

- **Are You Woke? Are You Hip? Are You Deep? Are You Christ? - Part 3**
Rocklyn Clarke Sr. - Sunday February 3, 2019
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▼ **Reflect on the way we approach scripture:**

- **Remember the tendency I mentioned to treat the Bible like a handbook.**

▼ **Review Genesis 2 and the two trees:**

- Tree of Life
- Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil
- We were intended to eat from the Tree Of Life first and to receive (somehow) the knowledge of good and evil subsequently.
- We have chosen to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil first and have been willing to forfeit life in order to do so.
- **What is life in light of John 17:1-10?**

▼ **Jesus does what he sees the Father doing:**

- John 4:27-38
- John 5:16-23

▼ **What significance does the “knowledge of good and evil” have for the way we approach passages like this?**

- Do we do what we see the Father doing, or do we set our own agendas?

▼ **Read the Passage: Matthew 22:15-22**

▼ **Consider the ways in which this passage has been used.**

- Church and state are separate realms with separate responsibilities. Pay your taxes and worship God (pay your tithes too)?

▼ **Consider the setting and the dilemma confronting Jesus:**

- The Pharisees and the Herodians were political and religious enemies.
- The Pharisees opposed Roman rule and would oppose anyone who supported paying taxes to Caesar.
- The Herodians supported King Herod who was in turn supported by Roman rule. They would report anyone who opposed paying taxes to Caesar.

▼ Jesus' cousin John the Baptist was jailed by Herod for speaking up about his unlawful marriage to his former sister-in-law. The Pharisees and Herodians were setting Jesus up for the conflict:

- Support the tax and lose credibility with the people.
- Oppose the tax and be arrested by the authorities.

▼ **Consider Jesus' response:**

- The coin used to pay the tax had Caesar's portrait (raising 2nd commandment issues) and the inscription "Caesar Augustus Tiberius, son of the Divine Augustus" (raising 1st commandment issues). The other side of the coin had a picture of the goddess of peace with the inscription "high priest".

▼ Jesus thus reveals that both parties are overlooking the issues implied by using the coins. His response has the implication:

- It's Caesar's money, so give it back to him.
- Stop giving to Caesar what belongs only to God.

▼ Jesus' response leaves open the question of what his specific policy about the tax was. Any attempt to pin him down more specifically would force his questioners to stake out a position about the message contained in the coin:

- Is Tiberius Caesar the son of a God?
- Is Tiberius Caesar the high priest?
- This is reminiscent of Jesus' response to questions about his authority in Matthew 21:23-27
- Jesus will not allow his agenda to be disrupted by his opposition. He is determined to die at the right time (Passover) in the right place (Jerusalem) over the right issue (Israel's guilt). His death will be about the overriding issue of Israel's disobedience to God and NOT about the minor issue of rebellion against Caesar.

▼ **Reconsider this passage in light of our new approach.**

- God has a way of forcing us to deal with our deepest motivations and the deepest implications of our actions and choices.
- God knows how to redirect us towards his priorities and his agenda.

▼ **Read the Passage: Matthew 22:23-33**

▼ **Consider the ways in which this passage has been used.**

- When we die we become angels?

▼ **Consider the issues raised by this passage.**

- The Sadducees accepted only Genesis through Deuteronomy as inspired scripture. They rejected the idea of a resurrection. They tended to be among the elites and were responsible to maintaining the Temple.
- The Pharisees accepted the entire Old Testament and believed in a resurrection.
- People who believe in resurrection may be more willing to challenge the status quo.

▼ **Consider Jesus' response:**

- Throughout his brief ministry career, Jesus operated as a replacement for the Temple.
- In his response Jesus quotes from Genesis, part of the Torah and accepted by the Sadducees.
- Jesus brings out a truth not obviously inherent in the text when viewed in its original context.

▼ **Reconsider this passage in light of our new approach.**

- Jesus clearly validates the concept of the resurrection.
- ▼ Jesus quotes Exodus 3:1-6 in which God introduces himself to Moses.
 - What is significant about this passage?
 - What does tying the resurrection to this passage imply about God's agenda?

▼ **Read the Passage: Matthew 22:34-40**

▼ **Consider the ways in which these passages have been used.**

- As long as I love people, I'm ok?

▼ **Consider Jesus' response:**

- He quotes Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18.
- Deuteronomy 6:4-5 is the first part of the Shema - the most important part of Jewish prayer services.
- ▼ What happens if we climb the "ladder of abstraction" with this passage?
 - Jesus is responding to a pointed question about the Hebrew scriptures by quoting from two of them.

- If we forget that the question is about the Hebrew scriptures we lose important context.
- If we forget that Jesus is responding to a question we lose important context.
- If we forget that Jesus' response is a quote we lose important context.
- ▼ What is Jesus trying to tell them?
 - Is he telling them to focus on these two commands and forget about the others?
 - Is he telling them to focus on loving God and loving people and forget about everything else?
 - Is he telling them to embrace all of the commands, but use these two as a way of understanding the others? Consider Matthew 5:17-20.
 - In John 13:34-35 Jesus makes a statement about love that is NOT a response to a question and is NOT a quote from the Hebrew scriptures. How does this affect our understanding of Matthew 22:34-40?
- ▼ **Read the Passage: Matthew 22:41-46**
- ▼ **Consider the ways in which this passage have been used.**
 - The Messiah is both David's descendent AND David's Lord?
- ▼ **Consider the questions raised by this passage.**
 - What difference does it make if the Messiah is both David's son and David's Lord?
- ▼ **Reconsider this passage in light of our new approach.**
 - What does this teach us about who God is?
 - What does this teach us about what God is doing?
- ▼ **Discussion questions:**
 - What has God been revealing to you through these passages?
 - What do these passages reveal about God's nature?
 - What do these passages reveal about God's agenda?