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Spring 2012

## What Jesus Said

### Lesson 1 - Introduction

What are the sayings of Jesus?"

"Saying" can refer to a proverb, adage, aphorism, commonly accepted truth. Technically any statements of Jesus are His sayings. We want to center on what we might more accurately describe as His teachings.

There are proverbial-like statements in the gospels (ex. Matt. 10:39). There are aphorisms or succinct truths (ex. Beatitudes; Matt. 5). There are different kinds of speech such as paradoxes (Matt. 10:39), irony, exaggeration, possibly even humor. But we want to center on truth taught by Jesus and its application to our lives.

Jesus' use of the word "Verily" reflects this. He used it to introduce 77 statements. On 25 occasions he doubled it saying "Verily, verily..." Verily means truly.



*"Let these words sink down into your ears..."*

- Luke 9:44

Literally, "You lay into your ears these sayings." In fact, the original language is emphatic regarding the word "you." Essentially, Jesus was saying to His disciples, "Regardless of whether others listen to Me or not, you on your part, must listen to what I am saying and take heed." Christ did not want them to hear His words and then dismiss them. Instead, He wanted them to chew on these words, digest them slowly, and absorb them permanently.

**Lesson 2 - What did Jesus Say?**

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**The Modern Challenge**

It is common today for "religious scholars" and others to question the reliability of the Bible record.

Today there is a lot of press about the search for the "historical Jesus." This is a modern attempt to learn what is true about Jesus from non-biblical sources and through reevaluation of the gospel records' accuracy. These modern studies begin with the presupposition that the gospel record cannot be trusted as accurate but contain legendary and apocryphal material about Jesus.

This is actually not new. For over 100 years many religious scholars have rejected the complete authenticity of the Gospels and postulated theories on how to determine what "Jesus really said and did." Most of these had rejected the historical Jesus revealed in the four gospels. They believed all that was important was to discover the basic message of Jesus hidden in the gospels and other "Christian writings" of the early centuries. Actually most of them believed it really did not matter what Jesus did, just his basic message. Rudolf Bultmann was a leading proponent of this approach in the mid-twentieth century.

The study most covered by the press in recent years is the "Jesus Seminar" sponsored by the Westar Institute. Its work illustrates modern efforts to undermine the trustworthiness of the scriptures.

The Jesus Seminar

In March of 1985 Robert Funk, a well known New Testament "scholar," presided over the first meeting of a group of scholars that he had convened, dubbed "the Jesus Seminar." Meeting on the campus of the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California, the group embarked on an unprecedented project, to examine the available sources, canonical and non-canonical,





### The Four Gospels' Emphasis on Jesus' Teaching

Several phrases illustrate the Gospels' emphasis on Jesus words:

1. The phrase "he taught" occurs 15 times in the Gospels.
2. "I say unto you" occurs 52 times in Matthew, 16 in Mark, 30 in Luke, 21 in John.
3. "Jesus said" occurs 65 times in the Gospels.
4. "Jesus saith" occurs 43 times and "saith Jesus" twice.
5. "Jesus answered" occurs 65 times.
6. "He said" in reference to Jesus is employed 170 times.

This is not to suggest that direct quotes of Jesus are more God's Word than all the rest of scripture. All of it is inspired of God as Jesus himself believed and taught.

Apostolic teaching is just as much the word of God as Jesus' Words (See 1st Cor. 14:37; John 15:20). Our emphasis in this class will be on the teachings Jesus revealed during his personal ministry.

### Our Approach

We intend to begin with an affirmation of the trustworthiness of the Gospel record. There are many attacks today on the reliability of the life of Jesus found in the Gospel record. We want to see that we can have confidence in the accuracy of the Gospel accounts.

We will then look at some of Jesus defining statements - the "I Am" statements found in the gospel of John.

We will also see what Jesus had to say about the Father and the Holy Spirit. Other important teachings of Jesus discuss the scriptures, the Law, Redemption, Discipleship, Evangelism, Resurrection and the Second Coming.

We also want to look at what are regarded as "hard sayings" of Jesus.

Overall we want to emphasize the authority of Jesus words for our lives. This will not be just a technical examination of certain statements. We want to make practical application to our lives of all we study.

### NOTES

in quest of "the voice of Jesus," i.e. "what He really said."

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Applying strictly secular and highly questionable methods, the Seminar eventually rejected over 80% of the sayings of Jesus found in the Gospels. In the Gospel of John they rejected 100% of Jesus' quotations as accurate and authentic.

While doing this they demote the four Gospels to the same level as apocryphal writings of later times. The most famous of these has become the gospel of Thomas - a book of 114 sayings attributed to Jesus that can be traced to about 200 AD. It is easily identified as non-biblical when compared to New Testament writings. Many of its sayings are clearly of Gnostic origin (a heresy widespread by the end of the 2nd century AD).

The bias of Jesus Seminar scholars against the four gospels is so obvious it has caused most biblical scholars, liberal and conservative, to question the Seminar's conclusions. Nonetheless, the Jesus Seminar has received so much press that many think it represents the thinking of most modern religious scholars.

**The Case for the Reliability  
of the Four Gospels**

We do not have time or space to review the evidence in detail. A brief overview will have to suffice. There is an outline on the church's website entitled Can We Trust the Bible? ([www.universitychurchofchrist.org](http://www.universitychurchofchrist.org). Log in and look under Member Files) That study addresses this very question and should be consulted for a more detailed answer to this matter.

The Scripture's Claim to Divine Inspiration

This claim is fundamental to its accuracy. The New Testament writers believed they wrote with the Holy Spirit's express guidance. God's hand was in the recording and preservation of the scriptures. The Bible plainly teaches this to be true (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21, etc.)

The result is a document that has been proven to be accurate and reliable in historical, geographical and

cultural detail. (See above mentioned outline.)

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The Bible is a reliable document, not just in theory but in historical fact. There is no reason to question the authenticity of the statements of Jesus in their setting. These eyewitness accounts can be trusted unless someone can prove they are wrong or inaccurate. And no one has ever been able to do that. On the contrary, the remarkable nature of Jesus and His teachings is the only explanation for the unequalled impact on world history that has resulted from His life.

What is recorded in the gospels is what Jesus said. We can have confidence in that. Our study will be looking at the very words of the Jesus of Nazareth, recorded by those who heard them and their personal associates.

**Who wrote the Four Gospels?**



**Matthew** - one of the 12 apostles and personal companion of Jesus throughout His ministry.

**Mark** - a companion of Paul the apostle (Col. 4:10; Philemon 24) and Peter (1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 5:13), and a cousin of Barnabus (Col. 4:10). He was from Jerusalem (Acts 12:12,25);).

**Luke** - a companion of Paul (Acts 16:10-17; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 4:11) and generally thought to be in

Antioch of Syria when the church began.

**John** - one of the 12 apostles and personal companion of Jesus throughout His ministry.

All four of these men would have either direct knowledge of Jesus words and deeds or direct access to those who did. Paul, as an inspired apostle would have the Holy Spirit's insight into what Jesus said and did. (ex. 1 Cor. 11:23-26; Acts 20:35).

For Study

1. Read these scriptures on the process of divine inspiration - John 14:26; 15:26,27; 16:6,7,13-15; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 2:1-16; Gal. 1:11-12; 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:19-21; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 3:16-17.
2. In 1st Cor. 11:23 what does Paul mean by "I received?" Was Paul present at the institution of the Lord's Supper?
3. Who did the Hebrew writer say the final revelation came through? See Heb. 1:1,2
4. The teaching of Jesus was distinguished from other teachers by what? See Matt. 7:28,29