

## Follow Jesus: He Spoke God's Words

Joe Slater

As John the immerser sought to calm his fretful disciples, he told them, *"He whom God has sent (i.e. Jesus) speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure"* (John 3:34). What better reason would anyone need for following Jesus?

Our Lord Himself stressed that He spoke God's words: "My doctrine is not mine, but His who sent Me" (John 7:16). Later He reaffirmed, ". . . all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15).

Many prophets preceding Jesus spoke the words of God; but Jesus was superior to them all. He out-ranked them. He spoke not only what He was told by inspiration, but what He had seen and heard. And He possessed the Spirit without measure.

Beyond any shadow of doubt, the old prophets were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Ezekiel, for example, says over and over, "The word of the Lord came to me, saying . . ." This shows that Ezekiel's inspiration was not continuous; from day to day and time to time, as the need arose, God gave Ezekiel His words.

Jesus, however, received the Holy Spirit at His baptism, as witnessed by John who saw the Spirit descending like a dove. Jesus had the Spirit to the fullest extent, like no other before or since. We can know and be assured that Jesus spoke the words of God, and that we are safe in following Him.

## HOLD FAST

*"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works"* (Hebrews 10:23-24).

Just off the New England coast a yacht race took place during a very heavy tide but only a slight wind. Consequently, the boats were slowly being pulled backward by the tide, even though they were under full sail. The small breeze couldn't overcome the tide.

Without anyone noticing, the skipper of one of the yachts dropped anchor; he took the lead by holding fast while everyone else was going in the wrong direction. When the tide's pull eased, he weighed anchor and went on to win the race.

Though everyone else may be going in the wrong direction, all children of God are responsible to hold fast, lest the Devil overcome us with his deceitful and evil tactics . Paul encouraged the early Christians to *"test all things; hold fast to that which is good. Abstain from every form of evil"* (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22). And to Timothy Paul wrote, *"Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have received from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus"* (2 Timothy 1:13).

To the church at Thyatira Christ said, *"But hold fast what you have till I come"* (Revelation 2:25). He told the spiritually dead church at Sardis, *"Remember, therefore, how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent"* (Revelation 3:3).

The Hebrews writer described our responsibility to persevere: ". . . but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of hope firm to the end" (Hebrews 3:6).

--Cecil Burch (adapted) via *Old Paths*

## LIVING AS EXILES

I don't think we believe we are living in exile in America. We look at ourselves as extremely blessed to live in such a rich country. We have all kinds of freedoms and rights because we are citizens of the United States of America. While there are many blessings to be had living in this country, have we missed the fact that we are first and foremost citizens of heaven? *"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ"* (Philippians 3:20).

I encourage you to read the Old Testament book of Daniel to see God's people living as exiles in a country not their own. There are several lessons we can glean from this book on how we should live today in a country that is spiritually not our own.

The Jews worked hard and served the Babylonians without undermining the government or rebelling in any way. They were respectful and submissive to the rulers over them. They lived above reproach; even their enemies struggled to find fault with them. However, their true loyalty was to God. The Jews would disobey the laws of Babylon or Persia so they could remain faithful to God. They accepted the consequences of their disobedience, even if it was death, because they trusted in God's power to save.

--Travis Robertson (Huntersville, NC) via *Bulletin Gold*

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When one boasts about being "a self-made man," he is living proof that he did a poor job.

--R. L. Whiteside (Anvil Sparks)