

The Wednesday Word, July 10, 2019: Did Jesus Put God First?

Jesus loved God's Law with a passion and upheld it at every turnaround. When asked about the greatest commandment, He affirmed that it was to love God with all the heart and mind (Matthew 22:36-39; Luke 10:26-28). According to Christ, there could be no competition and no rivals when it came to following and loving the Father.

But then Jesus loses the plot ... or does He? He begins to teach that we should follow Him with the same kind of loyalty we give to God. Listen to Him and consider if these are the words of a good, moral man:

He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Matthew 10:37).

"Whosoever of you that forsakes not all that he has cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33).

According to Jesus, if we love our families more than we love Him, we are not worthy of Him, and if anything claims our affection and keeps us from following Him, we are disqualified as disciples.

This is strange, for remember, it was prophesied in Isaiah 42:21 that Christ would magnify God's Law and make it honourable. However, it sounds like He is doing the very opposite. In fact, it seems He's setting Himself up as a rival to God for He's demanding first place. A good man would encourage people to love and follow God first and foremost! Jesus, however, by requiring absolute loyalty to Himself blocks the way for us to keep the great commandment. He's demanding the same type of loyalty and love that only God should have.

Then He dares to say,

"If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

But what about God's commandment to love Him with all? Christ is now demanding we keep His law as a sign of love. This surely is strange, for Christ said,

"Think not that I have come to destroy the law or the prophets; I have come not to destroy (them) but to fulfil (them)"(Matthew 5:17).

How can Christ claim that He is there to fulfil God's Law, and yet show such apparent disregard for it? If He loved the Law, then he would want to establish it and not take people away from it!

Furthermore, He says,

"He that has my commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves me: and he that loves me shall be loved of my Father"(John 14:22).

What? Can this be right? We know that Jesus believed the great commandment about loving God with all, but now He implies that we should love Himself above all.

Furthermore, God, according to Jesus, approves of this double-mindedness, for, He says, if we love Him, the Father will love us! Has the Father changed? Is the great commandment to 'love

God with all' still in force? It certainly looks as if Jesus has overthrown it and usurped the position that only God should hold. Can these be the actions of a good religious teacher? Could a good moral man set himself up to rival God for the love He receives from mankind? Of course not! Any mere man who taught like that should be rejected and denounced as an evil worker.

So was Jesus an evil worker? The only conclusion is that ---yes indeed He was ... if indeed he wasn't God. But rather than show He was evil, these passages actually demonstrate that He was God in human flesh. We should love God with all, and that's why it's perfectly fine to love Jesus with everything. Our complete loyalty belongs to God, so it's perfectly fine to be totally loyal to Jesus. We have no other God but Yahweh, so when we put Christ Jesus first we are on good gospel ground for Christ is Yahweh in human flesh appearing!

And that's the Gospel Truth!