

Can We Understand God's Will for Us?

How do we know what God instructs us to do? Jesus tells us how to learn God's will by using our Bibles!

In Matthew 22 Jesus is asked three questions; all intended to entrap Him; and evidently questions which caused debate among Jews. Jesus reprimanded the inquisitors for seeking to entrap Him, and for not knowing what God had clearly taught. He categorized the inquisitors as "hypocrites," "mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God," and not knowing that the greatest commandment represents "all the Law and the Prophets." By this Jesus teaches that everyone is able to know and to understand God's will.

The first question is about paying taxes to Caesar, in which the Pharisees thought Jesus would either contradict God or Caesar with His answer. Jesus taught that God, who founded governments of men (Daniel 2:21; 4:17), gave governments the right to a budget (Eccl. 11:19). Since governments are from God; to deny taxes to a king is to contradict the king and to contradict God. Thus Jesus said a man must pay taxes to the king and to God. They should have arrived at this answer themselves!

The second question is about the resurrection of the dead. The Sadducees thought they had Jesus trapped, since they could not explain who would be the husband of a widow in the resurrection, since she had had seven successive husbands. Jesus indicated, "*None of the above.*" He based the truth of life-after-death on God's statement "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Ex. 3:15). One is expected to determine from this statement that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are living although they died physically; because God is still their God! They should have arrived at this answer themselves!

The third question was, "Which is the great commandment in the Law?" Jesus tells a lawyer that "all the Law and Prophets" hang on two commandments. Jesus teaches that readers of "You shall love the Lord you God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind," (Deut. 6:4-5) and "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," (Lev.

19:18) should conclude that these commandments are the foundation of all others. Importantly both of these commandments include statements about God's identity: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!" (Deut. 6:5), and "I am the Lord" (Lev. 19:18). Thus obedience to these commandments must characterize the people of God in all that they do. They should have arrived at this answer themselves!

Jesus is saying that all people can and all people must understand God's will. The teaching of God's will is not limited to a single communication style in the Bible; i.e. direct statement, command, narrative, example, inference, etc. The starting point must always be built, as Jesus did, on the identity of God. All three of His answers do this! Let's read the Bible and understand God's will for us.

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