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B1035 – August 29, 2010 – The Life Of Christ: Ancient Jewish Response

Today we want to move beyond the Birth of the King. The Birth of the King introduces the challenge of the hypostatic union and what people do with this unique individual. Both the Jewish and Gentile world were prepared categorically for the King but the prevailing response to the King was one of unbelief. The light came into the world and men loved darkness rather than light, for their deeds were evil. The irony of unbelief, both ancient and modern, is that to articulate disbelief requires tools that can be accounted for only by belief. Our tools and categories must be rooted in the hypostatic union of Christ.

Then we dealt with the Trinity because once you've introduced the fact that Jesus was God and man then you're forced into Trinity issues. So the Church had to work this out, it wasn't that the Church sat around and thought, hey, the Trinity would be a neat idea, we'll believe that. That's not quite how it happened. It happened very reluctantly over many centuries in order to explain the Scripture and get some sort of coherence.

Now we're going to shift to the second NT event, which is the Life of the King. Our approach is to look at the responses to the King. We've seen the response to the virgin birth, the ancient Jewish response was that Jesus was a bastard; we know that clearly from historical records. The modern Gentile response of liberalism is that the virgin birth was a late addition, that is has no historical basis. And yet, if the Jews explained it away by the bastard approach then we know the virgin birth idea was already floating around before the church was even started so that fact refutes later unbelief of liberal theologians who infiltrated the Church in the early 20th century. We're going to now look at the Life of the King through the eyes of the Holy Spirit

who is the author of the NT, and then we'll look at the objections in the same manner - looking at how ancient Jewish unbelief and modern Gentile unbelief handle Jesus Christ. We live in a world that has intellectually corrupted the greatest revelation the world has ever seen. So we're interested in studying what is wrong with the human heart. How is it that when God Himself walks on this planet He's not recognized?

The point that you want to remember, and we'll go over this dozens of times, here's the crux of the issue with the Life of the King. The objections to His life primarily come from a disbelief of all divine revelation. In other words, Jewish people who rejected Jesus had already rejected the revelation given through Moses. It wasn't that they had accepted Moses and then they just rejected Jesus. It was rather that they had pulled a slick maneuver with Moses and re-interpreted him to mean something other than what he said. And that essentially is a rejection of the OT. In place of the OT they had erected tradition. So when they rejected Jesus Christ, the highest revelation of God ever, then it's not a different kind of rejection. They had already rejected God's word in the OT prophets, so when they reject God's word in the NT Christ it's not different kind of rejection; it's more of the same thing. There's a continuity between Jesus and the OT. Paul insists Jesus is the logical conclusion of the OT. So we want to keep those two linked together.

Remember when you read the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, about the fights, the arguments and the debates that are going on, it's not just over Jesus. The debates and the arguments are fundamentally over all revelation, the whole corpus of revelation, OT and NT. So by seeing those debates we can understand our own problem in that apart from regeneration we'd be doing the same thing. People who are in our families, our neighborhoods, and our work place who are not yet Christians, are thinking on the same frequency. This is the frequency of the world system. The world system ridicules the idea that God can speak to man.

The ultimate response to this unbelieving position is that God can speak through an ass, that's Num 22. It's a great story to remember, Balaam's ass, because at that point in OT history God spoke through an ass. So if God can speak through an ass, can God speak through a person? It's easy to see, and it's sarcasm. The Holy Spirit has sort of a sanctified sarcasm in writing these things into history; and He shows when the prophet Balaam rejects God he

gets all screwed up and God had to speak to him through his jackass. And it's sort of a mockery of unbelief. The ability of God to do that shows His total control of His creation. He has control over every animal; He can speak through animals if He wants to. In the Garden what did Satan speak through? Satan spoke through something that we now call a serpent, except in those days whatever this thing was it had legs, and then it says part of the cursing was that anatomical changes occurred because of the Fall of man and that affected the animal kingdom, particularly it affected this serpent thing that Satan had basically incarnated himself in. In the NT demons can occupy pigs, showing clearly that demonic powers can occupy animal bodies, apparently to the degree that they have a developed central nervous system. This goes on so there's no implicit reason why God can't fully speak through a man. What we want to say is that God speaking through the Lord Jesus Christ is not a new thing God is doing. He had been doing it for centuries through the prophets, it's just that with Jesus we have the highest revelation of God to man. So when we see Jesus rejected it's just more of the same thing that had been going on for centuries rejecting the OT.

There are some vocabulary terms that we are going to use, two words, and I want to define these words because they are words that are tools to help us think precisely about the issues of unbelief and what's going on in the Bible. We're going to talk about what we call "the historical Jesus". These are terms that I didn't make up, these are terms that critics of the 19th century have made up. If your kid goes to college or university this is what they're going to hear. If they go to a Christian college, they'll hear it there too, except they pay twice the tuition in a Christian college that they'd pay in secular college. The historical Jesus is a term that refers to (quote) "the real guy," the actual carpenter that walked around Palestine. Then there's another term that they'll hear, "the kerygmatic Christ." What does that mean? The word kerygmatic comes from a Greek word meaning 'preached'; it means "the preached Christ." When you hear this term, "the kerygmatic Christ", what they mean is the portrayal of Christ that you get in the NT. They mean to make a distinction between the historical Christ and the kerygmatic Christ. One is the real Christ, the other is the portrait of Christ in some Jewish apostle's heads that they wrote down. But they're not one and the same. That's the debate: is the historical Christ equal to the kerygmatic Christ or are these two different Christ's?ⁱ

Those of us who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who have had the eyes of our heart illumined by God, know very well that the historical Christ is the kerygmatic Christ, that the real historical Jesus is the Jesus described in the Gospels. They're both the same picture. But the critics universally say that the historical Christ is not the kerygmatic Christ; that the kerygmatic Christ is that which the Church envisaged from the original historical Jesus, but they're not one and the same. The historical Jesus might have been, if he even existed. Some go so far as to say he's a total myth and nothing more than a religious symbol, others don't go so far. But if he did exist he was just an ordinary Jewish carpenter that somehow got amplified into a deity, somehow became a martyr for the cause of a small band of myth-prone Jews. That's the storyline now taught on every major secular campus and on many Christian campuses. They're just so brilliant and have such a command of history that they can make these dogmatic pronouncements.

But the issue to track... keep your eye on the target as we go now through the forest and look at different trees; here's where you want to focus. As we read the Gospel narratives in relation to the kerygmatic Christ, are we reading of the actual historical Jesus that really lived? Belief says yes, the picture of Christ in the NT is the actual picture; unbelief says no, the picture of Christ we get is imagination. You can already see where the attack is going; the attack is going at the validity of the Scriptures. So when we come to the unbelieving responses to the King's life we want to watch the split. It starts with the unbelieving response of ancient Jews in the 1st century, and it comes back again in the unbelieving response of modern Gentiles in the 19th century. But we want to get a handle on when it started and why it started, this split between the historical Jesus and the kerygmatic Christ of the NT because this is what the sinful heart does to God's revelation in the Life of Christ.

We're going to get into some passages but follow me first. "During the days when the King spoke and performed miracles, a Jewish backlash arose from His threatening challenge to their popular religious views of the day. Jesus' threat can be seen in many areas: His assault upon Pharisaic legalism, His radically different interpretation of the Jewish Scriptures (particularly His innovative picture of the OT Messiah), and His stubborn, bold claim of implicit authority for whatever He taught." Look at those three issues. There

could be more, there are probably dozens more, but because we can't go off on everything, we're just going to track and discuss those three things.

For the first one, His assault on Pharisaic legalism turn to John 4. This really burned people up; Jesus' social life was out of step with the accepted standards of the Pharisees. This is one of the things that profoundly offended the religious people of His time. And you can't miss it, it's all over the pages of the Gospel, the things Jesus did in society that bugged Jews. I'm going to show you two kinds of things Jesus did in His social life that bugged the contemporary Jew. One was his relationship to women, and the other one was His smashing of the bureaucracy around the Sabbath.

In John 4:7 we have the woman at the well incident. This is particularly interesting because Jesus has ventured into a Samaritan area. This would be like walking through a slum, most Jews avoided it altogether, but Jesus passes through it and in the midst of it we pick up in John 4:7 "There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give Me a drink.' ⁸For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food." Verse 8 sets us up. John the apostle wants us to see the scene, so he's very careful to describe something is abnormal about this from the standpoint of a Jewish rabbi. If Jesus was a genuine Jewish rabbi He would have never been caught socially alone with a woman, not in public, and probably not in private. They are very careful about that. So after His disciples take off, the rabbi is un-chaperoned and along comes this woman and He starts talking to her. Not only is He close to this woman but He actually starts a conversation. And we have often preached from John 4 in our churches of this evangelism, and it was, Jesus was interested in winning this woman to Himself. This is an evangelistic encounter; He's sharing the gospel with her. We've all read the passage; the conversation goes on in verse 9, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)" See the note; Jews do not talk to Samaritans and especially to Samaritan women. This was socially unacceptable behavior. Verse 10, "Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.'" Verse 11, "She said to Him, 'Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water?' She evidently still doesn't understand so in verse 16-17 He has a dialogue with her because He wants to make her aware that she needs spiritual life and so

He has to show her I'm not talking about physical H₂O, I'm talking about spiritual H₂O. Verse 16, "He said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come here.' ¹⁷The woman answered and said, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You have well said, I have no husband, ¹⁸for you have had five husbands; and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly.'" Just like modern people she's shacking up with some guy. It's a simple scene and she's all of a sudden confronted with Jesus, this Jewish man who asks her for a drink and He begins to tell her her life story. By the way, where do you suppose John got this conversation from. It says in verse 8 that none of the guys were around. So how do you think that John ever recorded this conversation? It must have been because Jesus shared the conversation. This tells you something else. Jesus was interested in teaching how to do things with His disciples. He probably shared this story to tell them and teach them how to be appealing in their conversations, how to lead people to Christ. He probably said, there was this one woman, this Samaritan woman, and he went on and told them the story. That's the only way John would have known this, right? John wasn't there; verse 8 tells us John wasn't there.

The woman gets into religious questions. In verse 25 the woman admits that she has this Messianic awareness. "The woman said to Him, 'I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.'" John in his eloquent gospel records this one sentence of Jesus to the woman, ²⁶"Jesus said to her, 'I who speak to you am He.'" A clear claim by Jesus of His Messiahship. Verse 27 is injected as a sandwich to verse 8. In verse 8 the disciples had left; in verse 27 the disciples come back. When the disciples come back and they see their rabbi in an unchaperoned situation talking to this woman, even the born again disciples, being good social Jews, have a problem with this. This is not acceptable social behavior in their eyes. "And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He had been speaking with a woman; yet no one said, 'What do You seek?' or 'Why do you speak with her?'" In other words, they were wondering about this but they didn't quite have the courage to say Lord, what are you doing here? That's what they wanted to say at the time but they didn't have the guts. Verse 28, "So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city, and said to the men. ²⁹Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done," and she brought down half the village with her. We're not looking at the story evangelistically, all we're looking at is the scene to show you that Jesus in His social life did not live in step with the

accepted standards passed down by the Pharisees. He made people very uncomfortable, particularly religious people. I think you can see, the Gospels are yelling at us to see that Jesus' personal life was revelatory, not only in what He said, it wasn't just that He gave great sermons, but when He lived His life out the very things He did bothered people. It really bothered people that He would do these things.

In Luke 6:6 we have a similar type situation. You have to catch this because this is really cute. The Lord Jesus Christ is not what many people think Him to be. He actually did things purposefully to rub people the wrong way, just to get under their skin He would take them on. This involves the Sabbath. The Lord gave the Sabbath. Why did He give the Sabbath day in the first place? What does it say in Genesis? God created all things in six days and took a rest on the seventh day, it was a day of rest, relaxation. Then the Pharisees came along and had to define what r-e-s-t really meant. That's too easy, rest can't mean rest, we've got to make it burdensome. So in Luke 6:6 we have this situation lurking in the background. We want to see how Jesus handles it. "On another Sabbath He entered the synagogue," notice, another, as if this comes from a compendium of Jesus' doings on the Sabbath day just to burn people up. He enters the synagogue and it says He "was teaching; and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. ⁷The scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely to see if He healed on the Sabbath, so that they might find reason to accuse Him." So the legislation was you can't heal on the Sabbath because that's work. And they've been watching Him heal people, but rather than thinking about the significance of the healings and what that indicated about Jesus' nature they're like attorney's just looking for anything to pounce on. Verse 8, "But He knew what they were thinking," see, they think they're setting Jesus up. Really Jesus is setting them up. It must have been terribly distressing at times to be around Jesus, for those who knew Him, because things happen in life and you can't help but have thoughts go through your mind. And the distressing thing is that Jesus knows the thoughts going through your mind. So if I were a disciple I'd have wished I could just be blank, go flat on the brain waves temporarily, but you can't do that and then before you open your mouth He's already turned the whole thing around and He's now challenging you. So here these lawyers are with these thoughts about catching Jesus, but Jesus already knows their thoughts. So He says, you guys think you're so smart, let's see how your Sabbath legislation holds up if I put a little pressure on it. "and He said to

the man with the withered hand, “Get up and come forward!” And he got up and came forward. ⁹And Jesus said to them,” notice who He’s talking to, He’s got this man up with Him now but He’s talking to them, the lawyers, He’s not talking to the man, He’s talking to the lawyers, you want to talk about unnerving these guys, they wanted to set up the challenge but Jesus steps in and does it for them and in doing so He drops an atomic bomb on them, “I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?” Now what are they going to say, do harm? Here this man is with a withered hand. It’s a catch 22. If they say do harm then they themselves are harming the man standing there, if they say do good then they can’t say Jesus shouldn’t heal him, healing is doing good. So what do they say? Nothing. Jesus gives them plenty of time to answer, just looking at them, and finally, verse 10, “After looking around at them all, He said to him, “Stretch out your hand!” And he did so; and it was restored.” That’s what Jesus thought of their little Sabbath legislation. He didn’t care for it and He rubbed it right in their face, showing them what a farce it was. In verse 11 they didn’t like Jesus too much. And the Gospels are deliberately filled with similar incidences where Jesus went against the traditions of his contemporary rabbi’s.

Let’s look at another one, this one from Matt 15. Jesus insisted that the Ten Commandments of the OT had been obscured by tradition and needed to be re-taught in their original spiritual sharpness (Matt 5-7). That’s what the Sermon on the Mount is all about. In the Ten Commandments we have the fifth commandment, what’s the fifth commandment, “Honor thy father and thy mother’, Exod 20:12. In Matt 15 we see the gimmick interpretation that had risen in Israel. This is called the *corban* gimmick, Matt 15:4-6. What had happened was that the Jews had this deal where, for example... the best way to say this would be imagine a situation where your parents are relatively poor, and you’ve done really well. In this society they didn’t have social security or anything else; if the parents were impoverished the children would take care of the parents. So if you had a lot of money and you didn’t want to give it to your parents you could use the *corban* gimmick which said, “I dedicate this money to the Lord,” and now the money had a religious hedge around it and couldn’t be used for your parents. That’s what’s in the background of Matt 15. Verse 3, “And He answered and said to them, ‘And why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? ⁴For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother, and he who

speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.’⁵ But you say, ‘Whoever shall say to his father or mother, ‘anything of mine you might have been helped by has been given to God,’⁶ he is not to honor his father or his mother. And thus you invalidated the Word of God for the sake of your tradition.” That’s the *corban* gimmick, and apparently it was used in many, many families to excuse the children from taking care of their elderly parents in the family, all in the name of religion and God and all the rest of it. Jesus didn’t put up with that.

With the sixth and seventh commandments how does Jesus interpret? You shall not murder; you shall not commit adultery,” What does Jesus do in the Sermon on the Mount? He takes it back to mental attitude. He takes it all the way into the heart of our being. The murder one, remember what the rabbi’s were saying, don’t murder because you might get caught. Do you see the lawyer mentality there? That’s true but that’s trivial isn’t it, if we’re talking about men made in God’s image and you destroy one of them and you’re only concerned about getting caught you’ve trivialized the word of God. So it wasn’t the issue that you just destroyed the image of God, that wasn’t the force of the issue, it was whether you’re going to get caught or not. That’s why Jesus said never mind getting caught by the courts, that’s not the issue; the issue is if you’ve sinned in your heart, it starts with hatred. Murders don’t just happen, unless it’s a manslaughter thing or something. Murder in this sense is a sin that’s bred through hatred, through loss of control, through lack of using one’s conscience to discipline their thinking; hatred runs deep and if you nourish it and water it then finally it bursts out in a murderous act. But it doesn’t happen overnight. It takes days, weeks, months, years, to prepare to murder someone. This is why the Bible hits again and again on the inner mental attitude because that’s where it all starts. So Jesus went through and He said that the traditions of His time were basically hiding the real intent of the word of God.

So our first category is that Jesus assaulted the Pharisaic standards of the day when it came to social behavior and religious legislation which was nothing more than human distortions of the original revelation given by God in the OT. In its place Jesus insisted that only God’s Word, not man’s traditions, was the proper base of human actions.

In Matt 12:39 I want to show a second category of things that Jesus did that angered the people of His time. These are His radically different interpretation of the Jewish Scriptures, particularly with respect to the Messiah. Although He interpreted the OT in its original literal sense as many other rabbis claimed, He insisted that the Scriptures were fulfilled in Himself. In Matt. 12:39, “But He answered and said to them, ‘An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet, ⁴⁰for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea-monster; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.’” What is He saying? He’s saying that the whole book of Jonah, the whole motif of those three nights is a pattern set up that He, the Son of Man, is going to fulfill. He fulfills the structure of the book of Jonah. He fulfills verse 42, “The Queen of the Sheba shall rise up with this generation at the judgment and shall condemn it; because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.” Remember we saw the Golden Era of Solomon in our OT events, Solomon was the pinnacle of OT wisdom, he was the king of the greatest culture ever produced by man, and he was the picture, really, of the eventual kingdom of God that would fill the earth culturally. And what Jesus says is I’m greater than Solomon; Solomon points to Me, the temple points to Me, the book of Jonah points to Me, David and His blendings of priest and king point to Me. Do you see why Jesus picked up a lot of enemies? Every time He said something like this He infuriated yet another group of people.

In Matt 13:13 you see the result of their rejections. Matt 12 is the climax and Matt 13 transitions. If you want to diagram the Gospels, each crescendo is to a midpoint, climaxes and then decrescendo’s. Jesus grows in popularity, in this case Matt 1-11, then there’s a massive confrontation, Matt 12 is the climax, then the decrescendo in Matt 13-28, it’s at that point Jesus begins a new tactic. He starts talking more intimately to a smaller group. It’s no longer the great public proclamations. In 1-11 that was the popularity, in 12, that was the rejection; they’d had it, they turned on Him, they said He threw demons out with the power of Satan, so now in Matt 13 Jesus starts doing what He says in verse 13, “Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says...” and He quotes a passage of doom from Isaiah. When did Isaiah

write? Remember OT history? He wrote during the Decline of the Kingdom. What was the role of Isaiah the prophet? He was to what? He was God's convicting and prosecuting attorney over covenant violations. The nation was on the brink of going under the 5th degree of divine discipline. The people had turned against the word of God and Isaiah said you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to preach more of it to you because I've found out something about you. Every time you hear the word of God it makes your heart hard. So I'm going to give you more of the word and more of the word and more of the word, and your heart is going to turn to stone. So God actually in Isaiah brings greater cursing by preaching the word of God. He's setting them up for judgment, turning up the volume of revelation, turning up the intensity of the light, to deafen these people, to blind them.

If that's what Isaiah is doing and Jesus quotes Isaiah in vv 13-14 what do you think Jesus is doing? Jesus is doing the same thing, He's going to keep on revealing Himself in a way, through parables, so that they keep on hearing the word of God but it blinds the people that are in rebellion. He's taken all those OT types and said, I am the temple, I am greater than Solomon, I am the fulfillment of Jonah, and this really bothered people. Jesus interpreted the Scriptures and "insisted that all revelation was fulfilled in Himself!" And He's setting them for judgment. This is Dr. R. T. France who did a lot of study on Christ in the Gospels. He concluded, 'Jesus saw His mission as the fulfillment of the OT Scriptures;' now here's the key, look carefully at the sentence. We just got through saying Jesus fulfilled certain prophecies; that He did, no question. He was born in Bethlehem, the prophecy said the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem, but the passages we just read in Matt 12, you couldn't classify those as real prophecies. They were types. And Jesus had the audacity to not only claim that He fulfilled prophecy, but He claimed that He fulfilled the basic types of the OT. Where did Israel come out of at the Exodus? Out of Egypt. What does Matt 2 say, when Joseph and Mary fled the genocide to save Jesus, they went where? Egypt. So Matthew cites, "Out of Egypt I have called My Son." That's an OT passage that applied to the nation Israel. You would never have thought that was prophecy. That's a type, the redeemed nation comes out of Egypt, yet Jesus in His personal life traces the pattern the nation Israel went through.

That's what France is talking about here. He says, "not just of those which predicted a coming redeemer, but of the whole sweep of OT ideas," a very

important sentence, the whole sweep of OT ideas. “The patterns of God’s working which the discerning eye could trace in history and institutions of Israel were all preparing for the great climax...which the prophets foretold. And in the coming of Jesus all this was fulfilled.” Then he goes on to point out passages like Isaiah 53, Daniel 7, Psalm 110, Zech 9-14, these are all the key OT passages. Remember Isaiah 53 the suffering servant passage; Dan 7 that’s the Son of Man that comes before the ancient of days in heaven in Daniel’s vision; Ps 110, David says “The Lord said to my Lord,” who’s the Lord of David that the Lord is talking to. So Jesus identifies Himself.

France, in a second quote says: “In the Jewish world of the first century AD Jesus of Nazareth was a man apart.... While second to none in His reverence for the Scriptures, His diligent study of them and His acceptance of their teachings...He yet applied the OT in a way which is quite unparalleled. The essence of his new application was that He saw the fulfillment of the predictions and foreshadowings of the OT in Himself and His work.... Such a use of the OT was not only original; it was revolutionary. It was such,” and here’s the key to response, “It was such that a Jew who did not accept it must violently oppose it. It is not surprising that a community founded on this teaching soon found itself irreconcilably divided from those Jews who still looked forward to a coming Messiah.” He’s concluding there with the Book of Acts and the early division between Christianity and Judaism. Sooner or later those had to split.

The third area of what we’ll say is the offending things that Jesus did, not only did He assault Pharisaic legalism, not only did He interpret the OT in an offensive manner, but He also claimed implicit authority. Turn to the Sermon on the Mount in Matt 7. There’s this comment right at the end of this sermon that summarize this characteristic of Jesus. After He had preached His sermon this is the comment of the people that heard. Remember Matthew is writing this. Matthew heard a lot of oratory in his day, he was a government official, a tax collector. Matt 7:28, “The result was that when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at His teaching; ²⁹for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.” Why do you suppose that comment’s there? Why does He make a difference between “as one having authority” and a scribe. What would a scribe do to strengthen his argument? He’d quote other rabbi’s. The rabbinical literature is filled with this, well Rabbi So and So says, and Rabbi So and So says, and

So and So says, and this says and that says, and they'd cite hundreds of these references to say hey, I've got big guns behind me on this. Yet in this sermon the Lord Jesus Christ said "you heard it said, but I say to you, you heard rabbi so and so, but I say to you." Who's the authority? It isn't some other rabbi.

I want to articulate this carefully because it has tremendous apologetic import. Jesus' authority is self-authenticating. Remember that term, self-authenticating. Why do I use the word self-authenticating? It gets back to presuppositions. Jesus does not appeal to a standard outside of Himself, ultimately. What Jesus says is that I say to you. He doesn't justify it by referring to someone else. What would it mean if Jesus justified what He said by someone else? That Jesus' word had to come under the microscope of some other authority. Self-authenticating authority means He is the authority. That is what is so offensive about Jesus Christ.

That's what's so offensive about this book, because it doesn't offer a proof for God in terms of Aristotelian logic. Your logic machine does not stand as judge over Jesus. It doesn't offer any proof for God in terms of human empiricism. The Scriptures say that you can't prove anything unless you first start with God; God is the necessary prerequisite of proof. God is the standard of truth, He is truth. Therefore it's silly to say that God can be subjected to some proof that requires His existence to prove His existence. He is self-authenticating. The word of God is self-authenticating. We can argue about it, we have different arguments going on, but ultimately when it comes down to the bottom line, the word of God is authoritative and true because it says it is. That doesn't set well with a lot of people. Why doesn't it set well with people? Because people are sinful and sinful people insist that they are the self-authenticating authority, that they set the standards, so yeah, it does rub them the wrong way when we say the word of God is self-authenticating and does not require your stamp of approval to be true.

We have to remember that because we get uncomfortable sometimes when we offend people. None of us like to offend people, not when we're walking by the Spirit. We don't want to offend people. But yet there comes those times when you stand up for the truth and it's tough because people go into a fit, and you suddenly become the black sheep of the whole family and you are stuck with it. You're the black sheep of the family, everybody criticizes you and finds all

kinds of fault with you. But if you do it because you're standing under the authority of Scripture in a gracious way, not in a stupid way, in a gracious way then that's a work of God, because God in the life of Christ certainly worked, didn't He. Did Jesus offend people? Did He divide homes? Did He divide towns? Did He get people so mad they were willing to stone Him? Absolutely. Was it because He was nasty? No, it was because He didn't subject the word of God to human authority, He said My word is the authority - over and out. The offense of Jesus is profoundly deep.

So the Lord Jesus Christ is Lord, don't forget that title Lord, and as Lord, when He says something, it is true because He said it. It doesn't need the backing of rabbi So and So. The backing of rabbi So and So would reduce the authority.

Next week we'll move on to the modern unbelief. We've looked at the rejection of Jesus by His contemporary Jews who were offended at these sorts of things. Next week we'll go into the modern critics that you'll meet in the universities, Time Magazine, Newsweek, etc. Then we're going to tie both the modern and the ancients together and say look, what is it that's common to all this unbelief? Something underlies this and we want to study what that something is. What is the focal point of the battle, because when we witness for Christ and we discuss the gospel, we're in the battle and we want to perceive where the attack is coming from.

ⁱ Rudolf Bultmann argued in the 1920's, "that the Gospels were interested not in presenting a dispassionate portrait of Jesus but in expressing the kerygma—the proclamation of the early church's faith in a Risen Christ. This meant that although the New Testament might be a primary source for a study of the early church, it was only a secondary one for a life of Jesus. Since the faith of later generations was really based upon the shining faith of the first Christians and not upon Jesus himself, theologians should forget about seeking the earthly Jesus and analyze the formation of the kerygma. 'We can now know almost nothing concerning the life and personality of Jesus,' Bultmann said." <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,874918-2,00.html#ixzz0xvi0uSAE>

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