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LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF

When a lawyer once stood up to test Jesus and asked him what he needed to do to inherit eternal life, the Lord responded first by asking him what the Law said for him to do. *"And he answered, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself,'" (Lk. 10:27).* Once Jesus acknowledged his answer to be correct, the lawyer pressed Jesus further asking Him to expound in greater detail what the command to love your neighbor truly meant by asking Jesus to specifically define the term "neighbor". What follows is a moving story about a kind hearted compassionate Samaritan who took a personal interest in the recovery of a total stranger he came upon who had been beaten up by thieves and

left for dead. Once the lawyer acknowledges that he understands from Jesus' story that a random stranger and a travelling Samaritan were in fact "neighbors" (and how compelling that the lawyer recognizes this from Jesus' parable since most Jews excluded Gentiles and Samaritans as being "neighbors" to love as themselves) Jesus instructs the lawyer must go beyond simply recognizing the truth in how widespread the application of that command really is but to even obey it. *"Then Jesus said to him, 'Go and do the same,'" (Lk. 10:37).* Often we read stories and parables Jesus spoke with the intent that we would be observant of various human behavior of the people he spoke about. And just as Jesus commanded the lawyer, He expects we would not merely

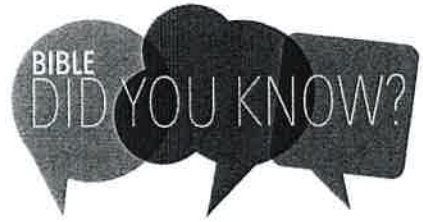
understand the lessons they provided but that they would serve as examples to be imitated and carried out ourselves. In many cases Jesus not only painted a picture of human behavior that was worthy of imitation, but even contrasts it with actions which wind up being condemned by the Lord which often serve as a true harsh reflection of our own selves in an effort to persuade us to change. *“When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them,”* (Mt. 21:45). When Jesus was mocked by the Pharisees for spending time with tax collectors and sinners, He told a story where the compassionate and forgiving behavior of the father is contrasted with the self-righteous and unloving attitude of the older brother in the parable of the prodigal son, hoping to show just how pitiful and ugly the Pharisees’ attitude towards sinners had become and to give them an example in the father of how they could emulate a more compassionate approach towards the lost. Over and over again Jesus is constantly highlighting certain righteous moments of behavior in the lives of human beings who were sinners themselves, demanding that we take notice in such astute observation and

study that we would mold our own behavior and character by their very actions and footsteps as noted by the Lord. If such is the case, how much more ought we to be the careful studious observers of every action performed and word uttered by Jesus, the perfect example of God living in the flesh? *“And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power,”* (Heb. 1:3). The very reason Paul has the confidence to implore all Christians to be studious observers of his behavior for emulation is because of his dedication to emulating the very behavior of Christ Himself. *“Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ,”* (1 Cor. 11:1). The words, deeds, actions and behavior of Jesus as recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are to be the very cornerstone of the set order of guidelines for every professed faithful Christian in going about their daily walk of life through this world. All of us striving to be “of Christ” as Christians are to be are to have every saying and action of His stamped upon our memories and hearts as we seek to obey His command in regards to our observance of noted approved Godly behavior: Go and do the same. “We know love by this, that He laid down

His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight," 1 John 3:16-22. "If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,' and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself," James 2:15-17. "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live

Through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." 1 John 4:7-11. -Daniel Ruegg



"But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.' For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
Matthew 25:26-30

People, Places, and Things of the **BIBLE**



Isaiah's Signature

A newly discovered small piece of clay may contain the signature of Isaiah, the biblical prophet. *Biblical Archaeology Review* announced the findings in its latest issue. Eilat Mazar, an archaeologist and author of the *BAR* piece, suggests the damaged half-inch clay oval may have contained Isaiah's name and title. According to *National Geographic*, the clay seal, or bulla, was one of 34 found during a 2009 excavation by Mazar. Because the seal is broken, the text contains the Hebrew name of Isaiah "Yesha'yah[u]" followed by the word "nvy." If the Hebrew letter aleph originally followed nvy, then it would be translated "Belonging to Isaiah the prophet." But without knowing if the final word actually is "prophet," some experts are unconvinced. "Of course, the assumption that this is a [seal] of Isaiah the prophet is scintillating, but it is certainly not something we should assume is at all certain," Christopher Rollston, professor of Semitic languages at George Washington University, told *National Geographic*. However, Robert Cargill, editor of *BAR* and a self-described skeptic, told *The Daily Beast* he believes the seal is "the first archaeological and extra-biblical reference to the prophet." Mazar cites the location of the discovery as evidence the artifact is from the famous prophet. Previous bullas from the same excavation bore the personal seal of King Hezekiah, who the bible records as a king of Judah during the time Isaiah served as a prophet. The seal impressions of Isaiah and King Hezekiah were found less than 10 feet apart in the Ophel excavations.

