

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32

"And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free"

APRIL 19, 2015

CONFRONTING FALSE DOCTRINE (2)

Jim Stauffer

In last week's article we focused our attention on three areas of this subject. 1) We recognized the absolute truth of God's revealed word, the Bible. 2) As friends of God, as was Abraham, whose seed we are according to the promise (**Gal. 3:29**), we are bound to defend His word. 3) Those who pervert the word of God (the gospel, **Gal. 1:6-9**), will appear to be sheep while in actuality they are ravaging wolves. (**Mat. 7:15-23**)

This week we will focus our attention on the existence of such a problem and how it was handled by our Lord and His disciples in New Testament times.

In the text of **Mat. 7:15-23**, Jesus identifies and warns us of false teachers as He tells us how to deal with them. 1) He says we will recognize ravaging wolves, not by their appearance but by their fruit. Every tree brings forth fruit either good or bad. 2) He explains the ultimate result of a tree that brings forth bad fruit, in this case the false teacher. It will be destroyed. We would cut down such a tree and destroy it and God will, in the end, destroy false teachers likewise. 3) He then tells us how to recognize good and bad fruit. This is where the sheep's clothing comes in handy for the false teacher. The false teacher claims what he says and does is authorized by God's will. But in reality it is not. Jesus teaches through this brief lesson a principle we must all follow. **Know God's will!** Then each of us can determine whether the man is a wolf or a sheep of the flock of God.

Jesus has regular confrontations with the Pharisees and Sadducees because they are indeed these wolves in sheep's clothing. They represent themselves as teachers of God's law but in reality they are each teaching their own version of God's law and their versions do not agree with each other. Again, they say they are doing His will but the close inspection of the Lord indicates otherwise.

For instance look at **Matt. 15:8,9**; *This people honoreth me with their lips; But their heart is far from me. 9 But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.* Jesus teaches the Pharisees and scribes a lesson by invoking the prophet Isaiah, with whom they were well acquainted. Why did He say this? He was responding to an accusation

against His disciples of failing to honor the traditions of the elders. His answer exposed a failure in principle on their part. They held the traditions of the elders above the word of God. Look at verses 4-6 of the same chapter, *4 For God said, Honor thy father and thy mother: and, He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death. 5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is given to God; 6 he shall not honor his father. And ye have made void the word of God because of your tradition.* Rather than require their parents as the Law required (and as Paul has clearly taught in the New Testament - **1 Tim. 5:4**), they would pay money into the treasury and then tell their parents to seek relief from those in charge of that money. Because they established this as **their tradition** rather than simply obey the clear command of the law, Jesus said their worship was in vain. Grasp that principle. Our worship is not accepted by God when it is practiced according to the precepts of men instead of in compliance with His word. In the verses following this text He identifies the source of their error as having originated in their hearts. Just like the tree that gives bad fruit, these people were rotten at their very core. Their hearts were not attuned to the will of God but rather to their own precepts.

Peter warns us that those who are ignorant and not steadfast will wrest or twist scripture. **2 Pet. 3:15** *And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you; 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. 17 Ye therefore, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own steadfastness. 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and for ever. Amen.* It should be noted he decisively indicates the seriousness of mishandling God's word. It leads to one's own destruction. We then, in order to be considered steadfast

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must beware of such men and not be carried away with their error. Instead we are to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord. Let this be a warning. Peter issues it as such. When we hear men speak we must as those Bereans did, *in that they received the word with all readiness of the mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so. (Acts 17:11)*

Remember, our soul's eternal destination hangs in the balance.

Jesus And Division

by Allan Turner

In **Isaiah 9:6**, the prophet referred to Jesus as the *"Prince of Peace."* In the New Testament, He is called the *"Lord of peace" (2 Thessalonians 3:16)*. And at His birth, the angels and the heavenly host said: *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (Luke 2:14)*. Around Christmas time we hear folks quoting these passages as if they were originally intended as a remedy for the sad state of affairs in the world (i.e., "wars and rumors of wars"). Contrary to what many people think, these passages are not addressing Jesus' connection to peace between nations. Neither are they saying that His primary mission was to bring peace between men. Jesus did not come to bring peace in the way we normally think of the word. I know this is true because the Bible says so.

In **Matthew 10:34-36**, Jesus said:

"Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

Again in **Luke 12:49-53**, the Lord said:

"I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished! Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

So, as shocking as it may sound, Jesus said that He came into this world to bring division. But, before we pursue this subject any further, it is absolutely essential that we understand the statements made in **Isaiah 9:6**; **2 Thessalonians 3:16**; and **Luke 2:14**. First of all, one can be sure that these statements do not contradict what Jesus said in **Matthew 10:34-36** and **Luke 12:49-53**. The Bible, the inspired word of God, does not contradict itself! In **Luke 2:14**, the angels and host of heaven are speaking of the peace that would, as a result of this child's work, be able to exist between God and man. As **Romans 5:1** says, *"having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* This peace was being bestowed upon all of mankind

"through Jesus Christ" (Acts 10:36), and the "glory" for all of this belongs to *"God in the highest."*

"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Eph. 2: 4-9.

In other words, all of mankind became the enemies of God through sin, and the only way they could be at peace with Him was through His goodwill or grace. This, and this alone, is that of which **Luke 2:14** speaks. Yes, it would be true that men who were at peace with God through Jesus Christ would also learn how to be at peace with each other (**Romans 12:18**; **Hebrews 12:14**; **1 Peter 3:11**), but this was clearly secondary to, and dependent upon, the peace that could, through Christ, exist between God and man. With this truth firmly fixed in our minds, it is now time for us to try and understand what the Lord meant when He said He came to cause division.

Jesus Christ Must Be Taken Seriously

Although many seem to miss it, the Bible makes one thing very clear: *Jesus Christ expects to be taken seriously!* If one does not kiss (worship) the Son, then He will be angry with him (**Psalm 2:12**). Those who think Jesus will be tolerant concerning their religious beliefs are sadly mistaken. Jesus made it quite clear that He is not a way to the Father, but He is *the way (John 14:6)*. Peter taught the same thing when he said, *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12)*. Consequently, in order to spend an eternity with God in heaven, one is going to have to make the *right* decision about Jesus of Nazareth (**John 8:24**; **1 John 4:3**; **2 John 7**).

For instance, our Muslim friends honor Jesus as a prophet of God. In the *Qur'an* (Koran), Mohammed wrote, "The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, is but the apostle of God and His word" (Sura 4:169). He had previously written, "We have given Jesus the son of Mary manifest signs, and strengthened him by the Holy Spirit" (Sura 2:54). Even so, Mohammed rejected, as do our Muslim friends, the truth that Jesus of Nazareth was God *incarnated (John 1:14*; **1 Timothy 3:16**; etc.). Mohammed believed and taught that Jesus, although a prophet, was *just* a man. As a result, there is a great division that exists today between those who practice Islam and those who follow Jesus Christ as Lord.

The Jews, who had been entrusted with the oracles of God and therefore should have known better (**Romans 3:1-2**), failed to *"kiss the Son,"* and they felt His terrible wrath when He came in judgment against their nation and their religious institutions in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (**see Matthew 24:4-34**). Since their rejection of the Messiah, there has

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been a division between the Jews and Christians.

Hindus believe there are many paths that lead to heaven. They believe that Jesus is but one of those ways (i.e., they believe Jesus is a way). But, again, Jesus clearly said that He was *the* way (**John 8:24**). When Christians teach that Jesus is the *only* way to the Father, there is a great rift that develops between the Hindu and the Christian.

Now, I've said all that to say this: *What one thinks about Jesus causes division, and Jesus emphatically said it would!* So sharp would be the divisions caused by Christ, that He said:

"For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; and 'a mans enemies will be those of his own household'" (Matthew 10:35-36).

Again, in **Luke 12:52-53**, He said:

"For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

This sharp division over Christ will one day culminate in the great judgment scene where the wise and the foolish, the sheep and the goats, those on the right hand and on the left, and the doers of the word and the hearers only, shall be *divided* for an eternity (**Matthew 7:21-27; 25:31-46**).

If all this is true, then why is it that we hear so many Christians complaining about disagreements and divisions taking place in churches of Christ over God's word? Did anyone who loved the truth back in the Fifties and Sixties not think that institutionalism, unless repented of, would cause division? When the current false teaching on marriage and divorce began circulating (i.e., the unbeliever is not amenable to Christ's marriage law), did anyone who loved the truth think that this would not, without repentance, cause division? These divisions occurred and will continue to occur because the word of God does exactly what the Lord intends it to do—provide a criterion for separating the spirit of truth from the spirit of error (**1 John 4:1-8**), and ultimately separating sheep from goats (**Matthew 25:31-33**).

It is extremely unfortunate that some who make a plea for the restoration of New Testament Christianity are caught up, quite erroneously, in the pipe dream of a golden era of the church when there were neither problems nor divisions. But when was that? Churches of Christ have always been plagued by strife (**Philippians 1:15-16**), false teachers (**2 Peter 2:1-3**), perverse and destructive leaders (**Acts 20:29f., Jude 4**), the preaching of a false gospel (**Galatians 1:6-9**), servants of Satan (**2 Corinthians 11:13-15**), and divisiveness (**3 John 9-10**). This is why Jude exhorted Christians *"to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints"* (**Jude 3b**). This is why Paul admonished Christians to: *"Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong"* (**1 Corinthians 16:13, NIV**). What the kingdom of God needs today are more soldiers of the cross and less

spiritual pacifists, who only stand around bemoaning what they say is a lack of love among brethren, and who frequently point accusatory fingers at those whom they consider to be much too strident.

Now, I realize that those who are at peace with God through Jesus Christ ought to be at peace with each other (**James 3:18**). And if we were all what we ought to be, then this would be the case. In fact, the objective standard for the peace mentioned in **James 3:18** is clearly set forth in **1 Corinthians 1:10; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Ephesians 4:3; Philippians 1:27; 1 Peter 3:8; and John 17:21**. Unfortunately, the redeemed do not keep this standard perfectly. Yes, it is certainly wonderful when brethren live together in the unity of the Spirit and faith for which Christ died (**Ephesians 4:3, 13**), and we ought to cherish those times and circumstances, but *because Jesus Himself is the standard of authority for God's people*, there will be times when we will have to oppose those who teach or practice error. Furthermore, if we do not keep the standard, we, too, will have to be opposed. This is simply *the effect* of following a standard *outside* of ourselves. Of course, when compelled to oppose error, we need to be very careful that we don't fall into some sin ourselves (**Galatians 6:1**).

Nevertheless, heresies, contentions, dissensions, and other works of the flesh (**Galatians 5:19-21**) must be opposed. When this happens, divisions usually occur. As uncomfortable and unpleasant as this is, this is as it ought to be when the truth is at stake. Consequently, let those of us who follow Christ not grow weary in well-doing, but let us confront, oppose, and identify those who do not obey God's word (**2 Thess. 3:13-15**).

In the final judgment at the end of time, all things will be set right. In the meantime, the tares and the wheat grow together in the same field (**Matthew 13:24-30**). Let us determine to spend our time here in this world proving ourselves to be the *"good seed"* sown by our Lord, Jesus Christ. Remember, the churches at Pergamum and Thyatira, who basked in the twilight of the 1st-century, were condemned by the Lord for tolerating false teaching. Reflecting in the twilight of the 20th-century, let us make sure that we are not guilty of the same misdeed.

There'll be no terror attacks in heaven
Where living will be a delight
No mention of September 11th
In that land "where cometh no night"
by Grant Clothier

Rev. 21:25 *And the gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day (for there shall be no night there):*

Rev. 22:5 *And there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.*

Eph. 2:19 *So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;*

1Pet. 2:9 *But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

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Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

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PATRICK AND GRANT CLOTHIER.

JESSIE GIBSON IS AT HOEGER
HOUSE RECUPERATING. J.R.

DANIEL IS AT SWEET LIFE
ASSISTED LIVING, 12000 LAMAR

OUR BIBLE CLASS ON SUNDAY IS
THE STUDY OF THE GOSPEL OF
JOHN - WITH RON PECK.
WEDNESDAY OUR STUDY IS THE
SUBJECT OF PREMILLENNIALISM.

SUNDAY MORNING SERMON: THE
JOY OF BEING HIS CHILD



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins

Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10