

Jesus and Trustworthiness (3)

“What Jesus said about the Old Testament demonstrates what He believed about it, and what Jesus believed about the Old Testament has to matter to believers.”¹

Goals of this lesson

1. Not to prove what Jesus believed about the OT
2. Rather, demonstrate Jesus’ confidence in the trustworthiness of God’s words

I. Assumptions about God’s Old Testament Words

- A. Historical reliability of Scripture
- B. The underlying assumption of Jesus’ words: these words are God’s words

II. Teaching about God’s Old Testament Words

- A. God will do exactly everything he has said (Mt 5.18)
- B. God’s words are irrefutable (Jn 10.35)

III. Usage of God’s Old Testament Words

- A. The Temptation (Mt 4.1-11)
- B. In Teaching
 1. Example: Jesus’ teaching on marriage rested on God’s word (Mt 19.3ff.)
 2. Jesus’ teaching on difficult doctrines — example: Mark 9.42-48 — the doctrine of hell
- C. In Controversy
 1. Jesus relied on God’s words to rebuke sacrilege: cleansing of the temple (Mt 21.12-13)
 2. Jesus relied on God’s words to defend others and condemn his attackers

¹ Layton Talbert, *The Trustworthiness of God’s Words: Why the Reliability of Every Word from God Matters* (Geanies House, UK: Christian Focus, 2022), 85 (All other quotations will be noted merely by a page number [in brackets]).

a. The attack of his disciples over the Sabbath (Mt 12.1-8)

b. The attack of his disciples over the tradition of the Elders (unwashed hands) (Mk 7.1-5)

- 1) The washing was a matter of tradition, an expansion of the Law
 - a) They attacked the disciples for violating tradition, not personal hygiene
 - b) The Pharisees made their ritual a “badge of Jewishness”
- 2) Instead of reasoning from Scripture, here Jesus counterattacks with Scripture
 - a) Proposition

Isa 29.13 Then the Lord said, “Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned *by rote*,

b) Specific examples

Ex 20.12 ¶ “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

Ex 21.17 ¶ “He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

- c) The Pharisees avoided obedience by pious tradition (11-12)
- d) Their tradition violated the word of God (lit., “revoked”)
- e) Jesus said “you do many things such as that”

“the Jews of Jesus’ day thought of themselves as preserving ancient traditions; but Jesus said that

what they were actually preserving was the spirit of those whom Isaiah criticized long before.”²

Jesus “was applying God’s words as the final authority and the only reliable appraiser of human religion.” [105]

c. The attack on the Israelites who praised Jesus on Palm Sunday (Mt 21.15-16)

- 1) The Jews were indignant over the people proclaiming Jesus as Messiah (“son of David”)
 - a) Hosanna = “save now” or simply “Salvation” – used here as an “acclamation,” a word of praise
 - b) Son of David = the Messiah, especially “coming as the king”
 - c) The wonderful works of Jesus prompted this expression, the leaders objected [despite evidence]
- 2) Jesus responded with Ps 8.2 “have you never read...”

Ps 8.2 From the mouth of infants and nursing babes
You have established strength Because of Your
adversaries, To make the enemy and the revengeful
cease.

- a) Jesus quotes the first part of the verse
 - i) They know how it ends
 - ii) In Judaism, a quotation of a part implies an assertion of the whole
- b) The claim Jesus makes with this quotation
 - i) He identifies with the cry of the people
 - ii) He accepts the meaning of the appellation: Yes, he *is* the Messiah

² D. A Carson, “Matthew,” in *Matthew*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 8, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 349.

iii) He identifies them as God's enemies

"No attentive priest or scribe could have failed to recall the rest of the line or miss Jesus' intent. It was a powerful use of God's words." [105]

d. Jesus relied on God's words to establish his deity (Mt 22.41-46)

- 1) Context: his enemies trying to trip him up with loaded questions
- 2) He unmasks their shallow attention to the Scriptures with a Scripture question
- 3) They have nothing to say in reply

D. In relying on Prophecy

1. Daniel predicted the "abomination of desolation," Jesus accepted it (Mt 24.15, Dan 9.27, 12.11)
2. Jesus accepted the prophecies of Messianic suffering in Jerusalem (Lk 18.31, 22.37, Isa 53.12)
3. Jesus made it plain he would be betrayed, fulfilling Scripture (Jn 13.18-19, Ps 41.9)
4. Jesus explained his enemy's hatred (Jn 15.23-25, Ps 35.19, 69.4)
5. Jesus confident that every word *must* be fulfilled (Mt 5.18, 26.54, Mk 14.49, Lk 21.22, 24.44)
6. Jesus warned his disciples of their own impending failure (Mt 26.31, Zech 13.7, Mt 26.56)
7. Before his enemies, he claimed the words of Dan 7.13 (Mt 26.64)

E. In his Suffering, Jesus relied on the Word

1. Why have you forsaken me? (Mt 27.46, Ps 22.1)
2. Into your hands, I commit my spirit (Lk 23.46, Ps 31.5 see esp. Ps 31.1-5, David *and Jesus* expect deliverance from death)

Conclusion:

“When you combine what Jesus taught about God’s words, what Jesus thought about God’s words, and how Jesus use God’s words throughout His ministry, the full picture becomes compelling. ... Anyone inclined to abandon any of God’s Old Testament words will find himself at loggerheads with Christ — an unenviable position, since He said, whoever ‘does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him.’”[110]