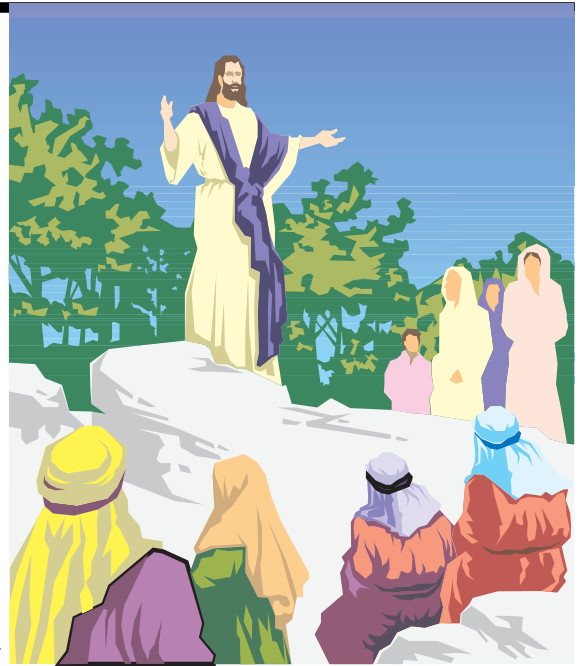
Before proceeding to other matters, it is well for us to realize that Christ was not primarily a healer of bodies, nor a worker of signs, nor even a preacher. He was first of all, in fact almost exclusively, a *teacher—the Teacher*. John A. Marquis expresses it thus<sup>3</sup>: “Teaching was his chief business during the years of his ministry. He was often a healer, sometimes a worker of signs, frequently a preacher, but always a teacher.”

Jesus was not a proud and polished pulpit orator, who was too cultured and too busy to associate with the common people. He was a poor Jew of the laboring class (being a carpenter and the son of a carpenter), who lived a plain and humble life. He taught in a simple manner, to all classes of people, usually out in the open, by the way side, sitting in a boat, or talking with some

outcast individual. He was truly “meek and lowly in heart.” No wonder “the common people heard him gladly.” Proud modern preachers and teachers need sorely to learn this lesson.

**I**. Perhaps the first point now to consider is the question: *Did Jesus prepare for His life of teaching?* Being God in the flesh (John 1:1–14), was it necessary or even desirable for Him to be trained on earth? Of course there is much mystery connected with the combination or blend of the divine and the human in Jesus Christ. Without attempting in the least to explain that which has not been revealed, let us take notice of several passages of Scripture that bear on the subject. “And the Child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him” (Luke 2:40). “And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and He was subject unto them; and His mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:51, 52). “And Jesus Himself, when He began to teach, was about thirty years of age...” (Luke 3:23). “And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and He entered, as His custom was, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read” (Luke 4:16).

These references make it clear that at least in some respects Jesus had to learn as other children learn. He was not born with all wisdom; rather He grew and “advanced in wisdom.” Also He continued to be subject to His parents, even though at the age of twelve He was wise enough to discuss deep matters with the Jewish doctors of the law. It was His custom to obey the law of Moses and to attend regularly the synagogue services, where He studied and listened to the Old Testament Scriptures. Jesus was so seriously concerned with His preparation that He did not begin His ministry until He was about thirty years old. And this fact is all the more remarkable when we remember that He had only three and one-half years in which to accomplish the greatest task ever undertaken. James F. Cox well remarks<sup>4</sup>:



Christ was not primarily a healer of bodies, nor a worker of signs, nor even a preacher. He was first of all, in fact almost exclusively, a *teacher—the Teacher*.

“Too many times today young people want to undertake some large task before they have had sufficient time to make preparation for it.”

**II**. Jesus’ success as the Master Teacher cannot be measured simply by looking at His teaching *methods*. *Much of His power—as is true of every other good teacher—came not from methods but from His personality*. The personal qualities, His general character traits, certainly explain much of His success. Successful teaching is not a bag full of tricks and devices; it is principally a good and great character in action imparting some of his greatness to others.

Jesus placed the very highest value upon His teaching work. It was obviously His chief business and love. His serious and earnest attitude toward teaching impressed His hearers. Jesus was conscious of the vast power which lies in effective teaching. This power may be for good or for evil. The Saviour was determined to do as much good teaching as possible to overcome all the evil teaching and practice of His day. No one can become a great teacher who does not feel deeply the power of good teaching. One of the fundamental passages on the Christian Way of life is Matthew 28:18–20. In these words Jesus emphasizes that we are to go to every nation and teach all the people; then when they obey the first principles they are ready to begin a life of learning of Christ. Again, in John 6:44, 45 Jesus tells us that every person who truly becomes and remains a disciple of His must do so through *learning* the doctrine of God. Hence Christianity is basically a life of learning and teaching.

Continued on page 9



The marvelous *personality* of Jesus Christ is at the root of His success in every field. The personality of "God" as it glowed through the veil of human flesh simply astonished and awed human souls into submission and worship. By personality I do not mean superficial qualities; I mean the innermost beauty and perfection of a sinless character.

Among the many things which might be mentioned as a part of Jesus' personality, we should remember that He was never seriously discouraged, even in the face of extreme discouragement and persecution. He had to try to teach dull, carnal, and sinful people the most wondrous beauties and sublime truths in the whole moral and spiritual realm. With many of His hearers this was simply impossible (without a miracle), but nevertheless the Saviour set on foot a movement among men which continues until this day, having affected the lives of hundreds of millions of persons.

In Jesus, then, we see many virtues in full bloom, such as patience, optimism, enthusiasm, calmness, self-control, and confidence of final success.

One of the most important parts of Jesus' personality as a teacher was His true love for His learners. This is why "the common people heard Him gladly." A touching illustration of this love, visible to all, is found in Mark 10:17-22. Jesus knew that the heart of this rich young man was enslaved in money, yet "Jesus looking upon him loved him."

In every way possible, in word and in deed, Jesus manifested His true love for those He was trying to teach. People soon learn whether a teacher loves them. Seeing how much Jesus loved them, many soon developed a love for Him that would lead them to the jaws of death without flinching. No mere volume of words can do that; only *love* has such power over men.

In close connection with this thought is the fact that Jesus *lived* what He taught men to do. People soon learned that Jesus was honest, sincere, and wholly consecrated in life to the doctrine which He taught them to follow. Nothing has such power in a teacher's life. There is no substitute for living what one teaches. This requirement can safely be placed at the very highest position in the qualifications of a teacher of God's word.

Horne<sup>5</sup> makes the following comments on the teaching personality of the Christ: "He did not request, he commanded with authority. He begot...confidence in himself. His magnetic personality awoke responses. He was obviously doing big things and knew what he was about..."

Again Horne says<sup>6</sup>: "Jesus practiced what modern educators preach, that complete education is sevenfold—physical, moral, esthetic, intellectual, social, voca-

tional, spiritual..." Then the author proceeds to show in detail how Jesus fulfilled each of these.

The personality of the Master Teacher was such that He would naturally become a *Maker* of teachers. The hearts of many of His followers began to throb with the desire to be a teacher like their Master. Jesus did this, not by teaching them the technique and the tactics of teaching, but by setting their hearts on fire with the desire to save lost men. Jesus has stirred more hearts to teach than all other teachers of the world combined. Marquis has well said: "The Master turned out the greatest generation of teachers the world has ever known."

**III.** Principles are more important than methods, yet the methods of Jesus' teaching are eminently worthy of close study. In this brief article only the high spots can be touched. *The personality and the methods of Jesus' teaching were so great that His enemies who heard Him went away amazed, saying: "Never man so spake."*

In the first place, Jesus was a master of *His subject matter*. He knew thoroughly the Old Testament writings, and how to use them to the greatest advantage. He knew with matchless wisdom the doctrine of the New Covenant of His blood. It naturally follows that He was able to teach the will of God in a masterful way, and to answer perfectly the most difficult questions that friend or foe could ask. A fine illustration is found in Mark 12:13-27.

Jesus was the master *illustrator* of all time. Every one knows that good illustration is a vital part of effective teaching. Jesus used concrete and vivid words and sentences: for example, "cup of cold water," "Show me a penny," "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." There are hundreds of such examples. Jesus used many figures, similes, and metaphors, like "Ye are the salt of the earth... Ye are the light of the world." These are always effective.

Above all forms of illustration, probably, the most wonderful is that of the parable. No one has even approached Jesus in the use of the parable. Strike out the many parables of the Scriptures, and you have a much-weakened divine record. The learning faculty of man hungers for such vivid teaching.

Jesus was also the master *questioner*. As already noted, He could answer with the utmost wisdom the hardest questions any one could ask. In His ordinary teaching Christ used many questions. His skillful use of questions stirred His hearers into asking questions. He provoked or mentally forced His hearers to ask or answer questions, that He might close in on them with His point. No wonder it is said: "And no man after that durst ask Him any question." (Mk. 12:34). See also Mark 12:35-37 and Luke 20:1-8.

Christ used the *warm conversational method of teaching*; He was no stiff and cold lecturer on a pedestal. The best method of teaching a class is usually the informal, socialized discussion, with comments by students as well as by the instructor. Jesus used this method.

Again, the *Christ was skillful in utilizing every occasion possible to turn the conversation into the spiritual realm*. Yet He did this with such naturalness and grace that His hearers were hardly aware of it. A splendid example of such teaching is that of the Samaritan woman at the well. From the water in Jacob's well, He turned to the subject of the water of life. The final results were: "And from that city many of the Samaritans believed on Him..."

We see then that Jesus used what we call *the apperceptive method*; He taught from the known to the unknown; He tied in the new with the old.

We also see from the example of the woman at the well that Jesus cared for an outcast individual as well as for crowds. Teachers who "love the pre-eminence" so much that one person is not worthy of their time are unlike the Saviour. No teacher can truly love his class unless he loves each individual of the class. Jesus never dealt with men in the mass. He looks at the individual. He died for even one weak brother (1 Cor. 8:11).

Jesus' method of teaching was *simple and practical*; else the common people would not have heard Him gladly. "This could never be said of even the good Socrates, or the great Plato; for the 'common people' could not understand them."<sup>7</sup>

Jesus not only *taught* the people, but He was their personal friend. He associated with the common people in a way to win their hearts. He loved them, and they could see that He loved them. This fact is noteworthy in considering Jesus' success as the Master Teacher. Jesus did not separate Himself from society, and go away into the monastery or into the hermit's life.

Of the writing of the merits of the Master Teacher, there is hardly any end. How beautiful is the person of Jesus, the Son of God! How sublime is the doctrine and the teaching of Him who spake as man never spake!

#### Conclusion:

Jesus indeed is the Master Teacher of the ages. Let us all study Him and His methods. ☛

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Teaching God's Word, p. 141

<sup>2</sup> Jesus, the Master Teacher, pp. 200, 201.

<sup>3</sup> Learning to Teach from the Master Teacher, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Op cit., p. 150

<sup>5</sup> op. cit., pp. 174, 175.

<sup>6</sup> op. Cit., pp. 27, 28.

<sup>7</sup> Haygood, The Man of Galilee, p. 75.

# Questions & Answers

## Why is no more being added to the Bible?

When we make something, we have in mind what it is that we want to make, and when we reach that goal, we stop. Then we put that project to its intended use.

Concerning the Bible, there is nothing more to add, but the Bible is complete and sufficient for all of our needs (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Jude 3). We cannot be made complete or perfect by something that is itself incomplete or imperfect. Since we can be made complete or perfect by the Bible, then it must be that it is complete and perfect.

Jesus promised the apostles:

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come (Jn. 16:13).

The question is: Did the Holy Spirit guide the apostles into *all the truth*? Was the

Holy Spirit faithful to His mission in making sure that the apostles revealed all that truth to us in the Scriptures?

Yes, to both questions.

Since the last word of the book of Revelation was written there is no more truth to discover.

This is why the doctrine of continuous revelation is false. People who hold to this teaching believe that the Bible as written is insufficient. Therefore, they have modern prophets who supposedly reveal more doctrine to their followers. They believe that the Bible is the word of God, but that more is needed to deal with modern man. ☹

## Continued from page 2

4 As indicated above, the Jewish system of religion, as initially designed by God, has passed from earth's scenes. Modern Judaism is but a faint image of the past. For example, there can be no Jewish priesthood today, for all genealogical records (necessary to establish the legitimacy of the Levitical priestly line) perished with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The Jerusalem temple (the divinely appointed site for worship) was demolished totally by the Romans, and every attempt to reconstruct that sanctuary has resulted in failure.

5 The New Testament Scriptures repeatedly affirm that the death of Christ was the end of the Jewish economy (see Rom. 7:1ff; 2 Cor. 3; Gal. 3:23ff; Eph. 2:11ff; Col. 2:13ff; etc.). The validity of this claim, of course, depends upon the integrity of the New Testament documents. If these records are credible, authenticating themselves as inspired works (and a massive compendium of evidence demonstrates that they are), then their affirmation of the termination of Judaism must stand—emotional, cultural, and “politically correct” protestations to the contrary notwithstanding.

It is neither necessary nor prudent that charges of “Jew hate” or “Christian hate” be irresponsibly thrown about, the design of which is but to inflame. Rather, the controversy is one of evidence. Where does the evidence lie in regard to the respective credibility of the two religious economies? This is the issue the honest and serious investigator must determine.

Even though Christians and Jews differ radically in their convictions regarding true religion, they ought to love one another still, and courteously debate their respective positions in the public arena of ideas. The emotive response to Mr. Hart's comic strip reflects the very opposite of intellectual stimulation. ☹

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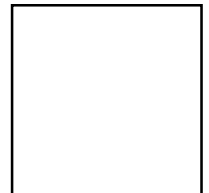
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