

Just The Red Stuff
By Wayne Vasilenko

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Many of my writings deal with the errors I perceive within the teachings of the modern church. I am not a theologian by any means; my personal knowledge comes from years of studying the bible and through the teachings of many "Spirit Filled" preachers throughout the years. Much of my knowledge comes directly from the Holy Spirit in the same way the disciples received knowledge because of the relationship they had with Jesus. I am not attempting to put myself above anyone else by that statement; I am only confirming that as the bible states, the Holy Spirit gives us discernment concerning spiritual matters and that the Spirit indwells us when we accept Jesus as our Savior. The Holy Spirit, just like God the Father and Jesus, is the same yesterday – today – and forever. The distortions we find in modern churches and religion in general are not caused by mixed messages *from* God, but rather by mixed messages *about* God coming from man. This comes about in most cases from things being taken out of context, and in many cases misunderstandings of the culture of the audience at the time that various passages were spoken or written. Dr. Minto and I have decided to try something a little different... We will concentrate for a time strictly on the ministry of Jesus. I will concentrate on His teachings while He walked among us (the Red Letter portions of the Bible which represent the actual words of Jesus; hence the title of this series, "Just the Red Stuff") while Dr. Minto will be commenting on the culture and understanding of the people who actually heard Him speak those words. Many, if not most people that read the bible, believe (at least initially) that the New Testament or New Covenant begins at the Gospel of Matthew chapter one! This is not true... when Jesus walked the earth He was subject to Jewish law. One of Jesus' statements was that He was not here to cancel out the law but rather to fulfill it.

Matthew 5:17-18 (ESV)

¹⁷ **"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.**

Everything about the law pointed to Jesus and our need for a Savior; the law was given to show us how imperfect we are. It is my opinion, (and history backs me up) that over time the religious leaders began adding to the laws given by God, their own rules and regulations, which were easier in some cases for them being religious zealots to outwardly obey so as to show themselves worthy of their position over the people. As the people strived to be obedient of those laws, the religious leaders became stricter and stricter in order to continue to appear above the common people. Again... this is my opinion. So in order to keep things in perspective, let us explore what Jesus deemed important when He addressed His followers. In the process I believe we will gain a deeper understanding of where the doctrines of man strayed from the truth of God's Word.

The Beginning of the Ministry of Jesus

Why was Jesus Baptized? John the Baptist was administering the "Baptism of Repentance" to his followers; if Jesus was sinless, why did He insist on being baptized by His cousin John?

Matthew 3:13-15 (NKJV)

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ And John *tried to* prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" ¹⁵ But Jesus answered

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and said to him, **"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."** Then he allowed Him.

Yes, it is true that Jesus had no need to repent, but this act of His baptism had a different purpose; it was to bring attention to who He was to the people in reference to a prophecy in the book of Daniel.

Daniel 9:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.

This in essence was the opening kickoff of a new season in the way God would deal with the sinfulness of man. It was the beginning of the fulfilling of Jesus' purpose for being born as one of us. Following His baptism, Jesus went into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan, something that needed to be done in order for Jesus to be able to truly relate to common man and for us to relate to Him. From that point on no one would ever be able to say to Him that He didn't know what we (common man) goes through when it comes to temptation. So let's get into some of the **"Red Stuff"**... We will start with some of the ways that Jesus dealt with Satan which are recorded as lessons for us when we face the same temptations Jesus faced.

Matthew 4:1-4 (NKJV)

¹ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. ³ Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." ⁴ **But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "**

In verse four above, Jesus was quoting from *Deuteronomy 8:3*. As a Rabbi, Jesus committed the scripture to memory. I often wonder with envy how people memorize scripture as I have trouble remembering my name at times so it seems. I believe the key is study - study - and more study! After all, there are a lot of thing I do remember... I remember a lot of trivial things, we all do! Why is that? I believe it is all a matter of what we dwell on. To dwell on something means to pause... **Selah!** In this case it would mean to not just read over a passage of scripture but to stop and think about it... consider what it means, and what it means to you. So what is Jesus teaching us here in Part One of The Red Stuff? I see three major teachings in this one verse of scripture: 1. Jesus is standing up to Satan... as we also should. 2. Jesus is teaching that not everything we feel is as important as it seems. (Remember Jesus fasted forty days, being a man, He was hungry!) 3. The most important thing for us to be concerned about is God and His Word. So... as we continue our study of "The Red Stuff" take the time to dwell on what Jesus said and what it means to you and me. Let us all grow not only closer to God, but in the process also closer to one another as we take out the opinion and religious doctrine factor and concentrate on the words of our Lord and Master. Until next time... God Bless You with wisdom and knowledge.