

# In the Name of Jesus

Hunt, Dave

Last month we noted that a major part of Paul's ministry was spent in disputing, reasoning, and persuading



(**Acts:19:8; Acts:19:26; Acts:28:23**) in synagogues and market places (**Acts:17:2-3; Acts:17:17; Acts:18:4; Acts:18:19; Acts:19:8**), in religious schools (**Acts:19:9**), and wherever debates were held, such as on Mars Hill (**Acts:17:18-34**). Paul tells us that we are to follow his example, so Christians should be earnestly reasoning with and persuading others of the truth of the gospel as the Lord gives opportunity. Friends, neighbors, perhaps family members are on their way to a Christless eternity. Let us try to help them!

Time is short. Whether by death or the Rapture, we're all leaving this world soon.

We also saw with equal clarity that the Bible does not promote ecumenism of any kind or any other compromise of the faith. We are to "earnestly contend for *the* faith," a clause that cannot be twisted to mean, "emphasize what we have in common and avoid controversial differences so that we can all work together for the common good." That may sound commendable, but it is not biblical and is shameless disobedience to our Lord's command.

The early church made no alliances with apostates, heretics, or non-Christians, even for seemingly good causes. There is no time to waste and we must decide our priorities. Will we spend our time and resources in partnership with the world in political and social action, or will we preach the gospel and earnestly contend for *the* faith once for all committed to the saints?

From Genesis to Revelation, we are instructed to stand firm, following the Lord with pure hearts, not turning from the narrow way. Christ's command to every Christian was and still is, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (**Mark:16:15**). This is every Christian's marching orders.

Earnestly contending for the faith does not mean arguing over moot points that are not essential to the gospel. We must be patient with differences of opinion on minor matters of doctrine and practice. Yes, Paul openly rebuked Peter to his face before the church at Galatia, but his rebuke concerned the gospel, which cannot be changed one iota: "I withstood him to the face...when I saw that they [the believers who had been led astray by Peter's compromising in order to placate the Jews] walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel..." (**Galatians:2:11-14**).

We must stand up for God's truth and not compromise. Sadly, we have Christian leaders today who not only disobey but even dare to revise what God has clearly written in His Word!

We cannot make what we think will be acceptable "small adjustments" to God's way of salvation. If we tamper in the slightest with the gospel, we are despising God's Word and jeopardizing the eternal destiny of souls! The unchanging and unchangeable "gospel of Christ [not the latest revision of it]...is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth [it]" (**Romans:1:16**). This is the only way of salvation. Jesus said that for anyone to "see [and] enter into the kingdom of God [i.e., be saved] he...must be born again" (**John:3:3-7**). Peter declares that we are "born again...by the word of God...which by the gospel is preached" (**1 Peter:1:23-25**).

No wonder we must proclaim the gospel. Only in believing this Word from God can anyone be saved. Tragically, as we have repeatedly documented in these pages, the gospel is being tampered with and compromised by many who claim to believe and preach it. Passages of Scripture such as the above, which are crystal clear in the duty they impose upon every Christian, are being willfully set aside to avoid "offending" the unsaved. How can someone's hurt feelings be compared with an eternity separated from God in the torments of the damned?

We have quoted John Hagee (Q&A, 4/08 ) declaring: "I'm not trying to convert the Jewish people to the Christian faith...trying to convert Jews is a waste of time....Everyone else needs to believe in Jesus...but not Jews. Jews already have a covenant with God that has never been replaced by Christianity..." [ *The Houston Chronicle* (4/30/88, sec. 6, p. 1)].

In stark contrast, Paul was absolutely certain that unless they believed the gospel, Jews, like anyone else, would be eternally lost. So concerned was he that he would have gone to hell in their place if that would have saved them (**Romans:9:1-5**). He declared, "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh....My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (**Rom:9:1-3; Romans:10:1**).

Apparently, Paul did not know what Hagee knows, which, had he known it, would have removed Paul's concern for the salvation of Jews. One wonders when and how Hagee received this revelation that Jews don't need the gospel and whether he thinks the Bible ought to be revised in that respect. That would involve changing so many scriptures that I

doubt it could be done.

When Paul proclaimed, "The gospel...is the power of God unto salvation" he added, "to the Jew first..." (**Romans:1:16**). Christ commanded His disciples to "preach the gospel to every creature" (**Mark:16:15**), which surely must have included Jews. In fact, they were to "begin at Jerusalem" (**Luke:24:47**), which Peter did obediently on the day of Pentecost when 3,000 Jews (with maybe a few Gentiles among them) were saved.

Although Christ's own words, as well as many other scriptures, plainly said that the gospel was for all mankind, the apostles were certain that the gospel was only for Jews. In order to persuade them to preach to Gentiles, the Lord had to give Peter the vision of the sheet let down from heaven with all manner of unclean animals in it (**Acts:10:9-20**).

The language of Scripture is so clear that those who withhold the gospel from the Jews are guilty of willful disobedience.

In addition to Hagee, there are other highly esteemed church leaders guilty of the same, among them apologist Ravi Zacharias. As the 2008 Honorary Chairman of the National Day of Prayer, Ravi composed a generic prayer suitable for anyone. It does not contain the name of Jesus, which was left out, we are told, "so as not to offend the Jewish participants."

We have previously pointed out the unscriptural nature of a "National Day of Prayer," which, though led by Christians from the beginning, has encouraged non-Christians to join in by praying to their own god or gods. Can anyone imagine that when a disciple asked Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray" (**Luke:11:1**), Christ included a generic prayer for all "people of faith" to whatever "higher power" they espoused?

Let's test Ravi Zacharias's model prayer against reason and Scripture to see how hopeless it is to craft a prayer for all "faiths." It begins, "Holy Father...." Repeatedly, the Qur'an says that Allah (Islam's god) is not a father and has no son. Already, the Muslims are offended. The "Holy Father" to whom Ravi refers is the God of the Bible, who is called "the God of Israel" 203 times.

The Muslims would be worse than offended. They would be highly incensed. Allah hates Jews, and Islam teaches that every Jew on earth must be killed before any Muslim can be resurrected. If that happened, it would be a great embarrassment to the "God of Israel"! He couldn't just change His name; He would have to admit to being a false god and Allah the true one.

The God of the Bible is jealous for the honor of His holy name. To Moses He declared: "I AM...the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob...this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations" (**Exodus:3:13-16**). Jesus confirmed that this was God's name (**Luke:20:37**). But Islam opposes Israel, and Allah hates Jews.

Islam teaches that what the entire world once understood to be the land of Israel was actually given by Allah to the Arabs/Muslims. As we show in *Judgment Day*, this belief exposes the fraud of "Palestinian" negotiations with Israel for "peace." It reveals the fact that the trips to the Middle East by Bush and Rice, as well as by EU, UN, and Vatican representatives, are futile.

The Islamic world has drawn the entire non-Muslim world into a false "peace" effort, which so-called Palestinians and their Muslim brethren hope will lead "peacefully," step by step, to the utter destruction of Israel and, finally, to the extermination of all Jews on earth.

Ravi's prayer ends, "In God's holy name...." What does "In God's holy name" mean to Muslims and to millions of Americans who are non-Christians? The National Day of Prayer makes as much sense as Elijah calling apostates in Israel, who worshiped Baal and other false gods, to join with the followers of Yahweh in praying for "God's" blessing upon Israel! If the followers of various religions are praying to different gods (which they are), then what is being accomplished? Is this uniting America? Yes, but only in confusion and deceit.

What about leaving out the name of Jesus from this model prayer in order not to offend Jews? Our Lord Jesus Christ commanded His disciples "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached *in his name* among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem..." (**Luke:24:47**). Nothing could have been more offensive to the Jews. Wouldn't it have seemed logical to the disciples to hold a meeting to discuss this command and to decide that using the name of Jesus--especially at that sensitive time just after the crucifixion--would be counterproductive and probably arouse hatred and maybe get them killed? No, the issue was not how to please the audience but obedience to Christ.

In obedience to their crucified and resurrected Lord's command to preach *in His name*, the disciples boldly proclaimed the truth *in the name of Jesus* where that name was despised and where to obey their Lord would mean hatred, persecution, and even death. Without compromise, they indicted the Jews with having rejected and crucified Christ, though He dearly loved His brethren after the flesh and mourned over their unbelief. Peter did not preach a special gospel to the Jews. He declared, "Jesus of Nazareth...approved of God...by miracles and wonders and signs...ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain..." (**Acts:2:22-23**).

There is reluctance today to state the facts as Peter did. "It wasn't the Jews who crucified Christ, but the Romans" is offered in evangelical circles in order to avoid giving offense to Jews. Peter was there. He knew the facts as no one living today could know them. Inspired of the Holy Spirit, he indicted his fellow Jews with having crucified God's Son. Of course, the Romans nailed Jesus to the Cross, but it was at the insistence of those, stirred to hatred by their rabbis, who cried, "Let him be crucified."

Pilate objected, "Why, what evil hath he done?" But the mob "cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified...his blood be on us and on our children" (**Matthew:27:22-25**). The truth is that in response to the haunting question posed in that old spiritual, "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" we must all, Jew and Gentile, confess with repentant hearts, "Yes, I was there. It was for my sins that Christ died!"

Is the gospel for the Jews? Let Hagee and all others who have any doubts where Jews stand in relation to the gospel take note of Peter's specific language, "Therefore let *all the house of Israel* know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (**Acts:2:36**).

It was likely the next day, at a gate of the Temple and in the name that Ravi Zacharias purposely kept from Jewish participants in the National Day of Prayer, that Peter and John healed a man who had been a hopeless cripple "from his mother's womb" (**Acts:3:2**). They commanded him, " *In the name of Jesus Christ* of Nazareth rise up and walk" (**Acts:3:6**).

Arrested for this good deed and standing before the religious hierarchy, they were asked, "By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel...be it known unto...all the people of Israel, that by *the name of Jesus Christ* of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead...doth this man stand here before you whole....Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (**Acts:4:7-12**).

The council commanded Peter and John "not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus" (**Acts:4:18**). Tragically, it takes far less than that to stop some of today's Christian leaders from speaking in the name of Jesus; they do it on their own initiative for the sake of money and popularity. May God deliver us all from ever succumbing to such shameful motivation.

The response by the apostles to this threat was instant and fearless: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (**Acts:4:19-20**).

The miracles being done in the name of Jesus through the apostles caused growing multitudes to believe on Him. The high priest and his cronies "were filled with indignation, and...put them in the common prison. But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go...speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life" (**Acts:17:5-20**).

Meanwhile, another larger council was called, and officers were sent to the prison to bring the apostles before them again. The officers found that the prison was secure, the doors locked, but the apostles not there--they were obediently teaching in the temple. The apostles were brought again to the council and reminded of the warning they had been given not to preach in the name of Jesus. Peter responded, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (**Acts:5:29**). They continued testifying for Christ and His resurrection. "And daily in the temple, and unto every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (**Acts:5:40-42**). The rabbis' reaction was to "take counsel to slay them" (**Acts:5:17-33**).

The apostles were beaten and released after one more warning "that they should not speak in the name of Jesus." Did they obey men rather than God? No. They rejoiced that "they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."

Centuries ago, Joshua challenged the people of God, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (**Joshua:24:15**). We are faced today with the same choice. To obey our Lord may be costly in terms of money, prestige, and influence--but the issue is really time vs. eternity, God vs. man. That should not be a difficult choice to make.

When we at the Berean Call are denounced by critics for daring to disagree with popular Christian leaders, we simply point to the Bible and reply, "Check it out there!" **TBC**

Quotable
Question: An article in the L.A. Times reported that the May 15, 2008, California Supreme Court's overruling of the ban on same-sex marriages was greeted with joy by the homosexual community [and] many religious leaders. Dave, what's your reaction?
Question: Which comes first, the nations starting to come against Israel more aggressively or the reconstruction of the Temple?
Question: How can Rick Warren, who claims to be a born-again Christian, be part of Tony Blair's interfaith movement?

Question: Could you please interpret the meaning of Psalm 102? I was told to read Matthew 5:1–12 and Ecclesiastes 1 and 3. I truly would like to know your thoughts.

Question: What about the popular idea that we must "plead the blood" over a situation or one's home, room by room?

Question: In Matthew 23–25, Jesus heals "those possessed with devils...those which were lunatick," etc. What is "lunatick"? Does it refer to a medical, or mental problem?

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