

Bible Study 5

Jesus' Usage of Jewish Scripture

Aim: To examine how Jesus uses the Jewish Scriptures in the Gospels and how Christians may hear those texts today as a call to faithful and holy living.

Opening Prayer: Gracious God, open our hearts and minds as we study your Word. Help us to hear the Scriptures as Jesus taught them, to recognize your liberating work among us, and to respond with faith, humility, and holy living. Guide our conversation, deepen our understanding, and form us into a community that bears witness to your justice, mercy, and peace. Amen.

Learning Guide Questions

- What might Jewish Scripture have meant within its own historical and theological context?
- What should we understand about the imagination and hope of the First Testament?
- How does Jesus interpret Scripture in relation to his mission and message?
- How can Christians today hear Jesus' call to holy living?

Primary Texts

Opening Reflection Question: When conflict or hurt arises within a faith community, what helps us move toward healing rather than distance?

Readings: Matthew 21: 23-27; 22:23-33; 22:34-40; 22:41-46

Matthew 21:23-27

Sinning brother or sister

Commentary:

Jesus has re-entered the Temple of Jerusalem and this becomes the scene where conflict with the various divisions of Leaders in the city. These leaders such as the Pharisees, Levites, and the Sadducees among others represent power influences that opposes the Kingdom of Heaven as represented in the teachings of Jesus. The influence of this new way with Jesus opposes the understanding and aspirations of the leaders and history of Israel. The popularity of Jesus and his representation challenged the authority or influence of the leaders. The question in Matthew 21:23 is pivotal to the conflict and direction of Jesus to the death on the cross. The leaders and powers asked the question within the community: "Who gave you this authority?"

How do you answer questions from powerful influences about your own direction?

Matthew 21:33-46.

This aspect of the conflict uses parables to describe the failed and false work of the leaders. The images of Vineyard is reflection of Isaiah 5: 1-7. [READ]. The tenants farmers are Israel's leadership while the servants are Israel's prophets [Matthew 21:34-36. See Jeremiah 7:25 and Jeremiah 25:4.

Matthew 5:12; 23:31,34,37 suggests that pattern of leadership going against the will of God acts against the Torah and way of the Kingdom of God. As the prophets are not keeping the people in line with the will of God then the replacement in the Jesus movement is present. The tension of the early Jesus followers and the established respected leadership over time asks many questions as to relevance and faithfulness to faith and culture.

The main focus is the questions being asked that are at the source of faith and practice in relation to Jesus and the Kingdom of God.

Discussion Question: When our faithfulness to God is questioned by others, how can we discern whether our response is shaped by fear, pride, or obedience to God's kingdom?

Question Area 1: Authority, Conflict, and Faithfulness

Question about the Resurrection – Matthew 22:23-33

Jesus did not use the go to text as proof of the resurrection in DANIEL 12:2-3.

"They asked, "Teacher, Moses said, If a man who doesn't have children dies, his brother must marry his wife and produce children for his brother." (24) See Deuteronomy 25:5-10.

"As for the resurrection of the dead, haven't you read what God told you, I'm the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He isn't the God of the dead but of the living." (31-32). See Exodus 36:6, 15-16.

a. Maccabess 7:19; 16:25 - Don't you know this is implied. This is because they believe that they don't die to God but rather continue to live for God like the ancestors of our nation, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (7:19)

They knew very well that those who die for God will also live in God's presence, just like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the ancestors of the nation. (16:25)

b. Resurrection for Gospel is different form of bodily life. See Matthew 9: 18-19 and 1 Corinthians 15:35-50.

Discussion Question: What does Jesus' teaching that God is "God of the living" reveal about resurrection, hope, and our present life with God?

Question Area 2: Resurrection and the Living God

Question about the Greatest Commandment – Matthew 22:34-40

This question is complicated with its story and history. According bible study notes and other sources, Jesus answer to the question in Matthew 22:34 is not a definitive or clear answer. Notes on the matter:

- a. rabbis discussed 613 commandments for find the important ones.
- b. David in the Psalms reduced them to 11 commandments [Read Psalm 15].
- c. The prophet Micah reduced them to three [Read Micah 6:8], etc.

Jesus suggested two in Matthew 22: 37-39

1st – Deuteronomy 6:5

2nd – Leviticus 19:18

Discussion Question: Did Jesus answer by naming the greatest commandment only, or was he also teaching us how Scripture should guide love of God, love of neighbor, and holy living?

Question Area 3: The Greatest Commandment and Kin-dom Living

Question about David's Son- Whose son is the Messiah? Asked Jesus.

Popular understanding would give the answer as David's son. By implication the son is to serve the ways of the Father. Son is to carry out the intentions of the Father for the salvation of Israel from the hands of foreign rulers or oppressive rule. This was vision and aspirational.

Read Matthew 22:2 as to the answer. See 2 Samuel 7:12-16; Psalm 89:3-4.

Matthew 22:43-45 is based on Psalm 110:1.

The identity and mission of Christ expanded over time.

The idea is to share God's divine identity to be addressed even by his Father as Lord.

Jesus suggest greater purpose and works for the Messiah and to reject mythical and cultural aspirations that prevent development of the people within their contexts.

Discussion Question: How does Jesus' question about David's son expand our understanding of the Messiah beyond cultural expectation toward God's larger purpose?

Question Area 4: Observing Scripture and Responding in Faith

Discussion Question: What do these Scripture passages invite us to observe about Jesus' authority, the hope of resurrection, the command to love, and the identity of the Messiah?

Summary

In these passages, Jesus uses the Jewish Scriptures not simply to answer questions but to reveal the deeper purposes of God. He challenges religious authority when it resists the work of God's kingdom, teaches resurrection as life held in the presence of the living God, gathers the commandments around love of God and neighbor, and expands the understanding of the Messiah beyond inherited expectations. The study invites us to hear Scripture as a living witness that shapes faithful discernment, holy living, and participation in God's justice, mercy, and peace.

Closing Prayer

Holy and living God, we give thanks for the gift of your Word and for the way Jesus opens the Scriptures to reveal your kingdom. Strengthen us to follow Christ with courage when our faith is tested, with hope rooted in the resurrection, and with love for you

and for our neighbors. Free us from narrow expectations that limit your work, and form us into a people who seek justice, practice mercy, and walk humbly with you. May what we have learned shape our thoughts, words, and actions, so that our lives bear witness to your grace and peace. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.