

Jesus Surprises

Jesus Disclaimed Doctrine of Original Sin

Christians tell us that all men are born sinners, and that we have Adam and Eve to thank for that. We aren't sinners because of anything we have done, but because of what happened long ago in the Garden of Eden. No matter how hard we try, no matter what we do (and don't do), we start out as sinners, and Christianity is the only antidote. Catholics are so adamant about it that they tell us even little babies may be doomed to eternal damnation in hell if their parents don't get them baptized into the Church PDQ.

But Jesus seems to disagree with that doctrine. In John 15: 22 and 24 he says: **If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. . . . If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin.**

What did Jesus mean by that? Is the doctrine of original sin true? If so, Jesus was wrong. If not, the story about Adam and Eve is wrong. Which is it?

Then we find this in Acts 17:30:

While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent,

That also seems to disprove the doctrine of original sin. If we are all sinners at (or even before) birth because of Adam & Eve, and if Christianity is the only source of salvation, then what about all those people who lived before Christianity was invented? No problem. They get a pass. So, the doctrine of original sin didn't kick in before Jesus? Adam & Eve didn't affect them? Then it isn't really original sin, is it? It's something entirely new. Christianity makes a mockery of itself at every turn.

Jesus and John the Baptist

The religious landscape of Palestine in Jesus' time looked like this. There were . . .

Pharisees, who were fastidious about keeping the Jewish law. After all, they reasoned, isn't that why God gave them the law – to obey as closely as humanly possible? And when they put it like that, what good Jew wouldn't want to be a Pharisee? Well, Jesus, for one. Why? Because the Pharisees were a bit too ostentatious, pretentious, and maybe hypocritical for Jesus' taste.

Sadducees, who controlled the Temple and sacrifices. They were the power players and aristocrats in Palestine. They were the liaison between Roman authorities and Jews. That was not an option for a peasant from Galilee, but Jesus could still have aligned himself with their teaching.

Essenes, a monastic community which was primarily focused on preserving their purity by avoiding the corrupting influences of the world around them. They are the group who produced the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Zealots, who urged a military and religious rebellion against their Roman oppressors. They wanted to establish Israel as a sovereign state. Judas Iscariot was likely heavily influenced by this group, which is probably why he betrayed Jesus, who wasn't aggressive enough for Judas' taste.

Jesus could have gone any of these routes, but he didn't. He allied himself, instead, with John the Baptist, a Jewish apocalyptic prophet. Which is exactly what Jesus himself became (or already was).

Father Knows Best?

Matthew 12:18

“Here is my servant, whom I have chosen, my beloved, with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.

Matthew 15:24

He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

Which is it? Was Jesus' mission and ministry primarily focused on Jews, or was it also directed at Gentiles? It seems that maybe Jesus and the Father were not on the same page.

Another major fundagelical oops.

Jesus Opens Mouth, Inserts Foot

Luke 7:28

I tell you, among those born of women no one is greater than John; yet the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”

John, of course, refers to John the Baptist. He was a pretty good guy, for sure. But to say that no one born of women is greater than him is a bit of an exaggeration, isn't it? Jesus was born of a woman, wasn't he? Jesus is not greater than J the B? What about the 12 apostles / disciples? Jesus said they would sit in the kingdom of heaven as judges over the twelve tribes of Israel. That's a bit greater than J the B, isn't it? What about Mary, the mother of Jesus? What about the great Old Testament prophets and patriarchs? Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, Jeremiah? They are pretty important characters. What about Paul?

Here's the rest of the verse.

yet the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”

Really? The most flagitious scoundrel who repents and converts on his deathbed is greater in God's kingdom than John the Baptist? What does that mean, anyway? Greater in what respect? Is there a social class system in the kingdom? Are people

ranked somehow in the kingdom? If so, the kingdom of God sounds an awful lot like life on earth as we know it. Before long, someone of a lower caste is going to resent the top dogs, then there will be conflict, murder, and war, just like we have now.

Doesn't it seem that Jesus sometimes suffers from foot-in-mouth disease? Doesn't he get just a bit carried away from time to time? A bit hyperbolic?

Jesus, Moses, John, and Paul. Who's the greatest of them all?

Mixed Signals

Mark 8:12

And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, “Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to this generation.”

Weren't Jesus' miracles signs?

Luke 11:30

For just as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so the Son of Man will be to this generation.

Luke 21:25

“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves.

Jesus says there will be no sign. Then he says he is the sign. Then he says to look to the skies for all kinds of signs. Not only are there errors and contradictions in the inerrant, infallible, inspired Word, but there are contradictions even within Jesus' own words. He says one thing, then another. In the process, he endorses astrology.

A sign of what? That Jesus was the long-anticipated Jewish Messiah? If that's what the Jewish leaders were asking for, then why didn't Jesus simply say that his miracles, his healing, and his casting out demons were sufficient signs for them to take him seriously? Wasn't that at least a big part of why he did those things?

Matthew 11:2-5

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them.

That's the response he gave to John the Baptist's disciples. Why not give the same answer to the Jewish leaders? Could it be that they were asking not for proof that Jesus was the Messiah, but for signs that would tell them when the kingdom of heaven was about to arrive? But, again, why tell them there would be no sign when Jesus told others that there would be lots of signs? In fact, he went into detail about the signs of the coming.

Mark 8:11-12, 13:1-8, 16:17-18; Matthew 12:38-40, 16:1-4, 24:1-30; Luke 11:14-20, 11:30, 21:7-28

He also said that nobody, including himself, knew the exact date or time. But he told his followers that many of them would still be alive when the kingdom of heaven arrived.

Matthew 16:28

Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

In other words, he was the sign, as he said in Luke 11:30. So why would he say that there would be no sign given to his generation?

In the end, it makes no difference why Jesus contradicted himself about signs. He was wrong about all of it. He believed the kingdom of heaven would be an earthly kingdom, not a heavenly one, and that it would arrive sometime during his generation. It didn't happen. Jesus was wrong. He was merely a Jewish apocalyptic prophet. He was a failed prophet. He is not the savior of the world. He was just a man. Maybe not even that.

How Could Jesus Say That with a Straight Face?

Luke 12:4-7

“I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that can do nothing more. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him! Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten in God’s sight. But even the hairs of your head are all counted. Do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Luke 21:12-18

“But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. This will give you an opportunity to testify. So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance; for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. You will be hated by all because of my name. But not a hair of your head will perish.

What did Jesus mean by that? It seems clear enough. He is saying that no harm will come to you. If you accept him, he's got your back. Don't worry about a thing. Jesus is your bodyguard, your protector, your guardian.

Yet we can't avoid noticing that reality is very different. Good people die every day. Good devout Christians die every day, often painful, cruel, violent deaths. Sometimes innocent little children die cruelly and violently. For example the school children who were gunned down at Sandy Hook. And the children who died in a bus crash in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Clearly Jesus was not there to protect them. Yes, every hair of their sweet little heads perished.

So, what did Jesus mean in those verses? Either Jesus meant something other than what he said, or he was mistaken, or he lied. Which is it, Christians? How do you reconcile Jesus' bold promises with reality?

Jesus loves the little children -- all the children of the world;

red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his sight.

Jesus loves the little children of the world.

Most Christians learned to sing that little song in Sunday School. Most Christians are very familiar with paintings of cherubic children, smiling, playing, with a guardian angel hovering overhead, protecting them from harm and hurt. Along with very reassuring cherry-picked verses from the Bible, Christians are constantly assured that they need not worry, because Jesus has got their back.

Yet anyone who has lived on planet earth recently knows very well that it's all a crock of pope poop.

Yes, Jesus loves the little children so much that he stood idly by while 20 of them got massacred in kindergarten not too long ago. THEN God took action, sending special angels to comfort the grieving parents. That's a vastly different Jesus than the one sold by ministers and Sunday School teachers. Christianity is a fraud, a lie.