



The Voice of Truth

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Oh, You Offended Me!

By Jimmy Pettigrew

In our society people are taught to get along with everybody. Don't rock the boat, don't stir up trouble, we should "agree to disagree." We are told that we shouldn't say anything that might offend someone in some way or another. That we shouldn't preach or teach anything that might offend someone either to our brethren or people in false religious groups. We don't want to hurt anybody's feelings, let us all just get along. Well, that might sound good, but what does the Bible say concerning this subject?

First, the Greek word for offend is skandalizo, and it means to stumble or to sin, or cause displeasure. Keep this meaning in mind as we go through this article. Now, let us look what the Bible says on this subject "Oh, you offended me!"

Question, did Jesus Christ offend those He came in contract with? Yes He did! Why were they offended? Remember that the word offend means to stumble, to sin or cause displeasure. So, why were the people Jesus came in contract with caused displeasure, to sin, or stumble? Well, let us look at some examples.

In **Matthew 13:54ff**, Jesus departed for "His own country," which would have been Nazareth. Here, He taught in the synagogue, and the people were astonished at His abilities and His wisdom (vs. 54). He taught them (from **Luke's account 4:21**) that the Scripture which He had quoted was fulfilled in Him. The concept that Jesus might be more than merely one of them was unthinkable to the people of Nazareth. Hence, "they were offended in Him" (**Matt. 13:57**). Now what caused these people to be offended, what caused these people displeasure, to sin or stumble? The Truth! Jesus didn't offend them, cause them displeasure, to sin or to stumble, the Truth did! The Truth caused these people displeasure! The Truth caused these people to harden their hearts, the sin of unbelief! If these people had believed that the Scripture which He quoted was fulfilled in Him, then what would they have done? They would have done everything that Jesus had asked of them, but they did not believe. The Truth caused these people to stumble! They were pierced with the Truth, rebelled at Truth, and were offended because of Truth! The Truth causes displeasure in ones life because they don't want to change their life, or they don't want to except the Truth, so they sin, stumble because they don't do Truth (**Jas. 1:22-25**), they are deceiving themselves, fighting against God. So, what happens? They tell the person who told them the truth, "Oh, you offended me!" Well, how did I caused you displeasure, caused you to sin or to stumble? You have displeasure because you won't change, you deny the Truth. You sin because you won't accept the Truth on any given subject. If you were fully convinced that God's Word is just exactly that, there wouldn't be any problem with any subject; you could mold your life to the teaching of the Truth. The sad thing about this is the fact that there are many unbelievers even in the church. You, yourself is where the fault lies. Sadly, when many brethren hear something that offends them (something that causes them to wiggle or whisper in their seats!) they leave! They go to congregations where they can get their ears

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tickled and won't be offended anymore.

Another example is found in **Matthew 15:1ff**. Jesus was teaching on the inconsistency of the Pharisees. The scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem came to Jesus with a question. "Why do thy disciples transgress the traditions of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread" (**Matt. 15:2**). Jesus said that they "transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition" (**vs. 3**). He called them "hypocrites" (**vs. 7**). He said to them "In vain they worship Me . . ." (**vs. 9**). We must realize that the Pharisees were standing there listening to Jesus when He said these things. And notice what the apostles said: "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" (**vs. 12**). What offended these Pharisees? What caused them displeasure, to sin or stumble? The Truth! They were offended by the things He (Jesus) had said to them and about them. He exposed their disloyalty to God's law, called them "hypocrites" and pronounced their religion vain. Yes, they were offended! The apostles they were more concerned with the feelings of a pack of wolves (Pharisees) than with Truth. They were worried more about projecting a favorable "image" in the eyes of the opinion-makers of the day than they were about pleasing God. They were actually suggesting that Jesus "tone down" His message so that it might not offend those men of repute from Jerusalem. Jesus' response to the disciples concerning the offended Pharisees is most instructive. Instead of running to the Pharisees saying, "Oh, I'm sorry for the Truth I had spoken!" "Please come back!" This is what many so-called brethren want us to do. Notice what Jesus said in response to what the apostles said: "But he answered and said, "Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit" (**Matt. 15:13-14**). If they were going to be offended, then let it be so! "Let them alone," not in the way of ceasing to expose their errors, but in the sense of making no effort to appease them. If people become our enemies when we tell them the Truth (**Gal. 4:16**), it is because they do not love the Truth, they don't want to see the Truth, because they refuse to see it (**John 9:40-41**). Truth is truth, and most don't want to obey it. The reason the Pharisees were offended was because they knew what Jesus said was true. They couldn't deny it, and it made them mad. Truth is more important than hurting someone's feelings! Brethren, you can't stand for the Truth and never offend anyone at the same time. Jesus said, "And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me" (**Matt. 11:6**).

What Jesus Left?

By Kent E. Heaton, Sr.

When we think of the greatest sacrifice ever given, the scene at the cross comes to mind with the Son of God nailed upon a plank of wood. How cruel man could be to another man and how shameful the act of crucifixion that would be imposed upon God's Son! The power of love and the devotion of Christ to His Father are clearly heard in His cries in the garden and upon the cross. But let us turn the camera back to a time preceding the cross.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (**John 1:1-3,14**). We see Jesus as He was before His birth and ministry upon the earth. He was with God and was God and through Him the world was made. He dwelt with God before time began and unfolded the creation of the world. He watched as man rebelled against God and the Garden of Eden was no longer a safe haven for man.

From His presence with God He beheld the terrible flood that would consume the whole earth and destroy all that had the breath of life—save eight souls and an ark full of animals. He would witness the unfolding of the history of men as they would fight and kill one an-

other, and the chosen people of God would rise in victory in their faith and fall in defeat in their unbelief. The “time” would come as the fullness of all things had come, and He knew that to save men from their downward spiral of destruction and fear of death—He would have to become a man.

“Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (**Philippians 2:5-8**). The phrase “made Himself of no reputation” means that Christ “emptied” Himself from His place with God.

The greatness of the sacrifice of Jesus is found in what He left and what He became. He was God who became man in the flesh and had to bear under the burdens of the flesh. He was tempted as all men (**Hebrews 2:14-18; Hebrews 4:14-16; James 1:14; 1 John 2:16**). He left a “realm” of all power, all knowledge and all presence for a world where He had to learn to walk as a little child and learn to talk. He “increased in wisdom” (**Luke 2:52**) as other children, and yet He was far beyond them all in understanding (**Luke 2:46-49**). He hungered where He had never hungered before. He tired and needed to sleep; yet as God, He did not weary or sleep (**Isaiah 40:28**).

He wept and felt anguish of heart in the deep emotions of the human spirit (**John 11**). He felt the pain of the whips upon His back as they beat Him unmercifully before they drove iron spikes through His flesh and nailed Him to a cross. He had not felt or known these measures of man as God. He became man to be a merciful and faithful High Priest to aid those who are tempted (**Hebrews 2:17,18**).

How can we understand the humanity and the deity of Jesus and not understand what He left? I wonder (and I know there is no answer) what He and His Father said or thought as Jesus left to come to the Earth? They shared glory together (**John 17:5**) and eternity. How shrill the cry must have been in those final gasping moments when Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?,” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (**Matthew 27:46**). How deep the pain and the sorrow must have been as He became sin and for that moment He and His Father must be separated.

What Jesus left to empty Himself will never be measured in human terms. What He gave is measured in blood. What He offers is salvation through that blood. What He gained is found in Paul’s writing: “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (**Philippians 2:9-11**).

What Does it Mean to Work Out Your Own Salvation?

By Brian Yeager

(**Philippians 2:12**) “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” This is a verse that many false teachers use to justify changes in God’s plan of Salvation. They also use this to justify changes in the authorization of the things that we do. Do keep in mind that the Apostle Paul penned this letter by inspiration. This letter was written to the Church in Philippi. To work out your own salvation is not to change the word, but to work in the word. In working out our own salvation we will remain faithful in the work of the Lord unto death. We should do those things that will assure us a place in Heaven through the grace of God and your obedience to his will.

First and foremost in this study we must set in order God's plan for salvation. Christ commanded that the Gospel be taught to all nations (**Matthew 28:19**). He said that after the Gospel had been preached they had to believe and be baptized (**Mark 16:15-16**). A great importance was placed upon the preaching of the word because without hearing the word no one could believe (**Romans 10:14**). Christ commanded repentance (**Luke 13:3,5**). The Apostle Peter preached repentance prior to baptism (**Acts 2:38**). Christ demanded confession that he was whom he was (**Matthew 10:32-33**). Confession is unto salvation (**Romans 10:10**). The final step for salvation, after hearing, believing, repenting, and confessing is baptism (**Romans 6:3-5**). We can see baptism as the final act in the conversion examples that we have in the book of Acts (**Acts 2:22-47, 8:4-13, 8:26-39, 9:1-20, 22:6-16, 10:1-11:18, 16:13-15, 16:23-34, and 18:8**). Christ said that if a person is not born again of water they shall not see the Kingdom of Heaven (**John 3:1-5**). God's plan for one to be saved is simple and true. One is taught the truth about Christ and the Kingdom (Church) (**Acts 8:12**). Then that person becomes part of the Church of Christ through obedience in baptism (**I Corinthians 12:12-13**). Remember that those that received Paul's words were Christians and therefore had already been obedient to God's plan of Salvation. The fact that they were Christians is evident in verse one when Paul refers to them as saints. (**Philippians 1:1**) "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons."

Does work out your own salvation mean that you can rewrite the rules? No it does not! The Old Testament gives us passages that say not to change the word (**Deuteronomy 4:2 and Numbers 24:12-13**). The New Testament also gives us passages that tell us not to add or take from God's word (**Galatians 1:8-9 and Revelation 22:18-19**). Christ tells us that there is no expiration date on his words. (**Matthew 24:35**) "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." God said to hear his Son. (**Matthew 17:5**) "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Before Christ gave what is called "The Great Commission" he said that he has all authority in Heaven and Earth (**Matthew 28:18-19**). In a great passage found in II Timothy we are told that all scripture is inspired. (**II Timothy 3:16-17**) "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The simple truth of the matter is that there are rules, they are God given, and they cannot or will not change. If the Gospel is changed and people follow those changes to please man, they simply cannot be the servants of Christ (**Galatians 1:10**). I love the words of the Apostle Paul when he proclaimed that what he taught was not of man but of Christ. (**Galatians 1:11-12**) "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

In closing this article I would like to point out the fact that we are under a law that is not our own. We are under an unchanging law. We have no authority to change the scriptures. We must realize that the word is all-sufficient. I will close with a summary verse from the inspired word of God. Do remember that if you want to see Heaven you must follow God's plan, but those choices are yours as you work out your own salvation. (**II Peter 1:3**) "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."