

Jesus' Advice about Coherence

A guest document – by Ricardo de Valencia

A series about the Principle of Coherence — Part 3

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to demonstrate the biblical basis, in the New Testament, for the Principle of Coherence as applied to human behavior — that is, Jesus' advice that, while striving to practice coherent behavior ourselves, we also should strive to detect —and thus not imitate— incoherent behavior that we see in others, including especially religious leaders.

DEFINITIONS

Applied to human behavior, coherence is the soundness and continuity of our actions and words in such a way that no contradiction can be found in them.

Incoherence is synonymous with contradiction. Contradiction can be verbal or factual. It can be caused by saying one thing and its opposite at the same time, but also by saying one thing and doing the opposite, or by doing two different things that reflect two opposing beliefs.

Sometimes, incoherence can also be projected without being real, that is, imagined by others without any duplicity on our part (1). This is not without responsibility because, for a Christian, the possibility of causing scandal without intending to is also a serious matter that must be watched over. By “scandal” we mean “scandalous behavior that can lead the faithful away from God.” (2)

DETAILS

In a certain passage in Matthew, our Lord Jesus Christ directly warned us against the problem of inconsistency:

“Neither shall you swear by your head, for you can’t make one hair white or black. But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’ and your ‘No’ be ‘No.’ Whatever is more than these is of the evil one.”
[Matthew 5:36-37]

It is a message that we can interpret as follows:

Let our “yes” mean “yes” and our “no” mean “no” — always.

As Christians, we must strive to uphold such coherence in our words and actions

that we will not need to swear by anything or anyone, because we will have cultivated credibility in our words in the eyes of others.

We must be watchful because an excessive zeal to appear righteous and credible through outward appearances —an effort that is superfluous if we are truly coherent— betrays an attitude and spirit that do not come from God.

He taught us that we must use our intelligence to identify coherence or lack thereof — we must “discern the signs,” and this does not happen without an effort on our part to understand. And he indicated that the illumination of that intelligence will depend on it not being blocked by dishonesty in our hearts:

The Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing him, asked him to show them a sign from heaven. But he answered them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ In the morning, ‘It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ Hypocrites! You know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but you can’t discern the signs of the times! An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and there will be no sign given to it, except the sign of the prophet Jonah.” He left them and departed. [Matthew 16:1-4]

This application of our intelligence (3), and not simple obedience to what others who seem more educated tell us, is necessary for identifying inconsistency. The opposite would be to say that all Jews contemporary with Jesus should have blindly obeyed the leaders of the time and should not have considered the possibility that Jesus' message was true and coherent. Christianity would not exist today; it would never have been born.

The Gospel teaches us that we cannot be content with mere obedience to religious authorities, because they are capable of contradictory behavior. Sometimes this is due to infidelity and hypocrisy...

“The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat. All things therefore whatever they tell you to observe, observe and do, but don’t do their works; for they say, and don’t do. For they bind heavy burdens that are grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not lift a finger to help them. But they do all their works to be seen by men.” [Matthew 23:2-5]

Other times it is due to weakness, which even happened to Saint Peter (4) in a matter of Christian faith and morality:

But when Peter came to Antioch, I resisted him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before some people came from James, he ate with the Gentiles. But when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they didn’t walk uprightly according to the truth of the Good

News, I said to Peter before them all, “If you, being a Jew, live as the Gentiles do, and not as the Jews do, why do you compel the Gentiles to live as the Jews do?” [Galatians 2:11-14]

As this happened to Saint Peter, we must also be alert so that it does not happen even to those who claim to be, or have claimed to be, successors of Saint Peter (5) — or to any Christian leader who claims to act or speak in the Name of God (6). This attitude of watchfulness is what the Gospels really teach us — and not blind or absolute obedience to religious authorities.

To identify incoherence, one does not need the high intelligence of the wise men of this world. What is required is a sincere heart open to the action of God's Holy Spirit. It is our connection with Him, and not human wisdom by itself, that will open our understanding to warn us of danger, no matter how limited an individual's intelligence may be according to worldly standards.

If it were otherwise, the Incarnate Word of God would have been sent first to the wise and learned, but that was not the case:

She gave birth to her firstborn son. ... There were shepherds in the same country staying in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock. Behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. [Luke 2:7-9]

In that same hour, Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, and said, “I thank you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding, and revealed them to little children. ...” [Luke 10:21]

For example, Peter and John were “*unlearned and ignorant men*”. [Acts 4:13]

So rejoice, you humble of this world! Yours is the enlightenment that will enable you to see the incoherence in the world we are going through, while the multitudes prefer such severe obedience that they will zealously follow their religious leaders — and ultimately a false world religious leader — even from contradiction. (7)

Humility is a necessary virtue for recognizing the spirit of contradiction, but humility is not necessarily obedience to human authority. Don't be fooled!

What is humility? And why is it necessary?

Remember that humility is not necessarily poverty in material things or gifts received. Humility is a simple and sincere spirit without a desire to exalt oneself. A poor human spirit, the lack of an “ego” that fills our being, is what leaves room for the Holy Spirit of God to enter us, so that He may fill our being, and such is the meaning of the beatitude: (8)

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.” [Matthew 5:3]

On the contrary, arrogance is the attitude of attributing to human wisdom what only the Holy Spirit can achieve. It is the attitude of becoming so absolutely dependent on “authorities or other people who are more educated, smarter, or holier than us” that we place all our hope in them, replacing the necessary hope in God and thus blocking the coming of the Holy Spirit to open our eyes individually.

The Holy Spirit of God comes only to those who are willing to receive Him with humility, not to those who have earned more “points” for holiness, worthiness or wisdom — although He does not manifest Himself as He would in a Hollywood movie, but in a more subtle way (9).

Remember that the Incarnate Word of God was first presented to humble shepherds, who were neither “holy” nor “worthy” nor ‘wise’ [Luke 2:7-9], and then to people like Peter and John, who were “*unlearned and ignorant men*” [Acts 4:13], Peter having literally confessed himself to be “*a sinful man*” [Luke 5:8].

Because “no one is good except one – God” (10) and, if we are not holy, we are not worthy, and if we are not worthy, then when He decides to enlighten each of His own with His Spirit to alert us to the spirit of contradiction, that is an act of Mercy, not Justice. Arrogance would be to block that act of mercy because you don't believe yourself worthy.

Therefore, do not be afraid to reject the dictates or advice of a religious leader, no matter how high an authority they may be in the eyes of the world —by asking yourself, “Am I being disobedient to a representative of Jesus?”— if you feel deep down that “something is not right” because you have recognized the signs of a contradiction.

A FINAL CLARIFICATION

This is not a call for systematic disobedience. It is an invitation to obey God rather than men. Remember:

“The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat. All things therefore whatever they tell you to observe, observe and do, but don’t do their works; for they say, and don’t do.”

[Matthew 23:2-3]

The Pharisees accurately transmitted the God's Law according to the letter, but not its spirit, because they failed to set an appropriate example for others of how to follow it properly. Jesus asked this of his disciples: discernment, so as not to blindly follow human leaders of organized religion. And this is still necessary in our time, where there are also Pharisees disguised as men of piety. (11)

Remember that obedience to the Word and example of Jesus Christ —the ultimate example of how God's Law should be applied— is the yardstick for knowing when to “*observe and do, but don’t do their works*”. It was in this way that apostles such as Peter

and John, who were “*unlearned and ignorant men*” [Acts 4:13], followed Christ rather than “doing as they say”.

They called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, judge for yourselves, for we can’t help telling the things which we saw and heard.” [Acts 4:18-20]

But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men.” [Acts 5:29]

This is a reminder that the orders or advice of men in high religious positions cannot always be a perfect image of God, because only God is perfect! (12) (13) And we hope that it will serve as **encouragement and consolation** when the world reaches a situation in which, as in the time of Jesus' first coming, “obeying” the Temple Masters meant supporting them in asking that Barabbas be released and Jesus be crucified (14), and whoever did not obey them would be marked as a reckless and dangerous renegade.

People tend to forget that this attitude on the part of a few required special courage, and we want to bring spiritual support to that courage, which will also be necessary at the End of These Times (15). Do you think it will be easy to be an exception to the masses who will follow a False Messiah, a man who will be supported by religious leaders, especially Christians, and who will appear as the very convincing image of a man of piety and intimately connected with God? (16)

NOTES

(1) For example, see 1 Cor. 8:1-13, commented on in *Preventing Scandal within a Church* [Scandal.html]

(2) The passage in Mark 9:42-45 illustrates the seriousness that a scandal of this kind can reach.

(3) “Application of our intelligence”: For example: *How should the Bible be interpreted: Literally or Symbolically?* [BiblicalLiteralism.html]

(4) *The True Rock of Foundation was Christ – St. Peter was the administrative head* [rock.html]

(5) *Popes who did not follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit – Abominable popes in the history of the Papacy* [TruthAboutSomePopes.html]

(6) *The Fathers and Doctors of the Church are not necessarily role models* [TruthAboutSomeFathersAndDoctors.html]

(7) For example, suppose a Christian leader arrives who calls himself “The Father” [NotTheFatherEsp.html] [in Spanish] — a religious title that, according to Jesus, is reserved only for God [Matthew 23:9]— and another Christian leader, who calls himself “The Holy Father”, honors the first, preparing his image to be venerated worldwide [AnAnnouncement.html]. Would you be alarmed, or would you follow the crowd, which downplays this contradiction?

- (8) We give credit to [miguel de Portugal \[bio.html\]](#), who personally revealed this interpretation to us, a jewel from Heaven that we now have the opportunity to share with our readers.
- (9) John 3:8 “*The wind blows where it wants to, and you hear its sound, but don’t know where it comes from and where it is going.*” || How to recognize that wind: [The Will of God – How to Discern It – God’s Active and Passive Will – The Doors \[WillOfGod.html\]](#)
- (10) Mark 10:18 — “*Why do you call me good? No one is good except one – God.*” (Other translations of the Bible say “holy”) — Note that Jesus is not denying that He Himself is holy.
- (11) For example: [Ecclesiastical Masonry \(Secret Societies within the Church\) – Who Are They? \[ecclmason.html\]](#)
- (12) [The claim of Papal Infallibility – Who is like God? \[infallibility.html\]](#)
- (13) [Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect – What does it mean? \[PerfectAsTheFather.html\]](#)
- (14) [The Jews did not crucify Jesus, it was the fanatics! \[jewsdidnt.html\]](#)
- (15) [The world is NOT going to end... Not yet! \[millenium.html\]](#) –and– [The End of These Times \(Not of the World!\) Corner \[endcorner.html\]](#)
- (16) [About the False Christ \[TheFalseChrist.html\]](#)

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