



20th February 2006

Welcome to

Wake Up Call

your weekly email support from WorkNet

Calling and Testing Four - Colliding Words

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This is the fourth in a short series on the testing of Jesus as He started a new phase of the work He was born to do

When Jesus of Nazareth was faced with the dilemmas of shortcutting His way to satisfaction He articulated the principle of living by the word of God and modelled it by quoting the word of God in His response.

The next step was a classic counter-measure. He is now invited to throw Himself onto the mercy of God on the basis of a quotation from the word of God. It now appears that the word of God is in contradiction with itself.

Before you close this file on the basis that we are now stuck in a theological ivory tower and you want to get out as soon as possible, you might like to consider that you will face or have faced such dilemmas where you work. There is a biblical principle of honesty and a biblical principle of considering others feelings. There is a biblical principle of supplying needs for yourself and standing up for what is right at the risk of losing your job. There is a biblical principle of patience and forgiveness and a biblical principle of high standards. In each case, in your dealings with people, these pairs of truths can come into conflict.

Most football fans hate referees as a matter of principle but sometimes the referees seem to provoke irritation. Sending off an individual for celebrating a goal may be within the law but misses the point of the game. Jesus was faced with a perfectly plausible quotation of a biblical principle that God protects His children. He is then invited to take a risk, and actually do something showy and stupid, to authenticate God's word. It would have been a spectacular stunt, hit the headlines and could have resulted in a newsworthy display of God's power. But it was ill conceived, stupid and would inevitably have turned people off as much as claiming to see a weeping statue arouses a weary scepticism in people today.

His actual response was to warn against putting God to the test. God is not reducible to a demonstration of support for my stupid actions. Many a Christian has sadly fallen into the trap of making a trivial issue the touchstone of faith or identifying God's faithfulness with His support of their position. It leads to discouragement, despair and from others mockery.

There are many ways God proves Himself as we throw ourselves upon His mercy and power. He does provide resources and rescue for His people and He does invite us to trust Him implicitly. But He does not want us to say, 'If you help me make this a success I will serve you forever', because if the success doesn't come you lose your way. More importantly He is calling you to work in such a way that others can see that you trust Him because you are walking with Him in integrity, not taking the moral high ground or laying down the letter of the law.

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Neither God nor you is here to pass a series of tests. To think like that would be to fall at another hurdle. God is not about stopping you committing suicide He is about walking with you through work and life. So when you find yourself caught between two words of God look for the higher third word which resolves the conflict. God will not hide this from you, you'll see.

Work Well,

Geoff Shattock

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Here is some Biblical background for your Wake Up Call

Matthew 3:16-4:11

16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6 "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:
" 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"

7 Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9 "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

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Also remember to have a look at the Bible sections for the biblical background to your Wake Up Call

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