

Missing Jesus Again

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7/7/2024



For Discussion: Missing Jesus Again (rev310.net, Steve Schmutzer, 4/1/2024; also in Prophecy Watcher's magazine, May, 2024)

<https://www.rev310.net/post/missing-jesus-again>

Why did First Century Jewish religious leaders miss recognizing Jesus as the Messiah?

It seemed like forever since God had spoken to His people. 400 years had passed since the last Scripture had been written, and the spiritual leaders had gotten way off course...

- The religious system they oversaw had become a whitewashed crypt.
- They were obsessed with their status, and they loved to be recognized for it.
- They talked about God without really loving Him.
- They esteemed certain parts of Scripture, and they generally ignored the rest.
- They ran the temple system as they wanted to keep the monies flowing.
- They regarded their own rituals of religious conduct to be every bit as important as Gods laws
- They preferred to compromise with the political establishment than lose their power.
- They missed the signs ignoring the things they should have paid attention to.

Why should these religious leaders have recognized the signs that Jesus was the Messiah?

Had they given proper respect to the prophetic Scriptures, they would have known where and how the Messiah would be born, where His ministry, would be centered, what He would do - and most importantly -who He would be and why He had come.

- The religious leaders were not looking for a suffering servant who was humble, sorrowful, and acquainted with grief.
- They were not looking for a spiritual Savior, a light to the Gentiles, a shepherd, one born of a virgin, or even a gentle donkey rider.

This wasn't the Jesus they wanted. Many of the religious leaders would have rather had a Messiah who would immediately reign.

- They wanted someone who would deliver on all the promises given to Israel, who would lead military revolt against their oppressors, and who would stablish an earthly kingdom.
- They wanted a mighty ruler, a warrior king.

What was the essential error of the religious leaders who missed the Messiah?

They were stuck in rear-view perspective. They held the five books of Moses in much higher regard than the prophetic Scriptures.

- They treasured the past and they ignored the future.
- Their religious culture was more important to them than a right relationship with God.
- Their senses had become dull to what was taking place because their hearts were callous to truth.

What did their failure to recognize the Messiah have to say about their spiritual condition?

While these religious leaders didn't recognize the signs, times, and seasons, they instead protected a system that was out of touch with the full counsel of Scripture, out of touch with their Messiah, and out of touch with their own need to repent and get right with God.

- They weren't watching for His coming, and so they missed Him.

There were many who did recognize Jesus as the Messiah and most of these were common lay people who simply knew God's Word like Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:25-38).

How are our times similar to what caused the First Century religious leaders to miss the Messiah?

It seems like forever since Jesus Christ first came, was crucified for the sins of the world, and rose again. It's been about two thousand years.

- The church today is lukewarm. It looks impressive - but looks deceive. It is mostly naked, pitiful, poor, blind, and wretched.
- It has devolved into a social charade that boosts its leaders' personal sense of relevance.
- They publicly tolerate sin to appear attractive and nonjudgemental to a depraved culture.
- They talk about God without really loving Him.

- They esteem certain parts of Scripture and mostly ignore the rest.
- They run their churches however they choose to keep the monies flowing
- To preserve the status quo, these 'Christian leaders' cling to petty and irrelevant church traditions.
- They ignore the examples of early believers and instead elevate big programs, elaborate buildings, and bloated budgets
- They engage in big-production worship experiences and have ear-tickling sermonettes
- They promote socially acceptable themes compromising with the political establishment rather than lose power and position.
- Callous to the rapidly changing times and seasons around them, they ignore the very things they should be paying the most attention to.

What would happen if most religious leaders today responsibly taught the full counsel of God's Word?

They would be looking for the coming of an omnipotent ruler with an iron scepter – one who will show righteous justice (not just social justice).

- They would be looking for the King of Kings and Lord of Lords who will dash the nations to pieces, who will deliver on all the promises given to Israel, and who will lead military campaigns against rebels.
- They would know Jesus will harshly judge those who treat the Jews poorly and who support a two-state solution.

Why is the neglect of today's religious leaders more irresponsible than those of the First Century?

Over 1500 of the prophecies in the Bible are devoted to Christ's Second Coming. For every prophecy in the Old Testament about Jesus' First Coming, there are eight about His Second Coming. Jesus Christ's return also comprises one of every five verses in the New Testament.

- Many of today's 'learned' church leaders mock and scoff at these prophetic details. They refuse to endure sound doctrine and they've conditioned their followers to respond the same way.

How does neglect of the prophetic Scriptures reflect backward thinking?

Most church leaders today much prefer to focus on Jesus Christ as suffering servant - someone humble, sorrowful, and acquainted with grief.

- They really like the baby in a manger thing, that donkey ride, all those palm branches, and how He fed a huge hungry crowd and washed a couple dozen dirty feet.

- They thrill in how Jesus ate with sinners rather than judging their sin. "It shows He loves us, and He accepts us just as we are," they say.
- But this misses the bigger picture of what God has planned.
- They hold certain parts of the New Testament in much higher regard than the Old Testament or any prophetic passages.
- They like the past Jesus, but ignore the future Jesus.

What is the danger in not considering the full counsel of Scripture?

As they swim endless laps in those parts of Scripture they are most comfortable with, the parts they feel give latitude to things they want to say, believe, do, and be, they don't perceive the dangers of their choices.

- They refuse to see their desperate spiritual condition when this is pointed out to them.
- Their trappings of 'Christian culture' have become much more important to them than a right relationship with God.
- They celebrate their blindness and nakedness because they're obsessed with looking good in the world's eyes.

Is claiming, "we'll just stick to Jesus and the gospel," a legitimate reason to ignore God's prophetic Word?

They are totally missing a big part of who Jesus is if they neglect prophecy...

Revelation 19:10 – *For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

You are also missing out on an important aspect of the good news of Christ if you are not teaching about *our blessed hope* (Titus 2:13)

What is the prophetic significance of religious leaders giving no attention to God's prophetic Word?

It is a characteristic of the end of the Church Age...

2 Peter 3:3-4 – *scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."*

The Bible warns that many 'Christian' leaders won't recognize the signs and seasons. They all revel in a system that is out of touch with the full counsel of God's Word, out of touch with the complete person and work of Jesus Christ, and out of touch with their own need to repent and get right with God.

- They fail to see Jesus Christ properly, because they only want a part of Him and not all of Him
- They ignore the myriad signs of His coming, and thus are in grave danger of missing Him when He returns. It's happened before.

Why did Jesus tell us to remember Lot's wife (Luke 17:32)?

Luke 17:31-36 – *"In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left."*

If a Christian is so enamored with the world, they are in grave danger of missing out on the rapture of the church. If you not living your life with the expectation that the Bridegroom Jesus could return at any moment for His bride, the church, you have the potential to commit the error of Lot's wife. This is why Jesus gave us this command:

Matthew 24:42 – *Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.*

How should we react to the parallels between the past and the present missing of the Messiah?

We should be alarmed. In both cases, those most responsible for the spiritual welfare of others willfully fail to understand their own calamity and blindness (Matt. 15:14; Rev. 3:17-18, Et al.).

- Any accountability they may receive is often regarded as a personal threat. In both cases, their obstinate "I do not need a thing" posture (Rev. 3:17) pushes back against the obvious fact they need a reality check.

So, what are we to do about spiritual leaders not watching?

Do we stick our heads in the sand and pretend the gravity of this problem does not exist?

- Do we spar in constant discord with shallow and obstinate leaders who refuse to submit to and teach the full counsel of God's Word?
- Do we resign ourselves to the conclusion that the problem is so big and pervasive that there's nothing we can do?

Of course not. People make their own choices, and they will face the consequences of them (Matt. 7:21-23; Rev. 20:12-13; et al).

- But that doesn't mean we should hitch our wagon to their folly either.

The wise response is to take personal responsibility for our own spiritual growth...

2 Timothy 2:15 – *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

The admonition to personally "study" God's Word is a command, not an option. And applying what is learned in this discipline results in blessing...

James 1:25 – *he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does*

Should we be concerned about Christians who have no interest in God's prophetic Word?

What a person believes about the return of Christ is not necessarily an essential (a matter of salvation), it is a "disputable matter" (Romans 14:1, KJV). But it could be indicative of a greater problem that is an essential: what they think of who Jesus Christ is and His Almighty ability to provide us with the inerrant Word.

John 8:23-24 – *He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."*

People who do not regard God's Word as inerrant and treat it as such in their "interpretation" of it are in great danger...

Revelation 22:18-19 – *I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*

What applications do we see from this discussion?

- The parallels between those who missed the Messiah the first time with today are striking; don't be fooled!
- It is important to take personal responsibility to study the full counsel of God.
- What a person thinks of Jesus Christ and His Word is an essential, a matter of salvation.