

Jesus had Issues

Jesus Had a Senior Moment

In the final moments Jesus spent with his disciples, Simon Peter asked Jesus: **Lord, where are you going?** (John 3:36). Then a short time later, Thomas said: **Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?** (John 14:5). But only moments later, Jesus said: **But now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, "where are you going?"** (John 16:5)

Did Jesus really have such a short attention span?

Jesus Was Impatient

Luke 9:41

Jesus answered, "You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here."

Why does Jesus sound so angry, impatient, irritable, cross, or resentful here? Wasn't this father doing just what Jesus wanted and expected people to do? Isn't that what Jesus was there for? Wasn't that part of his job?

This isn't the only time Jesus cops a 'tude. He frequently berated his disciples because they didn't readily understand his enigmatic and esoteric parables and teachings. They were ignorant, illiterate Jewish peasants. What did he expect?

Christians like to pretend this sort of outburst was a symbolic gesture, a kind of parable related to judgment. Or something. Pope poop. Jesus had anger management issues.

Jesus' Temper Tantrums

We occasionally get a glimpse of Jesus' darker side in the Gospels. For example, Jesus' temper flared up in this episode at the temple in Jerusalem.

Matthew 21:12-13:

Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. "It is written", he said to them, "My house will be called a house of prayer", but you are making it a den of robbers".

Mark 11:15-17:

On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'. But you have made it a den of robbers".

Luke 19:45-46:

When Jesus entered the temple courts, he began to drive out those who were selling. "It is written", he said to them, "My house will be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of robbers".

John 2:13-17:

When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their

tables. To those who sold doves he said, “Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father’s house into a market!”

So much for turning the other cheek.

This would suggest that there are times when it is appropriate to give into one's anger and to take decisive action, even if it is aggressive, in-your-face, violent, or possibly against the law.

Here's another example of Jesus having anger management issues.

Matthew 21:18-22:

Early in the morning, as Jesus was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, “May you never bear fruit again!” Immediately the tree withered.

Mark 11:12-14:

The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. Then he said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again”. And his disciples heard him say it.

This one is harder to understand than the temple temper tantrum. We might be able to chalk that one up to righteous indignation. But there is nothing noble or righteous about cursing a fig tree because it has no fruit on it, especially when it isn't even in season yet. It's clearly a childish, spiteful act, and not very Christ-like as we portray that to be. Yet, there it is, and if Jesus did it, why shouldn't we do something similar when we get frustrated or angry? If we accept Jesus as the ultimate role model, this is part of the package. We don't have the magic power to put a curse on a tree and watch it wither, but we can lash out in anger by saying something hurtful to someone, harming them in some way, or maybe kicking the dog. If Jesus didn't always turn the other cheek, why should we?

By the way, unlike the other Gospel accounts, John has the temple tantrum early in Jesus' brief career.

The others have it happening toward the end of his life. Why the discrepancy? Was John wrong on his timing? Oops, there goes Bible infallibility. Maybe Jesus turned the temple upside down twice, and only John bothered to mention the earlier episode. But now we're speculating and making up a scenario that isn't in the Bible at all. Did God go to all the trouble of giving us His inspired, infallible Word only to leave us wondering about so many things? That doesn't make sense.

Jesus Did Not Practice What He Preached

Luke 6:27-36

“But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

That's a compassionate and noble attitude. Easy to say, very difficult to actually put into practice. So difficult, in fact, that Jesus himself didn't really believe it was practical or even possible. How do I know that? Because it came straight from the messiah's mouth. Consider the Parable of the Ten Pounds. It's about a woman who goes on a strict diet of locusts and wild honey to get ready for the

annual Jerusalem swimsuit calendar. She doesn't enjoy the diet, but her wild honey does. Sorry.

Luke 19:11-27

As they were listening to this, he went on to tell a parable, because he was near Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. So he said, "A nobleman went to a distant country to get royal power for himself and then return. He summoned ten of his slaves, and gave them ten pounds, and said to them, 'Do business with these until I come back.' But the citizens of his country hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to rule over us.' When he returned, having received royal power, he ordered these slaves, to whom he had given the money, to be summoned so that he might find out what they had gained by trading. The first came forward and said, 'Lord, your pound has made ten more pounds.' He said to him, 'Well done, good slave! Because you have been trustworthy in a very small thing, take charge of ten cities.' Then the second came, saying, 'Lord, your pound has made five pounds.' He said to him, 'And you, rule over five cities.' Then the other came, saying, 'Lord, here is your pound. I wrapped it up in a piece of cloth, for I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man; you take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' He said to him, 'I will judge you by your own words, you wicked slave! You knew, did you, that I was a harsh man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? Why then did you not put my money into the bank? Then when I returned, I could have collected it with interest.' He said to the bystanders, 'Take the pound from him and give it to the one who has ten pounds.' (And they said to him, 'Lord, he has ten pounds!') 'I tell you, to all those who have, more will be given; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. But as for these enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and slaughter them in my presence.'"

Read that last sentence again. Let it sink in. It isn't Jesus saying it directly. It's the words of the parabolic nobleman. But, Jesus apparently thinks it

is just as important a part of the parable as the rest, and there's no hint that he condemns or discourages or disapproves. So, once again, we find that Jesus contradicts himself, and in this case in a big way.

Christian apologists are fond of claiming that someone like me cannot possibly understand the Bible. You have to believe it first, and accept the Christian faith, before you can truly understand the message of the Bible. Believers do have a point. Only to a committed Christian does *Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you* mean *kill the bastards*.

It is obvious that the reverse is true. Only non-believers are capable of objectively reading and truly understanding the Bible. Christians rarely actually read the Bible. Instead, they rely on what their minister or priest or family tells them the Bible says. They are supremely confident that if there is anything important they need to know about the Bible, someone will tell them all about it. So there is really no need for them to read it for themselves. Bible study groups are carefully controlled so that they do nothing but reinforce the brainwashing.

We rarely, if ever, hear about what the Bible really says and means, because few people other than Christian apologists have any interest in the Bible. Why would non-believers waste their time studying and discussing something they don't accept as valid?

I studied the Bible when I was still a believer. Now that I have been miraculously cured of Christianitis, I see for the first time what the Bible truly is and says, and I write about it. I know the Bible better than most Christians, and I will gladly debate any Christian who is brave enough to try to prove me wrong. You have nothing to fear. You have the omniscient, omnipotent God on your side. You have millions of like-minded sympathizers and supporters. All that against little old me. I don't have a chance. So prove me wrong and shut me up. What's stopping you? What are you afraid of?

Jesus Gave Bad Advice

Luke 6:27-30

“But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again.

This may have made sense in Jesus' time and in Jewish culture, but it is not good advice for today. Following this advice would make you an easy target and a doormat. It would make you a victim, and possibly a coward.

Matthew 18:21-22

Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

Taking these passages together could be disastrous. A woman in an abusive relationship could easily interpret them to mean that she has no choice but to stay with an abusive husband or boyfriend, no matter how much he beats her up or how long the abuse continues. When you factor in the Jewish law against divorce, she could easily feel trapped and doomed.

An attitude of patience, tolerance, forgiveness, and longsuffering is fine, but Jesus goes too far. Fortunately, most Christians don't know what the Bible says, and they wouldn't let it interfere much with whatever it is they feel like doing even if they did know.

Fundagelicals who insist that the Bible is the inspired, infallible, inerrant word of God and that it must be interpreted literally don't interpret it literally at all, except in a few cherry-picked instances when it happens to support their beliefs. I have never known a Christian who actually does what Jesus instructs them to do here. Why not? Because it would be incredibly stupid. Nobody in their right mind is going to let people steal from them without

reporting it, attempting to recover the stolen property, and going to great lengths to prevent it from happening again. Responsible Christians do not hand a \$20 bill to someone on the streets who will undoubtedly use it to buy alcohol or drugs.

Yet they will never admit that Jesus dishes out bad advice. The typical response, in the few cases where a Christian can be bothered to respond at all, is that this passage must be considered in context. They can't offer a coherent, plausible explanation of how that changes the clear meaning of the text, but then they realize there is no getting around the fact that Jesus' advice is potentially disastrous. So they rationalize, trivialize, marginalize, distort, obfuscate, and deny. How refreshing it would be if those who claim to have a lock on Truth would just be honest. Speaking of honesty . . .

Jesus Told Us to be Dishonest

In Luke 16:1-13 we find the strange Parable of the Dishonest Manager, and in it we find this strange verse.

Luke 16:9:

And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

There are a few Bible stories, verses, and parables that we hear over and over and over. This is not one of them. I've never heard a sermon based on this passage. I've never been to a Sunday School class featuring this passage. It isn't much talked about. I wonder why.

Maybe because it is another example of Jesus' incredibly poor judgment and bad advice. It's the story of a manager who gets busted by his master for incompetence or theft, apparently. When he gets fired, the shady manager decides to do what he does best: cheat. He goes to each of his master's accounts receivable and slashes the amount they owe. That makes him a hero in the eyes of the people who owe his master money. It buys the manager a lot of good will which he can use to his advantage later. It's not a manager who

rips off his master that makes this parable so interesting. It's the fact that Jesus applauds the manager's chicanery and encourages us to emulate his corruption.

Many Christians deny that the corrupt Church of the Middle Ages was managed by real Christians. They weren't following the true teachings of Christianity, so those guys weren't really Christians, and their wickedness doesn't really stink up the religion, they tell us. I guess they haven't read the Bible much. It seems Jesus would have cheered them on and praised them for being such faithful servants. Their corruption was in accordance with Christian conduct.

If, as they suggest, we can distinguish between real Christians and CINO (Christians in name only) by their conduct, then there are a lot more true Christians than I thought. In fact, Wall Street and Washington DC are full of them. Who knew!

faux devotion to strict interpretation. So, what did Jesus mean if not exactly what he said? And why didn't he just say that? Why doesn't Jesus just say what he means and mean what he says?

He does. The problem is that fundagelicals can't accept what Jesus said, what he clearly meant. So they have to pretend that he meant something else. Fickle fundagelicals. They accept the ludicrous tale about the virgin birth. They accept the risible ruse of the resurrection. They are so dedicated to strict interpretation at times that many believe the symbolic sacramental blood and flesh of Jesus are literally Jesus' flesh and blood. So, it should be no surprise that minds that disturbed can capriciously and arbitrarily abandon strict interpretation at other times with absolutely no sense of their own profound incongruity and hypocrisy.

Jesus Said to Hate Those Who Love You Most

Luke 14:26

“Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple.

Exodus 20:12

Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

Imagine that. Gentle Jesus telling people to hate those who love them most. Imagine that. Jesus contradicting the Jewish law to which he is bound to adhere. Of all the rotten, dangerous, self-destructive, misguided, incredibly stupid stuff Jesus spouted, this easily makes the top five.

Luke 14:26 alone should be enough to cause any reasonable, intelligent person to eschew Christianity.

I can see the rolled eyes and exasperated sighs of fundagelicals, who are thinking that Jesus didn't really mean what he said. Well, so much for that