

IS IT RIGHT:

To Judge, To Expose Error, & To Call Names?

By E.L. Bynum

Many today believe that it is wrong to expose error and to name names. Liberals have always seemed to believe this, but in recent times it has been widely espoused by Evangelicals and Charismatics. Now we are seeing the same fatal error being declared by those who profess to be Bible believing fundamentalists. Those who are faithful in exposing error according to the Bible are now being widely denounced, and are accused of being unloving and unkind. In this tract we intend to present the teaching of the Bible on this vital subject.

I. It Is Right to Practice Biblical Judgment

One of the most misused verses in the Bible is, "*Judge not, that ye be not judged*" (Matt. 7: 1). Every Scripture verse should be read in its context, if we are to properly understand the true meaning. In vs. 2-5 of this same chapter it is evident that v. 1 is referring to hypocritical judgment. A brother who has a beam in his own eye should not be judging the brother who may have a mote in his eye. The lesson is plain you cannot judge another for his sin if you are guilty of the same sin.

Those who cling to "*Judge not, that ye be not judged,* " to condemn those who expose error should read the entire chapter. Jesus said, "*Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing...* " (v. 15). How can we know false prophets unless we judge them by the Word of God? If we know the false prophets, how can we fail to exam the sheep of these "ravening wolves?" **All through the Bible we find proof that they should be identified and exposed.**

"Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit" (vs. 16,17). Did the Lord mean that we could not judge the tree (person), by the fruit of their life and doctrine? Certainly not, for you cannot know without judging. All judgment should be on the basis of Bible teaching, not according to whims or prejudices.

"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment " (John 7:24). Here our Lord commands that we are to **"judge righteous judgment,"** which is judgment based upon the Word of God. If judgment is made upon any other basis, other than the Word of God, it is a violation of Matt. 7: 1. Webster's Dictionary says that a judge is "one who declares the law. " The faithful Christian must discern or judge on the basis of God's inspired law, the Bible.

A fornicator is described in I Cor. 5:1-13. Paul **"judged"** (v.3) the man even though he was absent, and he told the Church at Corinth that they were to **"judge"** (v. 12) those that were within. The Greek word for **"judge"** is the same here as in Matt. 7: 1. Paul did not violate *"judge not, that ye be not judged,"* in judging the man, nor in instructing the Church to judge also. All of this judgment was according to the Word of God.

A person who is able to discern between good and evil, has at least one of the major marks of spiritual maturity. *"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil"* (Heb. 5:14). W.E. Vine says of the meaning of discern, "a distinguishing, a clear discrimination, discerning, judging; is translated 'discerning' in I Cor. 12: 10 of discerning spirits, judging by evidence whether they are evil or of God. " Strong also agrees that it means to judge.

Those who are unwilling or incapable of discerning or judging between good and evil are in this manner revealing either their disobedience or their immaturity.

II. It Is Right To Expose False Teachers

False teachers are free to spread their poisonous doctrines today because there is a conspiracy of silence among many Bible believers. Wolves in sheep's clothing are thus enabled to ravage the flock, thereby destroying many.

John the Baptist called the Pharisees and Sadducees (the religious leaders of his day) *"a generation of Vipers"* (snakes) (Matt. 3:7). Today, he would be accused of being unloving, unkind, and unchristian.

Jesus said to the religious Pharisees, *"O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh"* (Matt. 12:34). To many evangelicals and some fundamentalists, this would be unacceptable language today, but it is biblical language and it came from the mouth of the Son of God.

Standing face to face with these false teachers, Jesus Christ the Son of God, called them "*hypocrites*", "*blind guides*", "*blind*", "*whited sepulchres*", "*serpents*", "**and**" "*ye generation of vipers*" (Matt. 23:23-34). Yet, we are told today that we are to fellowship with men whose doctrines are just as unscriptural as those of the Pharisees. Some who say they are Bible believing Christians insist on working with Roman Catholics and other assorted heretics. Yet, according to many, we are not supposed to rebuke them for their compromise.

Near the beginning of His ministry, "*Jesus went up to Jerusalem, And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence, make not my Father's house an house of merchandise*" (John 2:13-16). Our Saviour is presented today as one who was meek, lowly, kind, and loving, even to false teachers, but this is entirely false. ***When dealing with false teachers and prophets, His words were sharp and His actions plain.***

Near the end of His public ministry, Christ found it necessary to cleanse the temple once again. The exposure of false doctrines and practices is a never ending job. At that time He said, "*Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves*" (Mark I 1: 17). Is it any different today? The thieves come into the house of God, and rob God's people of the Bible and peddle their perverted Bibles instead. At the same time this den of thieves rob the people off the doctrine of separation and the doctrine of sanctification. Then you can hardly tell God's people from the people of the world. In all honesty, should not these thieves (false teachers) be exposed?

In our day these false teachers have come into the churches with their books, music, literature, movies, psychology, and seminars, and have turned the Father's house into a den of thieves. It is time that men of God stand up and expose their errors for all to see.

The Bible Admonishes Us To Expose Error

We are to TRY them. "*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they be of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world*" (I John 4: 1). All doctrine and teachers are to be tried according to the Word of God. "*To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*" (Isa. 8:20). Every message, messenger, and method is to be judged according to the Word of God. The church at Ephesus was commended because they

had *"tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars"* (Rev. 2:2). The church at Pergamos was rebuked because they tolerated those that held "the doctrine of Balaam, " and "the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate" (Rev. 2:14,15). It is never right to tolerate false teachers, but they are to be tried by the Word of God, and exposed. Of course those who want to disobey the Word of God will seek by every means to avoid this teaching.

We are to MARK them and AVOID them. *"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them "* (Rom. 16:17). Those whose conduct and teaching contradicts the Word of God are to be marked and to be avoided. This requires discernment and judgment in the light of the Bible. The ecumenicalists, new evangelicals, and compromising fundamentalists will resist any effort to obey this Scripture. **They cannot be marked and avoided, unless they are judged according to the Word of God.**

We are to REBUKE them. *"Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith "* (Titus 1: 13). This was written to Titus, because there were those going from house to house and subverting whole houses with false doctrine (v. 10-16). Oral Roberts, Robert Schuller, Jimmy Swaggart, Pat Robertson, and others are subverting whole houses with their false doctrine today. Are we to sit silently by, while they do this, without rebuking and admonishing people to avoid their teaching? No, the faithful servant of the Lord is to be *"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers "* (Titus 1:9).

We are to have NO FELLOWSHIP with them. *"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them "* (Eph. 5:11). Reprove means to censure, condemn, find fault, rebuke, and to refute. How can we obey this Scripture unless we try them by the Word of God?

We are to WITHDRAW from them. *"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which ye received of us "* (II Thess. 3:6). We are to withdraw from those whose doctrine and conduct does not conform to the Word of God. The context clearly shows that obedience to sound doctrine is what Paul has in mind, for he says, *"if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet, count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother"* (II Thess. 3:14-15). Paul admonished Timothy to "withdraw thyself " from those who "consent not to wholesome words ... and to the doctrine which is according to godliness " (I Tim. 6:3-5).

We are to TURN AWAY from them. Concerning the last days, he says that some will have *"a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. from such turn away"* for such people are *"never able to come to the knowledge of the truth"* (11 Tim. 3:5,7). How can we turn away from them if we do not identify them, and this requires that their message be compared to the Word of God. It is the business of the true preacher to: *"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine "* (II Tim. 4:2). This is usually an unpopular and thankless task but it is the duty of the God-called man.

We are NOT to RECEIVE them into our house. *"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds "* (11 John 10, I 1). There is no doubt about who John is speaking about, it is *" Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ... "* (v.9). **By radio, TV, music and literature, false prophets are brought into the homes of many Christians today. Brethren, this ought not to be!**

We are to REJECT HERETICS. *"A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject "* (Titus 3: 10). We should reject those who deny redemption by the blood of Christ. There are many who deny this or some other doctrine of the Word of God. If they will not respond to being admonished, then they are to be rejected.

We are to look out for those who preach another gospel. Paul warned about those who preached *"another Jesus ... another spirit ... or another gospel"*(II Cor. 11:4). How can we know them unless we judge their Jesus, their spirit, and their gospel by the Word of God? Paul called such preachers *"false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ"* (11 Cor. II: 13). He explains in v. 14-15 that these preachers are the ministers of Satan. The God-called man must be just as faithful today in exposing the ministers of Satan.

Paul warned the Galatians about those who *"pervert the gospel of Christ."* He also said, *"If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."* (See Gal. 1:6-9). Multitudes today are preaching a perverted gospel. Those who teach salvation by baptism, or by works, are teaching a perverted gospel. Those who preach a salvation that you can lose, are preaching a perverted gospel. The charismatics, Catholics, many evangelicals, and many fundamentalists (?) are preaching a perverted gospel. Yet, we are supposed to cooperate with them in evangelism and Christian work, according to many today. If we fail to expose these false prophets, then we have betrayed Christ and His gospel.

We are to SEPARATE from them. *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no the unclean thing; and I will receive you "* (II Cor. 6:17). This makes it plain. God's people are to come out of apostasy and religious error. How can any Bible believer remain in the National Council or World Council of Churches? How can they remain among compromising evangelicals and wishy-washy fundamentalists?

III. It Is Right To Name Names

Many mistakenly believe that it is wrong to expose error and to name the guilty teachers; but they are wrong according to the Bible.

Paul named Peter publicly. Peter was guilty of unscriptural practice. *"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed ... But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"* (Gal. 2:11-14). The whole issue revolved around salvation by the law or by grace. When the integrity and purity of the gospel is at stake, then we have no choice when it comes to the matter of exposing error and naming names.

Paul named Demas for loving the world. *"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world"* (II Tim. 4:10). Those who forsake the cause of Christ for worldly living and pleasures should be named and exposed. **(Christian Rock!)**

Paul named Hymenaeus and Alexander. Paul told Timothy to *"war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some have put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme "* (I Tim. 1: 18-20). God's true servants should war a good warfare, and name those who have departed from the faith that was once delivered to the saints. Paul is not here discussing the faith of salvation but the faith as a system of doctrine. These men had made shipwreck of it and Paul exposed them and called their names.

Paul named Hymenaeus and Philetus. He told Timothy to "study" that he might be able to "rightly" divide *"the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth as canker. of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some "* (II Tim. 2:15-18). False doctrine overthrows the faith of some, so those who are proclaiming it must be exposed.

Paul named Alexander the coppersmith. *"Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil. the Lord reward him "cording to his works: Of whom be thou ware also, for he hath greatly withstood our words "* (II Tim. 4:14-15). It is clear that this is not a personality problem, but a doctrinal problem. Alexander had withstood the words and doctrine of Paul. He was an enemy to the truth. Godly pastors face the same problem every day. They stand and proclaim the truth, then their members go home and hear this truth disputed by radio and TV preachers. Often times these false prophets are sending their publications into the homes of members of true churches. Then the man of God is suppose to keep his mouth shut, according to many. **Only a coward will be silent when the truth of the Bible is under attack.**

John named Diotrephes. *"I wrote unto the church; but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not"* (III John 9). He related how this man had prated against him "with malicious words " (v. 10). He further said, *"Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God, but he that doeth evil hath not seen God "* (v. I 1). It is not wrong to name those whose doctrine and practice is contrary to the Word of God.

In fact, the whole Bible abounds in examples of false prophets being named and exposed. All this modern day talk about love, used as an excuse for not exposing error, is not really biblical love but is really sloppy agape.

Moses called the name of Balaam. (See Num. 22-25). Peter exposed *"the way of Balaam ... who loved the wages of unrighteousness "* (II Pet. 2:15). Balaam was a prophet that was in the work for money, just like some of the TV false prophets today. They beg for money and live like kings, while multitudes of innocent people send them their hard earned money. They are always building colleges, hospitals, TV network satellites, and amusement parks that have a water slide for Jesus. And then we are suppose to keep our mouth shut about these religious charlatans. How can we be silent and be true to God?

Jude exposed "the error of Balaam " (Jude I 1). John exposed *"the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication "* (Rev. 2:14). This gets right to the heart of the matter, concerning the doctrine of separation. Balaam never did curse Israel even though he wanted the wages that he was offered to do so. The men of Israel committed *"whoredom with the daughters of Moab ... and bowed down to their gods "* (Num. 25:1,2). Why did they do this? Because Balaam taught Balac how to break down the barrier of separation between the Moabites and the Israelites. We know this to be so because it is plainly stated in Rev. 2:14 and Num. 31:16. This sin resulted in 24,000 men of Israel dying under the judgment of God. **(Another good example of Christian Rock)**

False teachers are breaking down the barrier of separation between God's people and false religion. There is too little preaching and teaching on the doctrine of separation. Balaam breached the doctrine of personal separation by causing the men of Israel to commit fornication with the Moabite women. He breached the doctrine of ecclesiastical separation by causing the men of Israel to bow down to Baal. This brought a curse upon Israel. Until we get back to teaching the truth about personal and ecclesiastical separation, we can expect the continued widespread havoc that we have today.

It seems to be believed by many that some people are too high and mighty to be named or exposed. Men in high places, pastors of large churches, and those with great radio or TV audiences, are supposedly above criticism. Whatever they may do or say, no matter how contrary to the Bible it may be, is supposedly all right. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Nathan identified the man. There was a man in a very high place who was a secret adulterer. Surely this man who held the highest office in the land could not be rebuked by a lowly unpopular prophet. Nathan went right into the presence of David, revealed the sin in a parable form, and then told the enraged David, "*Thou art the man* " (II Sam. 12:7).

Hanani named king Jehoshaphat. In many ways Jehoshaphat was a good king, but he mistakenly forgot to practice religious separation. He caused his son to marry wicked king Ahab's daughter. (See II Chron. 18: 1; 21:1-6). He made an alliance with Ahab and went to the battle of Ramoth-gilead with him (II Chron. 18). Hanani "*said to King Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?* " (II Chron. 19:2). We have a question for those, "*Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?*"

Yes, it is right to expose error and to name those who are in error. It is right to "*earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*"(Jude 3). It was once delivered and it has never been recalled for revision. We had better beware of "*false teachers ... who privily shall bring in damnable heresies* " (II Pet. 2: 1). Faithful messengers will warn the sheep of these heretics, and identify them by name. It is not enough to broadly hint of their identity, for the young lambs will not understand and will be destroyed by the wolves.

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