

ATTEMPTING TO TRAP JESUS! MT. 19:3-12

The Jewish leadership wanted Jesus gone...but how to get it done!

Tempting him (πειράζω) became their modus operandi!

Tempting (πειράζω) = try, test, tempt → and by extension in Jesus case to trick and ultimately trap Him!

Matthew 4:1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted (πειρασθῆναι ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου) of the devil.

Matthew 16:1 The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting (πειράζοντες) desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.

Matthew 19:3 The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting (πειράζοντες) him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

Matthew 22:18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt (πειράζετε) ye me, ye hypocrites?

Matthew 22:35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting (πειράζων) him, and saying,

So, what exactly were they after? What traps were they setting to trap / catch Jesus?

1. A political trap: between Jesus and Herod Antipas⁺

Most of us deal with personal traps...fear, anxiety, money, marriage, bitterness,...

Few of us live in the realms of power, money, politics – Jesus did this by default!

Matthew 14:1 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, **Matthew 14:2** And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. **Matthew 14:3** For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. **Matthew 14:4** For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. **Matthew 14:5** And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

Matthew 14:10 And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. **Matthew 14:11** And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother. **Matthew 14:12** And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

John the Baptist spoke out and it cost him his life.

Would Jesus stick his head out of the pack and dare cross Herod Antipas?

Luke 23:6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean. **Luke 23:7** And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.

Luke 23:8 And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. **Luke 23:9** Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. **Luke 23:10** And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. **Luke 23:11** And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

Luke 23:12 And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

Acts 4:27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, **Acts 4:28** For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

Important footnote to marriage in the Greco-Roman World: Rome was a mess when it came to marriage.

They had lots of laws that seemed to not matter at all. Augustus had passed morality laws they he never obeyed in the least.

There was a great disjunction between their laws and their practices.

This is especially true among the upper class → those with power.

Lower class information is lacking.

2. A Biblical trap: between Jesus and Scripture | Moses

Matthew 19:7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

Deuteronomy 24:1 When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. **Deuteronomy 24:2** And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.

Deuteronomy 24:3 And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; **Deuteronomy 24:4** Her former husband, which sent her away, may **not** take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

Were the questions of the Pharisees legitimate?

For the common person this was the greatest trap.

If the Pharisees could trap Jesus in between Moses...would Jesus be the Messiah?

Moses allowed an exception

Did Jesus correct the exception?

Did Jesus eliminate the exception?

Did Jesus contradict the exception?

Deuteronomy 24:1 When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found **some uncleanness in her**: **then** let him write her a bill of divorcement, **and** give it in her hand, **and** send her out of his house. **Deuteronomy 24:2** **And** when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.

Matthew 19:9 And **I** say unto **you**, Whosoever shall put away his wife, **except it be for fornication**, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

Or did Jesus clarify the exception?

Some uncleanness = fornication

There was never a command to divorce!

Only exception was clarified & limited.

3. A theological trap: between Jesus and the various schools of thought / theology

This was a way of pigeon-holing Jesus!

I call this "Label & dismiss!"

You are one of "them!" So I don't need to listen to you!

This is not as dangerous but is quite effective.

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Shammai School: some uncleanness = sexual unfaithfulness

Hillel School: some uncleanness = divorce for trivial reasons

And then there were even looser schools of thought!

4. A practical Trap: between Jesus and the common man

Matthew 19:10 **His disciples** say unto him, **If** the case of the man be so with his wife, **it is not good to marry.**

Divorce and remarriage is a minefield!

People have opinions → very, strong opinions!

Opinions stronger than opinions about the Trinity, Deity of Christ, millennium...!

Shouldn't we all just have the Bible's opinion???