

Front Page - June 2024

The Apparent Inconsistencies in The Life of The Lord - Part 1

Introduction

At times one wonders what heaven was like before Satan rebelled and sin entered this world. Both spheres must have been glorious to live in, spheres in which there was no sin or rebellion, and no inconsistency with the perfection of God with every fruit and nutrient in the ground making the herbs etc. healthy. In heaven Satan rebelled and initiated a coup, a rebellion against God's rulership and glorification. Peace was disturbed, discord was prevalent and inconsistency prevailed. When sin entered this world, not only did physical and spiritual death come into man, but every living creation, animal or horticultural, began the decaying and dying process. It became a primary lesson from God. Disobedience results in inconsistency and waywardness from divine perfection. It never leads to divine enlightenment or a deeper fellowship with God.

The scriptures inform us of two men who specifically walked with God. It seems to me seven individuals walked with God, without actually saying so. They were Enoch (Gen. 5:22, 24); Noah (Gen. 6:9); the three Hebrews who were thrown into the fiery furnace (Dan. 3:25), and by indication, the two on the road to Emmaus (Lk. 24:15). The scriptures ask a question, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). To walk with God is a living, moment by moment in fellowship with God. That is a life of consistency.

As I travel this earthy sojourn I find about myself is that my only consistency is my inconsistency. Life is a constant conflict to be consistent, and that which eases my darkness is the knowledge great men of God had the same problem:

- a) Paul the apostle knew this experience for he wrote, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom 7:24). What caused this mighty evangelist and teacher to feel this way? In honesty he informs the Roman readers, "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Rom. 7:19). He found life was a vicious circle of striving and failing. Inconsistency marked his life.
- b) Peter was the same for He professed, "I will lay down my life for thy sake" (Jn. 13:37). He meant it with every fibre of his being. Yet a few hours later He denied the Lord (Matt. 26:70; 74; Mk. 14:71). Poor Peter, we can understand him for we also are flesh.
- c) Elijah was the same. After the tremendous victory at Mount Carmel over the priests of Baal (1 Kg. 18:19-38), he sat down in despondency and wanted to die (1 Kgs. 19:3-4).

Every Believer's Query

When an individual gets a glimpse of the consistency of God, the awareness of personal incompatibility raises the question, "How can I approach, much less be accepted into the presence of this perfectly consistent Person? This glorious One who at all times, in all situations, with all people, is perfectly consistent? In the mercy of God, I approach the Throne of the Holy by the sacrificial virtue of One who was always consistent. The Lord Jesus was as consistent as God the Father and I can approach and be accepted by God through Jesus Christ the Lord. God sees me, "In Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24); "As He is, so are we in this world" (1 Jn. 4:17).

Cautious Reverential Approach

God is Holy and perfectly consistent in all His work (Deut. 32:4) whether it is creating, disciplining or judging. Since the Lord is the perfect manifestation of God, He also must be consistent (Jn. 17:4-5) therefore, whatever God does is perfect and nothing ever is left unfinished. He cannot leave the disciples ignorant of that which is about to happen. He must tell them of His imminent death and what He practised. He who will tell others to "love the Lord with all one's heart, mind soul, and strength" was the perfect embodiment of that (Jn. 10:17; 14:31) and the Father loved Him (Jn. 15:9). He abided in the love of the Father (Jn. 15:10). It was on the night of His betrayal and only hours before His crucifixion, knowing all that lay before Him from the hand of God said, "I love the Father" (Jn. 14:31).

Front Page - June 2024

The Apparent Inconsistencies in The Life of The Lord - Part 1

The Lord was always **consistent in His teachings with His life and His life with His teachings**, His department with who He was in Himself as the Word, the Revealer of the heart, mind, will and purposes of God.

It is with holy reverential fear that one speaks of the apparent inconsistencies of the Lord. Those situations which seem to be inconsistent are words and works of the Father, consequently, they are always perfect and are manifestations of the moral perfect balancing of the life of the Lord.

Some of the apparent inconsistencies of the Lord

What were some of the accused inconsistencies of the Lord? I view them as two avenues:

- a) The Lord was inconsistent with the man-made traditions of the scribes and religious hierarchy.
 - i) The Lord and His disciples were going through a cornfield on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:1-8). For whatever reason, the disciples were hungry and they began plucking the ears of corn and eating them. The Lord was well aware of their watchings for it would have been harder for the Pharisees to see them doing such had they been at a distance. According to the Mishna, this was working and breaking the-Sabbath. The Mishna Shabbat 7:2 stated that some of the work not to be done included removing the kernel from the husk and grinding it. The disciples were breaking man-made commands, and we ask, would it not have been better if the Lord had told them, “Be careful lest we offend them and cause a scene”, but the Light of the world must shine on error for the Pharisees were setting the tradition of man above the law of God, a matter the Lord had spoken about. He said unto them, “Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition (Mk. 7:9). Furthermore, they were becoming the judges and displacing the Lord and God. Their attitude was, that God had not gone far enough and something had to be added to His law. What an insult to the Almighty when there was a matter of importance, and from the human perspective, the Lord seemed unfeeling or unsympathetic. In answering, the Lord gives a case history and illustrations they could not contradict.
 1. The case history. These men ought to have known the law of God and the Lord asks almost in a tone of incredulity, “Have ye not read” (Matt. 12:3, 5; 19:4; 22:31; Mk. 12:26). This was not spoken in spitefulness but in love, seeking to make them aware that they ought to have known what God had stated. Reminding them of what David did He demonstrates that mercy overrides sacrifice, that is, love and compassion must yield to not only man-made regulations but divine regulations.
 - ii) When the Lord was in the synagogue there was a man with a withered hand (Matt. 12:9-14) and they asked him, “Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days?” This time the Lord does not give a case history but an illustration from real life. If one of their sheep falls into a pit on a Sabbath, do they let it stay there until the day after the Sabbath or get it out of danger and possibly die? Again, on the Sabbath the priests function in the temple, they trim the lampstand, take away week-old bread, make sure the incense altar is functioning, kill various animals etc. Should they stop all such activity because it was on the Sabbath? To His questions, one I am sure could feel the restlessness and tension, the Lord then heals the withered hand which prompted a major decision, “How can we respond?” The Lord was perfectly consistent with the law and ways of God and the decision to be made was, “Do we accept His deity or get rid of Him?”
 1. His personal consistency enabled Him to point out:
 - (a) The inconsistency and hypocrisy of the Pharisees (Matt. 23:23).
 - (b) The inconsistency of the church at Ephesus (Rev. 2:2 & 4-5); and Thyatira (Rev. 2:19, 20).

At other times the response of the Lord does not seem compatible with the character of God.

In the Old Testament God told His people:

- a) “Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me” (Psa. 50:15).

The Apparent Inconsistencies in The Life of The Lord - Part 1

- b) “He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him” (Psa. 91:15).
- c) “Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you” (Jer. 29:12).
 - i) Why was the Lord then so apparently unfeeling or unsympathetic? He was such for several reasons. This woman was not a daughter of Israel, but of Canaan (Matt. 15:22). She called the Lord, “the Son of David”, and the Lord replied that He was sent only to the house of Israel (Matt. 15:24) and to bring the woman to her right place before him.
 - ii) However, this opens another question. Since the Lord was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, why did he go to Samaria (Jn. 4:40) or Galilee of the Gentiles? (Matt. 4:15)

Sympathy and compassion are such lovely characteristics of God.

Since God is the God of love and compassion, then why when the Lord heard that Lazarus was ill did He stay two days where He was before going to the family? This was further exasperated when the Lord went to the home of Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, when his child was ill and died (Matt. 9:18-25) but did not go to His friend Lazarus'. The Lord went to where the funeral was taking place for the widow of Nain's son but did not go to the funeral of Lazarus. I wonder if were they like me and in their minds question, the sincerity of His friendship, had they just been used? The delays of the Lord were only to bring them something greater than they could ever have considered. There was no inconsistency, but the teaching of trusting His wisdom in every situation.

. *Rowan Jennings*