

## RELIGIOUS LEADERS USE COMPLEXITY

Opening Questions:

- If religious leaders make things complicated so that people believe they must go to those religious leaders to understand important God truths, then don't the religious leaders gain much power by doing so?
- Could complexity be a significant factor in the dividedness of Christianity?
- What does it mean when Joshua's teachings are pure while Christian leader's instructions are often complicated?

As we saw in the previous chapter, *Hiding in Complexity*, people who want people to be dependent upon them to take things from them will often use complexity to accomplish that. If using complexity to hide things is more difficult when used regarding things that can be verified (like physical things), how much easier will it be regarding God things many of which are not verifiable? Religious leaders excel at using complexity to get the people to be dependent upon them. Please note Joshua's teaching on this issue of complexity:

Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 18:3)

So, Joshua does not use complicated language to convey his teachings, and he plainly says that if we want to enter the kingdom of heaven, we must become like children - and children do not communicate using complex concepts.

An excellent way to tell the difference between two things is to compare them. So let us compare a primary error of Christianity with the truth of The Light of the world by contrasting the stated beliefs of a representative religious organization with the teachings of Joshua.

As we have seen, many people hide in complexity, and this is a great example of religious people doing just that. The following is a list of the topical areas of the Doctrinal Statement from Dallas Theological Seminary which I consider generally representative of much of "protestant" Bible-anity. (Many religious organizations call statements like this a "Statement of Faith" which wrongly defines "faith" as synonymous with "religion" as we have seen.)

1. The Bible is God's Word or "All scripture is given by inspiration of God"
2. The Godhead or the Trinity
3. Angels, Fallen and Unfallen
4. Man, Created and Fallen
5. Dispensations
6. The First Advent
7. Salvation Only Through Christ
8. The Extent of Salvation
9. Sanctification
10. Eternal Security
11. Assurance
12. The Holy Spirit
13. The Church, A Unity of Believers
14. The Sacrament or Ordinances
15. The Christian Walk
16. The Christian's Service
17. The Great Commission
18. The Blessed Hope
19. The Tribulation
20. The Second Coming of Christ
21. The Eternal State

Here is a reference to that page -

<http://www.dts.edu/about/doctrinalstatement/>. Each of those twenty one *Articles of Doctrine* has several paragraphs explaining them and that amounts to about 4,200 words!

In contrast, here is a disciple's suggested statement of core existential beliefs.

1. Joshua of Nazareth is the unique Son of God (Luke 22:69-70; John 3:16,18; 5:25; 10:36; 11:4), the Messenger and Leader sent by God the Creator to humankind to save us from ourselves / our sins (John 3:16). You can best know Joshua of Nazareth and his Good News (or gospel) through his own words and teachings as preserved in the four gospel books. The Bible is not the word of God to humankind; instead the Person and teachings of Joshua of Nazareth in the four "gospel books" is the word of God to humankind. To look to "the Bible" or "the scripture" apart from Joshua's teachings is a tremendous error and thus we should look only to Joshua.
2. To begin following Joshua, we must:

- Repent of our sins (see ourselves as guilty, be remorseful and receive our Father's forgiveness for our wrongs, and stop practicing what is wrong)(Matt. 4:17);
  - Be born from above by placing our faith in Joshua and thus transition from spiritual death to eternal Life (John 3:3-7);
  - Turn away from or forsake all we have believed is valuable in this world, especially money, material things, and people who don't want us to follow Joshua (Luke 14:33; John 12:25; Matt. 10:34-39; 12:46-50);
  - Stop working for money as our primary pursuit in life, and start working for Joshua and his kingdom as our primary passion in Life (Matt. 6:24; 4:19; 9:9).
3. While there are many sins we can commit, there are three aspects of our nature that we must be aware of and seek to be no longer controlled by - self-pride, fear, and selfishness. Self-pride prevents us from learning and having a critical character virtue that we desperately need to learn and be better people - humility (Luke 18:9-14). Fear not only prevents us from learning but also dramatically hinders us from using reason well in our seeking what is true and decision making (Matt. 10:26, 31; Luke 5:10; 8:25). Selfishness works hard against love, and both self-pride and fear contribute to that as well (John 15:13; Matt. 6:19-21; Mark 8:35).
  4. Joshua refers to this critical term - truth - over a dozen times in the four gospels. For example, he says, "I am the truth" and "all who are of the truth hear my voice" and "the truth will set you free." Furthermore, he says we are to "love the Lord our God with all our mind." Loving God with all our mind can only be reasonably understood to mean to use reason and logic well to find, know and understand God. Therefore, it is **critical** that we as disciples do our best to use reason and logic well and to be willing to "go" where ever those important tools lead us—even if reason or logic lead us to reject some of our most tightly held religious beliefs or practices that we picked up over the years. If someone uses reason or logic well to show us that we believe something erroneous, we ought not to be offended and instead seriously consider if what the person is saying does in fact pass the test of reason as well as line up with all of Joshua's teachings (if he addresses it) in that area/topic/domain.
  5. In Joshua's teachings, he does provide us with how we should treat each other as human beings. In fact, he gives the universal "ethic" in this saying, "Treat others the way you want to be treated" (Matt. 7:12).

If we would keep this in heart/mind and act upon it, we would avoid *many* mistakes and wrongs done to other people.

6. To love Joshua means we will want to obey him (John 14:15). To know what to obey, we must first know HIM and HIS teachings and no one else's (John 8:12, 31-32; 12:48; 13:13; 14:6 Matt. 23:8-12; 24:35). His teachings are readily available to us in the four gospel books in any Bible.
7. In order to obey Joshua's new command of "love one another as I have loved you", we must join with other disciples and help them in real, daily life as we all serve God together as manifestations of His Family (Love means to value someone highly and to treat them with compassion and with selfless behavior). Our neighbors often choose not to love us back. What is the disciple's excuse? (Mark 10:28-30) (See also Acts 2:44-45 as an example of the teachings of Joshua about love lived out);
8. Serving God means we follow Joshua our Leader and Master/Teacher together, and we do the Greater Work of proclaiming Joshua's gospel in all manner of ways, making disciples and forming little flocks and cities on hills (groups/Families of people) (Matt. 5:14; 28:18-20; Mark 8:35; Luke 12:32); and we do the lesser work of helping each other with what is needed to live on this earth (providing food, shelter, and clothing) (Matt. 20:8; Luke 3:14). By this Life, we will demonstrate his living Way so that the world may know that we are his followers due to our love for one another and the unity we manifest (John 13:34-35; 17:20-21).
9. Eternal life is a state of being or existence which a person enters into through faith in our Father as revealed by Joshua. A person remains in eternal life through faithfulness to God as given by Joshua of Nazareth by his own words in the four gospel books. (John 3:3-4, 5:24, 8:12, 12:48, 16:6, 17:3, Luke 7:50, Matt. 11:27)

There are about nine-hundred words in the above disciple's statement of beliefs - that is about *eighty percent less than the Christian statement of God-stuff doctrine*. Some of those nine-hundred plus words are only there for corrective or clarification reasons due to widely held falsehoods as represented in the Dallas Theological statement. I also repeat certain things for the sake of helping the reader understand. Finally, please note how the disciple's statement is Joshua centered and addresses both essential spiritual as well as practical things.

Frankly, the disciples' statement of existential or spiritual beliefs could be as simple as this:

To save yourself from yourself, place your faith in and listen to, the historical Joshua of Nazareth as he reveals himself and God by his life and own words in the four gospel books, and do what he says.

*About thirty words. Beautifully simple, something a child can understand!*

The more child-like our approach and attitude is towards the Light, the fewer words are required. As he says, “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 18:3)

Notice the difference in content between the two statements of beliefs. The Christian statement is heavy on “angles on the head of a pin” stuff, stays away from Joshua, and is light on practical instruction. Aside from the MANY words, perhaps most revealing is that the Christians statement’s category titles *are missing the most important teaching of Joshua, "love."* The absence of love is no coincidence. Joshua gave many teachings, instructions, directives, etc., but he only issued one "new command," and it is this:

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another. (John 13:34-35)

The Christians ignore the one teaching that he explicitly labeled a "command" and yet it is the only way people will know that a person is a disciple/follower of the real, historical Joshua of Nazareth. *Telling—ironic, and self-condemning—religious social clubs substituted for love in practical, daily life.* The Christians should confess, “we like Bible knowledge, apart from The Light's teachings, and we will do just about any ritual or keep any tradition instead of complying with the new command.”

Furthermore, the two statements bear out the distinction between what standard is looked to for each person-type to know God. The “protestant” Christians look to the Bible with its many hundreds of voices and opinions about God and its many contradictions. Of course, the “protestants” also look to their leaders and their writings as well, although many will say they use on “the Bible.” The non-protestant sects look to their leaders and their writings and the Bible, making many more thousands of voices claiming to represent God.

The disciples of Joshua look to only One Person and One voice, the One whom we call our Master. That One person made this remarkable statement of unity and representation:

"If you have seen me, you have seen the Father/Creator/God"; and "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." (John 14; Matt. 11)

Remember the previous chapter on complexity? This comparison of beliefs is a great example of how the One who says "I am the truth" is hidden through Christian complexity. I am not saying that they purposely make something complex that ought to be simple. I am saying that they cannot help themselves because they refuse to listen to the One Voice that matters and at a deep level they want to stay away from him. I am saying that their unwillingness to make The Light their Master causes them to have the wrong standard to know God – the Bible or other's teachings – and to thus be confused and wrong about God, and their pride or fear will not allow them to admit that—hence the many words.

Even if your religious organization has a “statement of faith” that is not nearly as long as Dallas Theological Seminary’s, I can pretty much guarantee you it’s focus is *not* on Joshua of Nazareth and *his* teachings.

As a general rule, the more words it takes to address a single principle of human interaction, relationship or God belief, the more likely it is the author is lost and is trying to hide that lost-ness among the many words. Ask the Christian leader to boil down their “statement of faith” into about thirty words, and you will see what I am talking about here. Since Joshua is not their Leader, their thoughts are scattered.

In the next chapter, we will revisit relativism or at least a minor strain of it that applies to religious leader's ways.

#### Chapter Summary:

- Christian leaders hide The Light of the world in their complex believes and their false “gospel” narrative;
- If you ask one hundred people who are lost in a forest how to get out of the forest to a particular town, you are likely to get many dozens of answers—so it is with Christian leaders and thus the thousands of divisions of Christianity;
- The contrast between the simple teachings and truths of The Light of the world versus the complex doctrines of the Christian leaders is remarkable;
- "Unless you change and become like a little child, you will in no way enter the Kingdom of God."