

How Jesus Used The Scriptures

One's view of the scriptures does affect his use of them. One need go no further in Bible study to learn this principle than the life of Jesus Christ, though he can also observe the principle in other ways. Jesus used the Old Testament writings as He did because He believed them to be divine in origin, inerrant in nature, obligatory in authority, and historically true in account.

If Jesus held such a high view of the scriptures, then His disciples must likewise view them similarly. It is a denial of His authority over us and of our own discipleship for us to have an inferior view to His. It is also equally incumbent upon us to use them as He used them, understanding that proper usage of the Bible is the natural and essential consequence of the correct view of it.

The call for a "new hermeneutic" in recent decades is the impetus for a study such as this, and for the resulting examination of Jesus. Jesus is central in such a matter because those demanding a new approach to the Bible also insist that Jesus must be our pattern in spiritual matters, not the New Testament scriptures. They allege that early Christians did not have a pattern in scripture because the New Testament canon did not exist until a few centuries later.

It is necessary to point out that their insistence on Jesus, rather than scriptures, separates Jesus from the scriptures. If the New Testament is no pattern, then Jesus as a pattern exists apart from the New Testament, because we cannot learn Jesus from the New Testament, with the two being separate entities and the New Testament being less than a pattern. How could anyone ever hope to come to any definite conclusions about Jesus Christ without the help of the scriptures?

How did Jesus use the scriptures available to Him? Matthew 19 provides us an answer. In learning this, we also can learn some principles about marriage.

Jesus Used The Scriptures To Set Forth Divine Law

Consider His teaching concerning marriage in Matthew 19:3-6: *"The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall*

be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." The Lord obviously taught that the marital relation is one for male and female, and is indissoluble. He taught concerning marriage based upon the Old Testament, indicated by His question, *"Have you not read?"* On this solid foundation of what God had said, He then stated His will in the matter.

The Pharisees' question, *"Is it lawful?"* possibly presumed some traditional or rabbinical law, but Jesus clearly positioned Himself on the rock of the written scriptures. No other foundation exists for divine law, and no other should be sought. Only the citation of scripture has the sound of authority and the obligation of law to disciples of Jesus. Let men deride teaching that cites "book, chapter, and verse," but we stress that in doing so they break rank with the Christ.

Jesus Used The Scriptures To Show Us How To Interpret The Scriptures

In verses 4-6 of Matthew 19, Jesus cites a biblical example and a direct biblical statement and then stated a necessary inference. His example was that of the divine creation of man (vs. 4), and His statement was a citation of Genesis 2:24. From these two kinds of divine evidence, Jesus then drew a conclusion that necessarily follows in verse 6. The conclusion shows that marriage is designed to be a permanent relationship, and it is expressed as a negative horatory statement having the force of a command, *"let not man put asunder."*

If Jesus is our pattern for anything, then He is our pattern in how to construe the sacred writings. We can do no better than He did! May we ever look to Him as our teacher in this matter, as in all others. When modern religionists protest this approach as "legalistic," let us remind them that they need to follow Jesus as the pattern or else cease their claim that He is our pattern.

Jesus Used The Scriptures To Apply God's Will To All

Jesus said that this teaching was applicable to every person, as shown by the term *"whosoever"* in verse 9. He gave no indication in this passage that this teaching was restricted to those in covenant relation with God (the saved). How would one learn such, or what evidence is there? His reference to the creation of man shows that God's will for marriage is for all human beings thus created. Other passages also show that all human beings are subject to the Lord's law about marriage, by their use of the term *"adultery,"*

which always assumes a marital relation and shows at least one married person involved in the adultery.

Jesus' profound respect for God's word and His love for people caused Him to expound (*hermeneuo*) the scriptures. If Jesus were present on earth today, He would carefully and lovingly explain the scriptures to men and women.

Adapted From Bobby Graham