

“THIS IS MY BELOVED SON IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED, HEAR HIM!!!”

The title of our discussion comes from the well known account found in the Synoptic Gospels known as the “transfiguration of Jesus.” Jesus had taken with Him three of His disciples – Peter, James and John - up into a mountain area. In the Gospel accounts we read that Jesus was “transfigured” and then was met by two other well known men of the scriptures – Elijah, who

represented the prophetic Word of God given by the Prophets, and Moses, who represented the Torah, the Law. In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke we read that at the conclusion of this “event” a “voice came forth from out of the cloud.” This “voice” went on to tell those three disciples who were present as well as every other disciple of Jesus that would ever follow, “*This is my beloved Son: HEAR HIM!!!*” (Exclamation marks and capitalization added by this writer) So who was this “voice” that spoke from the “cloud?” We are all very much aware and are in agreement that it was the “voice” of the Father.

Below are the verses referred to above.

Matthew 17:5 (KJV) – “*While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.*”

Mark 9:7 (KJV) – “*And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.*”

Luke 9:35 (KJV) – “*And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.*”

This statement by the Father is so very profound and vital for us to truly grasp and correctly understand. This was the audible voice of God, the Father. As we know, or should know, that when God speaks we are to pay close very attention and not only hear but truly listen. First the Father declares that Jesus **IS** His beloved Son. This statement alone is so rich and impactful. The Father declared that Jesus is His Son. Therefore, He was declaring that Jesus is God. In the Gospel of Matthew, the Father declared this same message when Jesus was baptized, “*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*” (Matthew 3:17) However, at that time we read that most of the people who were present missed what He said and thought it was just thunder. Hmmm.....

However, the part that I would like to focus in on is the last phrase of the Father’s declaration while they were on the mountain at the time of the transfiguration. The two words the Father speaks, not just speaks but literally commands, are the words, “...**HEAR HIM!!!**” (Exclamation marks and capitalization again added by this writer)

Yes, Jesus is the beloved Son of the Father and **yes** He is therefore God. The Father emphatically declares that because Jesus **is** His Son and because Jesus **is** God. The Father then speaks forth the command that we are to “...hear Him.” The word used in these passages translated to “hear Him” is the Greek word, “*akouō.*” This word literally means - *to hear; but it also means to not be deaf; to attend to what is said, to understand and perceive the sense of what is spoken; to learn and give ear to the teacher and comprehend for the purpose of doing.* Therefore, in our scripture, we read that the Father, Himself, commands us to “not be deaf” or turn a deaf ear to whatever Jesus teaches. We are to not only listen but also desire to comprehend the teachings of Jesus for the purpose of going forth, doing and putting into practice everything He teaches.

Now to many of us this may seem like a “no brainer” and you may be asking yourself, what am I getting at? Well, even though this may seem to be a “no brainer” to many of us, there is a teaching being spread throughout the Body of Christ today that is saying that we actually **do not need to listen** to anything Jesus said or taught prior to His crucifixion and resurrection. It is being spread through and by well known speakers and teachers. Now, you may think that this teaching will never get very far and to that point you

would be very, very wrong. It is spreading like wildfire within the Body of Christ. I am going to let you know and say it right now – I believe that this teaching is absolutely nothing less than pure heresy.

The prevalent thought behind this “heresy” is the thought that Jesus, when He walked this earth was under the “Old Covenant” and therefore was hindered by it because He was under the Law. WHAT!!! Jesus was never hindered in any way or by anything. He was not “under” the Old Covenant. He was not “under” or bound up by anything. He was, and by the way still is and always will be, God!!! As we just discussed, the Father Himself commands us to hear Jesus and obey and do what He teaches. The Father did not mean and we never read anywhere in the scriptures, that it was only for those who were living at that time until Jesus died and then His words and teachings were no longer valid or necessary for His disciples after that or for His disciples today.

A large part of this issue, I believe, is the misunderstanding of Matthew 5:17 in which Jesus teaches, *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.”* The problem comes from the last three words of this statement by Jesus, *“...but to fulfill.”* The word “fulfill” used in this text is the Greek word, *“plēroō.”* This Greek word means - *to make full, to fill up, to fill to the fullest; to fill to the top: so that nothing shall be wanting; to bring to full measure; to fill to the brim; to carry into effect; to bring to realization; to realize.* In other words, as we read the text, Jesus explicitly teaches that He **did not** come to destroy the Law. He **did not** come to do away with the Law, the Torah and all the scriptures we have in the Jewish scriptures. The contrary is true. He came to role model for us how to live the lifestyle of the true child of God that was expressed and taught in the entirety of the Jewish scriptures.

What Jesus actually “fulfilled” was to fully demonstrate through His lifestyle and manner of behavior, the highest “moral excellence” and character that a true child of God should be manifesting within their own life and lifestyle. He showed forth, demonstrated and fulfilled this to its highest level. He did not do away with this type of lifestyle – He fully lived it and role modeled it to and for His disciples. We, as His disciples, are to now live that same lifestyle. Not with the mentality of being under bondage or because we have to live it to earn God’s approval or His love. Rather, we live this lifestyle that Jesus role modeled because we truly love our Father - with all our heart, all our soul and with everything that is within our very being.

If this is what pleases the Father, than we should delight in living that lifestyle and do so as an act of worship unto Him. Jesus was the Father’s beloved Son in whom He was well pleased. We know this because those present (Peter, James and John) heard Him say this from the “glory cloud.” Now through Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit and as “sons of God,” we should desire to live the Christ like lifestyle simply because we desire to bless the heart of our God and simply because it brings Him pleasure.

Through the shedding of his blood and by His sacrifice on the cross, Jesus became the once and for all final sacrifice that was needed to bring us back into relationship with the Father. In doing so Jesus totally satisfied and therefore brought to an end, the “sacrificial” aspect of the Law. We now have total access to the Father through the blood of the “perfect sacrifice” - Jesus. Now, because of that, those who have decided to accept what Jesus did for them and receive Him as their Savior are now to “follow” Him as their Lord – the absolute, supreme and final authority in their life. The only sacrifice we are to bring before God is ourselves – as a “living sacrifice” that is holy and acceptable (pleasing) to Him. (Romans 12:1)

This means that we, as His disciples, are to “follow” His role-model and teachings concerning the “behavioral” aspect of the Law and the scriptures. As we study the Gospels, we see that Jesus never spoke or taught much to His disciples concerning the sacrificial system and the keeping of it. Jesus spent most of His time teaching them to be “children of God,” and living a “morally excellent” lifestyle in every aspect of life.

I guess the writers of the Gospel accounts wasted their time. All they really needed to report was just that Jesus died on the cross, was resurrected and ascended to the Father. That would have saved them a whole lot of writing and saved us a whole lot of reading. Another question that comes to mind is - Why did Jesus tell His disciples that it was imperative that He "go away" so that the Holy Spirit would then come and bring all these events and words that He spoke "back to their remembrance?" (John 14:26) Why would we need to know them if they were not important? Oh, I forgot we are not to hear what Jesus said at that time because it was before His crucifixion and resurrection so it is not valid for us to even discuss. HERESY!!!

This same "teaching" that tells us that everything prior to the resurrection of Jesus is irrelevant and invalidated for us today and therefore should be disregarded, tells us that now the letters of Paul are the only valid and authoritative writings for the believer to study and adhere to. They cite Paul's teachings on grace in His letters which is so very true. However, they also say that Paul tells us the Law is sin. Therefore, all the commandments bring us into bondage and are to be avoided and disregarded. Yet Paul tells us in Romans 7:11, "*Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.*" Is Paul schizophrenic?

Let's read this scripture in its context within Romans 7:7-13 and see if Paul was truly having a schizophrenic breakdown or maybe some people have been misinterpreting His writings to fit their own theology. "*What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.*" - Romans 7:7-13

Paul is clearly telling us that the Law, the Torah, the Writings and the Prophets, reveal what is contrary to the character of God – which is sin. It lets us know clearly the type of character and lifestyle that is not pleasing and acceptable to God. However, it also reveals the type of character, personality and lifestyle that **is pleasing** and acceptable to Him. God in His infinite love and wisdom tells us what is pleasing and acceptable to Him. Therefore, man could never claim ignorance to this fact and then declare that God was unfair. The notion that the Law itself was sin was incomprehensible to Paul. He emphatically declares, "*God forbid!*" It simply reveals to us what is displeasing to the Father. The Law teaches us what sin is for the purpose of teaching us to not do what is contrary to the character and nature of a holy, loving God.

If we truly read Paul's writings, He always uses the term "scriptures." What were the "scriptures" that he was always referring to? The New Testament was not yet written. The "scriptures" Paul refers to and quotes throughout his writings are those found in the Jewish scriptures – the "Old Testament." He continually expressed the importance of those scriptures and how they are so vital in the believer's life. He writes that we, as the disciples of Jesus, are to desire to live that Christ-like lifestyle. Paul writes that the believer is now able to do this in and through the power of the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

There are many scriptures that stand out to me. One is found in Hebrews 13:8, "*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.*" This scripture is telling us that Jesus was, is and always will be the same. If Jesus is the Word then the Word (down to every "jot and tittle") was is and always will be the same – it was, is and always will be valid, relevant and vital to the true disciple of Jesus.

In Matthew 4:4 and Luke 4:4 Jesus rebuts the devil's temptation by expressing, "*It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God*" He was quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3. Notice, these scriptures very clearly state "**every**" word that proceeds from the mouth of God. It does not say anything concerning a select few words but rather "every" word ever spoken by God as

found in the Torah, the Writings, the Prophets as well as and including all the words of Jesus as found in the Gospels and all the inspired words as given by the Holy Spirit to the writers of the New Testament.

There are many, many scriptures we could reference in which the writers of the New Testament addressed this very truth. That is what makes the New Testament so wonderful. It is not just one person's opinion or thought – but many who wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Out of the mouth of two or three witnesses let His Word be established.

Jesus gives a very clear and stern warning to those who are bringing forth such heretical teaching. In Matthew 5:19-20 Jesus teaches in His Sermon on the Mount, *“Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and **shall teach men so**, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”* Jesus teaches that we, as His disciples are to keep the commandments and His teachings.

He goes on to say that if anyone willingly neglects and breaks the “least” of these commands shall be least of all in the Kingdom and possibly not enter the Kingdom of God. Actually, there are no “least commandments.” They are all of equal value. That was the point. We are to desire to walk in them all as an act of worship unto our God in the power of the Holy Spirit. Notice, Jesus also states that anyone who **teaches** others to not keep the commandments are just as guilty and maybe even more because that are leading others astray with false teachings and “doctrines of men.”

He compares that kind of incorrect teaching to the pharisaical leading and teaching to the people. The Pharisees made their own doctrines based on their traditions and their own interpretations of what they thought - **in their own understanding** - the scriptures (God) *really meant* and *really intended* to say. Unfortunately, they were wrong and so are those teaching this heretical teaching today. In Matthew 23 Jesus speaks to this kind of incorrect teaching as He goes through what is I refer to as the “chapter of Woe to the Pharisees.” In this chapter He rebukes them for leading others astray in their traditions and incorrect teachings and not the true Word of God.

Jesus states very clearly in John 14:6, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”* Jesus is the only “way” to the Father. This is accomplished by His once and for all final sacrifice for our sin which opens the way back into relationship with the Father. Jesus is God's “truth” revealed to us - the written (*logos*) and spoken (*rhema*) Word which He then lived out and role modeled to its fullest. Through His blood which is the only way of access to the Father, and through being the incarnate, revealed and expressed Word of God, Jesus then, through being both “the way” and “the truth,” gives us eternal “life.”

Jesus was and is the Living embodiment of the Word of God who declared and lived God's Word. The Living Word accomplished what God the Father had intended it to accomplish and it is still in motion until we are with Him forever and ever – and it will continue on even at that time because the Word of God, who is God, has no beginning and no end – He was, is and always will be. His Word, which is God, will never pass away.

The Bible is clear and the Father states it very clearly. Jesus is His beloved Son in whom He is well pleased. The Father was pleased with Jesus' obedience to His plan of salvation. He was pleased with the lifestyle Jesus role modeled. He was pleased and accepted Jesus as the sacrifice for all of mans' sins. He was pleased with everything Jesus did and spoke because He was the living, incarnation of the Word of God. He was and is God who came in the flesh. Jesus spoke the Word, lived the Word and role modeled the Word to its fullest. Yes, Jesus is the beloved Son of the Father in whom the Father is well pleased. Let's heed what the Father then commands to all those who believe and receive – “HEAR HIM!!!”