

## EXPOSING THE "JUDGE NOT" FALLACY: PART 1

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Our Spiritual Warfare, Armour Of God, Sword Of The Spirit, God's Word Divides Sheep From Goats, Satan's Deadly Lies And Fiery Darts, Words Are Real Things, Verbal Warfare, Beware Of The Devil's Doubts, Battle Of The Mind, Take The Shield Of Faith, Obtain Faith Through The Word, Keep Your Eyes On Jesus And Not On Yourself, The Devil Also Quotes God's Word, Judge Not Verses, Pavlov Dog Response, The Hypocrisy Of The Naysayers, Audience Of The Sermon On The Mount, Jesus' Many Disciples, Different Audiences At Different Times, Why We Shouldn't Judge Others, Human Propensity For Judging Others

As you may know, in his Epistle to the brethren at the Church of Ephesus, the Apostle Paul makes us very aware of the fact that we Christians are involved in heavy spiritual warfare against the forces of darkness. Consider the following verse:

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Ephesians 6:12, KJV

Being as our warfare is spiritual in nature and not physical such as that which is fought by worldly and ungodly men, it only stands to reason that the weapons of our warfare must also be spiritual in nature. The Apostle Paul again confirms this point for us when he writes the following in his second Epistle to the Church at Corinth:

"(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)"

2 Corinthians 10:4, KJV

So exactly what are these spiritual weapons which we have in

our possession? Again, the Apostle Paul not only informs us what our primary weapon is, but he also describes the armour which goes along with it for our own protection, as we see by the following verses:

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:"

Ephesians 6:13-17, KJV

Here we clearly see that our weapon is the Sword of the Spirit; that is, the very Word of God. The Apostle Paul confirms this fact for us again in his Epistle to the Hebrews where he writes the following:

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Hebrews 4:12, KJV

While speaking about His ministry on Earth in the Gospels, and the effect that He and His message would have on people, Jesus likewise spoke of this very same Sword when He said the following:

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword."

Matthew 10:34, KJV

I believe that the sword which Jesus was referring to in the previous verse is the very Word and Truth of God which He spoke throughout His time on Earth. It is that spoken Word which has divided -- and continues to divide -- the sheep from the goats; that is, the Children of God from the children of Satan, the Children of Light from the Children of Darkness. In fact, as you may know, in the Gospel of John we are told that Jesus is the very embodiment of the Word of

God. He came to reveal the Spirit of Truth in a flesh and blood human body, as we can determine by the following set of verses:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."  
John 1:1, 14, KJV

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life"  
John 6:63, KJV

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."  
John 14:6, KJV

This Word, this Spirit of Truth, is the very same Sword which we see proceeding out of the mouth of the Lamb of God -- that is, Jesus -- when He fights against the ungodly forces which have taken over the Earth in the Book of Revelation. Consider the following verse:

"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."  
Revelation 19:15, KJV

What we need to realize is that our chief adversary, Satan, also possesses a weapon; and that weapon is also the word. However, it is not the Word of Truth, but rather the exact opposite. It is the lie. In fact, as many of you will know already, we are told that he is the father of lies by Jesus himself in the Gospel of John, as we see here:

". . . He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."  
John 8:44, KJV

What some Christians may not realize though is that we have

that old serpent outmatched. You see, while we have a nice shiny two-edged Sword, all he has are a bunch of darts. But don't be deceived! And don't you dare underestimate that vile snake! While his little darts may not seem as effective or as powerful as our Sword, they are in fact loaded with fiery poison. Remember what the Apostle Paul wrote in that same Epistle to the Ephesians:

"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."  
Ephesians 6:16, KJV

You see, very similar to a wasp, or a scorpion, or a stonefish, or a poisonous viper, once his venom penetrates your system, Satan's words -- his lies -- can be extremely painful, destructive, and sometimes even deadly. They can wreak a lot of havoc. Please don't forget that in the Book of Genesis, all it took was four little words to bring about the downfall of humankind, as we see by this verse:

". . . Yea, hath God said . . . ?"  
Genesis 3:1, KJV

As I explained earlier, Jesus made it very clear that words are real things. They are powerful. They are spiritual. Our battle against Satan is primarily a warfare of words. If you read the four Gospels, you will see how true this really is. Jesus fought a constant verbal battle against the Scribes and the Pharisees. At the same time, He fed the multitudes spiritually with the Words that give Life. The Word of Truth uplifts, it heals, it gives hope, it saves. Satan's lies do the exact opposite. They condemn, they wound, they cause doubt, they damn. Throughout the entire Bible from beginning to end, we see a great verbal war taking place. That is, the words of the Prophets and the people of God, against the lies and damnations of the evil mouthpieces of Satan.

So exactly what is Satan's primary weapon in this warfare of words? The Scriptures make it very clear that it is the doubts which he speaks to our minds and hearts. As I explain in a number of other articles, the battle actually begins in our minds. That is where the Devil invades our territory. It is for this very reason that the Apostle Paul advises us to bring every thought into captivity. Not only that, but he writes that we must have our minds transformed and renewed,

and that we must in fact put on the mind of Christ. Consider the following set of verses which make this point so clear:

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Romans 12:2, KJV

"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;"

Ephesians 4:23, KJV

"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"

2 Corinthians 10:5, KJV

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

1 Corinthians 2:16, KJV

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;"

1 Peter 1:13, KJV

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:"

1 Peter 5:8, KJV

"For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

Hebrews 12:3, KJV

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

2 Corinthians 4:4, KJV

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

2 Corinthians 11:3, KJV

"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your

mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled"  
Colossians 1:21, KJV

This is why in the verses which I shared with you earlier, the Apostle Paul writes that we must put on the Helmet of Salvation, and above all, most important of all, we must use the Shield of Faith to stave off the Devil's doubt attacks. We fight against him with the Sword of the Spirit, but we protect ourselves at the same time with the Shield of Faith. We must not allow Satan's fiery darts of doubts to penetrate our minds for one instant; because if we do, that will be the beginning of the end for us. He will never stop until we are defeated. As you probably know, faith is the opposite of doubts. So how do we acquire this faith so that we can stand strong against the Devil? In his Epistle to the brethren at Rome, Paul informs us that faith comes and grows by hearing -- and I might add, by reading, by memorizing, and also by obeying -- the Word of God, as we see here:

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."  
Romans 10:17, KJV

So as I said, if Satan can cause you to doubt God, or to doubt His Word, or to even doubt your worth as a Christian, then he has a good chance of totally defeating you and neutralizing your work for the Lord. If he can get you to take your eyes off of the Lord, or off of His Word, he has won half the battle. Once he has you looking at yourself instead of looking at Jesus, you are in big trouble, because not only are you wretched in the flesh and stink, but you will begin to slowly sink, sink, sink. So we must keep our eyes on Jesus at all times. Consider these two verses:

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."  
Hebrews 12:2, KJV

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"  
Romans 7:24, KJV

As is clearly demonstrated in the Book of Genesis, as well

as in other parts of the Bible, one of Satan's most powerful methods of causing us to doubt God, or to doubt our worth as His children, is to quote the very same Word we all believe in; albeit with his own special twist to it. It is similar to matter and antimatter. It almost appears the same, but it isn't. In fact, it is the exact opposite. If you bring them together, it can cause a tremendous explosion. As we saw earlier, in the case of Eve in the Garden of Eden, it was the deceptive phrase "Yea, hath God said". With Jesus, the Devil was equally as bold. Consider this example that we find in Matthew chapter four:

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him."

Matthew 4:1-11, KJV

I like to refer to verses such as the previous ones as "Satan's If". The minute that he throws that "if" at you, watch out! His deception is right around the corner. In this case, the Devil had the audacity to quote directly from one of my favorite Psalms of protection; Psalm 91. Consider what verses nine through twelve say:

"Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall

thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."

Psalms 91:9-12, KJV

However, being as He is the Living Word, as you can see, in the previous verses from the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus fired right back at Satan by quoting the Word himself; and that foul fiend eventually gave up and retreated.

While I have now shown you a few examples in the Bible where the Devil actually quoted the Word in order to try to trip up and deceive people, there is another example I want to share with you which is in widespread use today. This example can be found in several verses which are likewise in the Gospel of Matthew. Furthermore, I would dare say that these verses have probably been quoted more often by those people who oppose God, and who reject the truth of His Word, than any other Scriptures in the entire Bible. These verses are the following:

"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

Matthew 7:1-2, KJV

It never ceases to amaze me how quick the enemies of Biblical Truth are to quote the previous verses. I am sure you have seen it happen many times yourself. The minute a Christian says something which they don't like, and which exposes them, or offends them, BAM, just like a Pavlov dog, those snakes fire away with the "judge not" verses. It is an automatic reflex with them. Their defensive shield goes up, and those verses are soon shot from their tower. However, what they fail to realize -- or perhaps purposely choose to ignore -- is that in their haste, they neglect to consider a number of other things which Jesus had to say, which add both balance and clarification to the meaning of the previous Scriptures.

I also find it rather ironic that, just like Satan, such people quote from the same Book which they deny as being the inspired Word of God, or which they at least reject to some degree. These enemies of Christ constantly accuse Christians of using Scriptures as crutches to support their beliefs,



while they do the very same thing themselves when it is to their convenience. How can they quote from a Source which they don't even believe is the Word of God?

It seems a bit two-faced and hypocritical to me. But you see, that is the way Satan operates. He is a hypocrite and a liar, and he will use whatever serves his purpose; and the verses from Matthew chapter seven serve him well. Those two verses have been used to neutralize many a sincere Christian in their witness for the Lord. So then, I think it is time to undo some of the damage which has been done, and to give our fellow workers for the Lord some ammunition to use when the workers of darkness try to stifle their witness through the misapplication and twisting of the previous Scriptures, which, by the way, will eventually lead to their own destruction, unless they repent, as we see here:

"As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."  
2 Peter 3:16, KJV

While Jesus did issue the above admonition regarding judging others, what most people do not realize is that He seems to have given this commandment to the multitudes who listened to Him speak on the mountainside during His famous "Sermon on the Mount". The significance of this point will be shown momentarily. There are those people who believe that this Sermon was reserved only for His closest Disciples; that is, the Twelve Apostles. However, a closer reading of the Bible appears to reveal otherwise. If we read the verse just prior to the beginning of the actual Sermon, and the verses which immediately follow the end of the Sermon, we begin to get a clearer picture of the events which transpired that day. The very first verse in Matthew chapter five reads as follows:

"And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:"  
Matthew 5:1, KJV

Notice that it says there were "multitudes" present. Jesus then went up into the mountain, and we are told that His Disciples came to Him. Some people have interpreted this as meaning that only the Twelve Apostles came to Him. However,

the closing verses seem to indicate otherwise, as we see here:

"And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

Matthew 7:28-29, KJV

Notice that it says "the people". This seems to imply that there were other people listening as well, and not just the Twelve Apostles. I am not familiar with any verses where the Apostles are ever referred to as "the people". In short, when they hear the word "disciples", some people assume that it means just the Twelve Apostles. However, the truth of the matter is that Jesus had many Disciples. Perhaps they were not all as close as the Apostles who were hand-picked by the Lord, but nevertheless they were considered Disciples of varying degrees. You see, not only do the Gospels mention the Twelve Apostles, but they also mention the other seventy Disciples who were likewise hand-picked by Jesus to preach the Gospel. Consider these two verses:

"After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come . . . And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name."

Luke 10:1, 17, KJV

In addition to the above, we also need to consider the women who attended to Jesus' and the Apostles' needs; such as the various Mary's, Martha, Joanna, Salome, etc. Likewise, we need to consider Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead. And then there is the secret Disciple, Nicodemus, who was the Pharisee who came to Him by night. And let us not forget Joseph of Arimathaea, in whose tomb Jesus was buried. They were all Disciples to some degree.

Now, if we turn to the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, we also discover that the eleven remaining Apostles abode in the upper room, and that they communed "with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren". Right after that, we are told that there were about one hundred and twenty Disciples. This was just prior to the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out. Consider

these verses:

"Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)"

Acts 1:12-15, KJV

Moving on, if we turn to the Apostle Paul's first Epistle to the brethren at Corinth, we also discover that following His Resurrection from the dead, and during the forty days that He remained on Earth prior to His Ascension to Heaven, Jesus was seen by over five hundred people at one time. All of these individuals were obviously Disciples as well. Consider these verses:

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."

1 Corinthians 15:3-8, KJV

"The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:"

Acts 1:1-3, KJV

Of course, following the day of Pentecost when the Holy Ghost

was bestowed upon the Apostles, we know that many thousands were won to Christ as well. These people too became Disciples of the Lord and members of the Early Church, as the following verses reveal:

"And with many other words did he [Peter] testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

Acts 2:40-41, KJV

"Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand."

Acts 4:4, KJV

So one of the points I am trying to make here, is that at different points in the New Testament, Jesus had a different number of followers. Not only that, but at different points in the Scriptures, His Words were not always addressed to the same audience. Sometimes what He said was addressed to the general populace. At other times, the Lord zeroed in on His enemies. And sometimes, He said things in private which were only meant for the ears of His inner circle; that is, the Twelve Apostles. For example, consider these verses:

"And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear."

Matthew 13:10-16, KJV

"And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them . . . But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples."

Mark 4:10-12, 34, KJV

Now, concerning the Sermon on the Mount, and the "judge not" verses, my understanding is that Jesus was not addressing the Apostles or Disciples in private. It appears that He was addressing "the people" -- as we saw in the previous verse -- that is, the multitudes who had arrived on the hillsides to hear Him speak. In other words, I believe that Jesus was giving general advice for all of humanity to live by. He was saying that inasmuch as the public at large is concerned, it is not a good idea to judge each other.

Why is this? Well, for one thing, as Jesus says in Matthew, we will be judged by the same manner and degree with which we judge others. That thought alone should stop us in our tracks. Sadly, it usually doesn't. Let's face it. Being the humans that we are, sometimes our judgment and criticism of others can be quite unjustified, or it can be unduly severe. Unless we possess the Lord's Spirit of Wisdom and Spiritual Discernment, we may not see or know things which He alone is aware of. For this reason, we may come to false or erroneous conclusions. I would dare say that most people in the world do not have God's Spirit; so applying the above verses to their lives is indeed a wise practice.

Looking at it from another perspective, when we are young children, we are especially guilty of harsh criticism. We find everything wrong with our parents and the world around us. This is particularly true when we become young teenagers and don't get what we want. Kids have to be some of the best con artists and psychologists in the world. What they often forget though is that we were once their age and engaged in the very same things.

Please go to part two for the continuation of this series.

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EXPOSING THE "JUDGE NOT" FALLACY: PART 2

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Righteous And Unrighteous Judgment, God's Will Is That We Believe In His Son, We Are Condemned If We Reject The Light, False Accusations Made Against Jesus, Satan: The Accuser Of The Saints, False Accusations Made Against Us, Abraham's Faith And Obedience, God's Righteous Judgments, God Has Given His Children Authority To Judge Others, Forgive Each Other's Sins In Private, Satan Condemns Us So We Will Shut Up And Not Be A Witness Of Our Faith, Ministry Of Salvation And Judgment, Moses Chooses Seventy Elders To Manage The Children Of Israel, We Must Choose Daily To Serve The Lord, God Raises Up Judges And Prophets To Keep Israel Obedient

From looking at a few other verses which likewise concern the subject of judgment, I am wondering if perhaps "do not unfairly or unjustly criticize" might not have been a better phrase to use in translating this word "judge" in the Sermon on the Mount. Using this phrase adds a whole new dimension to the word "judge", as it is used in the verses in Matthew. One thing we need to understand is that the issue of judging people and matters goes a lot deeper than what is apparent in these verses from the Gospel of Matthew. Most folks do not make any attempt to further research this topic, so they end up shortchanged in their understanding. They simply see "Judge not" and they leave it at that. That is certainly what our enemies do.

If we really want to get technical and base our lives on those two words alone, then we should not even have our judiciary system. After all, Jesus admonished us to "judge not", right? Obviously, embracing such a legalistic, narrow interpretation of the Lord's words is ridiculous; but you see my point, right?

So what I am now going to demonstrate is that some forms of judgment are necessary; particularly when it involves those people who have dedicated themselves to the Lord and His Work. As will be seen, there are really two different kinds of judgment. First, there is unrighteous judgment, which would be similar to unfair and unjustified criticism as seems to be implied in the Sermon on the Mount. And second, there is also what Jesus referred to as righteous or just judgment, as we can determine by the following verse:

"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment."

John 7:24, KJV

Notice that in Matthew we have Jesus saying "judge not", and now we have Him saying "judge righteous judgment". Is this a contradiction of the Scriptures? The enemies of Christ are real "pros" when it comes to pointing out these kinds of things. Some of them would swear up and down that this is a clear contradiction in the Bible. Tragically, without the Spirit of God, they don't have a clue as to what the Truth is, or what the Scriptures really mean. I am reminded of the following verse that is found in Paul's first Epistle to the Church at Corinth:

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

1 Corinthians 2:14, KJV

So is there really a contradiction in these two statements which were uttered by Jesus? Most certainly not. This verse clearly demonstrates the point I am making. Jesus made this second statement in the Temple at Jerusalem right after the Jews had accused Him of having a devil. As I just mentioned, Jesus is saying there are two kinds of judgment: unrighteous judgment -- that is, judgment which is not right, unfair

criticism -- and righteous judgment -- that is, judgment which is right and just. In this example, the "judge not" idea fits perfectly because those Jews were unfairly or unjustly criticizing Him. They didn't have a leg, or the Word, to stand on. They knew exactly what Jesus meant by "judge righteous judgment". They were no fools. They knew what they were doing.

Another clear example can be found in the writings of Paul. He also made a distinction between righteous and unrighteous judgment. For example, when he was discussing the problem in the Roman church between those people who were meat eaters and those who were vegetarians, he wrote the following:

"But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

Romans 14:10, KJV

In this case, the spirit of his words is implying negative criticism, just as the Jewish Elders used with Jesus. When you cannot back up what you are saying with the Word of God, then it is negative criticism, or unrighteous judgment. It seems that meat-eating brethren in Rome were self-righteously judging those Disciples who decided not to eat meat, even though the Lord and the Mosaic Law never once prohibited the eating of all meats. Aside from pork and a few other unclean animals, as well as the drinking of blood, the Mosaic Law gave the green light for eating meat. As I point out in a few other articles, from the time following the Flood in Noah's day, the Lord set the standard whereby eating meat is permissible.

So then, while the Apostle Paul is equating the word "judge" with negative, baseless criticism in regards to the situation which was occurring in Rome, he exercises righteous judgment when he deals with the problem of fornication in the Church at Corinth, as we can determine by this verse:

"For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed,"

1 Corinthians 5:3, KJV

This was righteous judgment because it was based upon Paul's



knowledge of the Word of the Lord. Regardless of whether he was basing his decision on the Mosaic Law, or on a direct revelation from the Lord, Paul's overall intention here was to establish God's Will within the Church at Corinth; so it was just, righteous judgment. So you see, if you understand the true rendering of the word "judge" in the various places where it is used throughout the Bible, it is possible to say "judge not" -- meaning don't unjustifiably criticize -- while at the same time still being able to pass righteous judgment when you may be called to do so.

So how do we distinguish between the two? How do we know when we are judging a situation or a person unfairly, and when we are passing righteous judgment? Actually, with the Apostle Paul's example, I have already hinted at the answer. In studying the Scriptures, the answer becomes even clearer. Jesus Himself provided a direct answer for us when He stated the following in the Gospel of John:

"I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."

John 5:30, KJV

"And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me."

John 8:16, KJV

You see, Jesus is saying that just or righteous judgment is that which serves to help bring about and fulfill God's Will and Purpose. Everything that Jesus did and said was to help bring about God's Will; even though it exposed the lies and hypocrisy of the Jewish Elders in the process. If you think back on things I have stated in other articles, this concept becomes even more clear. For example, in the Lord's Prayer, Jesus says the following:

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

Matthew 6:10, KJV

Okay. Let me ask you. Exactly what is God's highest Will for all of the people of Earth? Again, Jesus provides a direct answer for us when He says the following in the Gospel of John. The Apostle Peter likewise confirms this point:

"And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."  
John 6:40, KJV

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."  
2 Peter 3:9, KJV

Do you see how all of these verses join together to give us the full understanding of what righteous judgment is, as opposed to unrighteous judgment? God's Will is that all men everywhere believe in and accept His Son, so that they might be saved, and be resurrected to Everlasting Life. Everything Jesus said and did worked towards this goal. That is why He said His judgment was just, or righteous. In order for God's Kingdom to be established on Earth as it is in Heaven, those people who choose to practice the works of darkness must first be exposed, and then given a chance to accept the Light, so that they too can do their part to fulfill God's Will. When we do the exact opposite, and reject God's Will for our lives by rejecting His Son, we are not righteous. We are in fact quite unrighteous, and what we say and do will be unrighteous. Furthermore, by rejecting the Light of Christ, we condemn ourselves. I am reminded of the following verses:

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd."  
John 3:19-20, KJV

That was certainly the case with those unbelieving Jewish Elders. As a result, everything that they said and did was unrighteous, because they opposed and criticized Jesus every step of the way. In so doing, they were not only opposing Him, but they were also opposing God's Will on Earth. The Jewish Elders hated Jesus from the very beginning, because in the process of fulfilling His Father's Will, He exposed their hypocrisy. By His example of obedience to His Father's

Will, He showed exactly how wrong they really were. But you see, as I have stated before, Satan accuses us of the very same things of which he himself is guilty. They had to show how wrong Jesus was in order to prove how right, or how self-righteous they were. They thought they were fulfilling God's Will with their keeping of the oral and the written Law, performing animal sacrifices, observing feast days, etc. Thus, in their self-righteous way, they tried to trap Jesus in His words at every instant to show Him the "error" of His ways. They accused Him of being a blasphemer, a lawbreaker, a gluttonous man and a winebibber -- a drunk -- a friend of publicans and sinners, a deceiver, and a son of the devil, as we see by the following set of verses:

"And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth."

Matthew 9:3, KJV

"The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!"

Luke 7:34, KJV

"And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people."

John 7:12, KJV

"And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?"

John 10:20-21, KJV

"But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils."

Matthew 9:34, KJV

As we have already seen, Satan is a liar and a deceiver. Not only that, but through his human mouthpieces, he will shout, and he will yell, and he will point the finger accusingly at the very people who are exposing his own sins of fighting against God's Will on Earth. After all, he is the accuser of the saints. This point is made clear by the following verses:

"And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders,

he, answered nothing."

Matthew 27:12, KJV

"And the chief priests accused him of many things: but he answered nothing."

Mark 15:3, KJV

"And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him."

Luke 23:10, KJV

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."

Revelation 12:10, KJV

So one of the points I would like for you to understand from all of the previous paragraphs, is that as Bible-believing Christians, anything we say or do which helps to promote or fulfill God's Will on Earth, is counted for righteousness in God's eyes. When it is backed by the Word, it is justifiable action; even if those people who oppose God's Will accuse us of being self-righteous and judgmental. One case in point which is always coming up on the social networks, concerns our stance regarding homosexuality and related sins. As some of you will know, the minute we make our Scriptural position known, boy do the wolves come out and scream and yell. They accuse us of being homophobes. They claim that we have no right to judge anyone, and insist that we are self-righteous; even though our position is fully backed by the Scriptures.

Let me reiterate that point. Anything which works against God's Will of bringing the Kingdom into the hearts of men, is unrighteousness. When the Lord destroys His enemies who oppose His Will, His judgments are righteous. They had a chance to submit to God's Will, but they refused to do so. When the Lord destroyed the world and imprisoned the evil spirits during the days of Noah, His judgment was righteous, because by destroying all of those evil people who opposed Him, His Will could then begin to flourish through Noah and His family. When Abraham obeyed and believed God, it was counted to him for righteousness because He also helped to fulfill God's Will and Purpose on Earth. Consider this verse:

"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

Romans 4:3, KJV

Abraham was willing to leave behind his parents and family in Ur and Haran, and take his immediate family and live as a nomad, believing that God would multiply his seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand of the sea. As we all know, he eventually became the father of the Hebrew nation, who were the forerunners of the nation of Israel. You can read more about this in my article "The Children of God and Politics". So again, Abraham was promoting God's Will on the Earth. He believed God and stepped out by faith, and it was counted for righteousness unto him.

When the Lord later smote Pharaoh of Egypt and sent all of the plagues upon that land by the hand of Moses, it was also righteous judgment, because the Egyptians were opposing God's Will. Following their miraculous liberation from Egypt, and after wandering through the desert for forty years, when the Lord began to smite their enemies round about them by giving the children of Israel victories in battle, it was righteous judgment because the pagan nations opposed His Will. And what was God's Will? It was that they would eventually establish the nation of Israel, from which the Saviour would eventually arise.

What nonbelievers fail to understand, and what even certain Christians need to understand, is that contrary to the "judge not" mentality which is so popular with folks who oppose God and reject His Word, the practice of judgment is not reserved to God alone. He has also given this authority to the Saints who have dedicated their lives to His service, and to helping to promote and establish His Will and Kingdom on Earth in the hearts of men. As we saw earlier, the Apostle Paul did not hesitate to judge certain problems and situation which arose within the First Century Church. Consider some of the things which Jesus had to say regarding this matter:

"Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Matthew 18:18, KJV

"Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them;

and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

John 20:23, KJV

Let me first call your attention to the fact that Jesus said these things to the Disciples, and not to the multitudes on the hills. If we go back further in each of those chapters, we discover who Jesus was addressing in both instances, as can be seen by these three verses:

"At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

Matthew 18:1, KJV

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord."

John 20:19-20, KJV

At any rate, as you can see, the Lord gave this authority to His Apostles and Disciples during the First Century. Now, if you stop and think about this, you come to realize that the act of forgiving one's sins involves making a decision. It involves making a judgment regarding the person in question. You are passing judgment on that person. Do you forgive them, or don't you? So you see, whether nonbelievers accept it or not, Christians do have Scriptural authority to judge people and situations.

Of course, as I explain in the article "To Pray or Not to Pray? That is the Question", organized religion has totally twisted the meaning of Jesus' words. The sad result is that today, we have confession boxes where Believers go to confess their sins to a priest, minister or pastor. That is not what Jesus was saying. He was encouraging Christians to privately forgive each other their sins; that is, seeking forgiveness from the person they have actually offended. Why tell your sins to a priest who knows next to nothing about you?

As we have already seen, using the "judge not" attitude is one tactic which Satan loves to employ in his endeavors to condemn a great many Christians. He does it with me, and I am sure that he does it with you as well. He says, "Who are

you to judge others? What right do you have to tell other people how to live, and how to believe, when you are such a big mess and a clod yourself? You're just a self-righteous, judgmental Christian! Why don't you just shut up until you get your own act together?"

Sadly, sometimes we listen to his lies, condemnation sets in, and we soon shut up. We stop being a witness for the Truth. We foolishly put down our Shield of Faith, we take our eyes off of Jesus, and we start looking at ourselves instead. Oh what a mistake! That is EXACTLY what he wants us to do; because once we do that, we stop preaching the Gospel because we fall under Satan's condemnation when we see how bad we are. We have all done it. I know I have. However, when we shut up and stop preaching the Gospel, we are not helping anyone. We are not fulfilling God's Will by helping to spread His Kingdom. So instead of allowing Satan to judge and condemn us, we need to turn around and do as Michael the Archangel did when he said the following while fighting with Satan regarding the body of Moses:

". . . The Lord rebuke thee."  
Jude 1:9, KJV

Just admit you're a failure and a clod, and say, "Yeah Satan, I am guilty of everything you say I am. I am a dirty, rotten sinner and a scoundrel! But guess what? Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so! Now get lost! The Lord rebuke thee!"

In the Bible we find plenty of Scriptures which show us how the Lord's servants are called to a ministry of Salvation, as well as to one of judgment. For example, after their escape from Egypt, the task of leading the children of Israel became so burdensome on Moses, that he had no choice but to appoint seventy tribal elders to help him judge different matters, as we see by the following group of verses. It appears that this in fact was the beginning of the Sanhedrin, or Council of Seventy:

"And Moses said unto the LORD, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as

a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers? . . . I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me . . . And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone."

Numbers 11:11-12, 14, 16-17, KJV

The purpose of choosing these Seventy Elders was to share the responsibility of resolving disputes, keeping the people in line, and making certain that they were obedient to God's Will. This was no easy task. As the last four books of the Pentateuch -- or Torah -- demonstrate, Moses was plagued with problem after problem, which is why he needed the extra assistance to begin with. He was getting kind of old by this time, and his patience was wearing thin.

While Moses continued to be the Lord's main mouthpiece to the children of Israel, he would pass on what the Lord gave him to those Seventy Elders, who would then make God's Will known to the rest of the people. With the Spirit of Wisdom the Lord had given them, the Elders would then judge matters accordingly. They were in effect ministers of Salvation, and ministers of judgment. Those people who obeyed the Word of God which was given through Moses, and then to the Elders, were spared the wrath of God. But as the following verses reveal, those people who disobeyed and got out of line were consumed by fire:

"And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp."

Numbers 11:1, KJV

As I point out in other articles such as "Beholding the Evil and the Good", "Free Will and Personal Choice", and "Do You Want Love and Light, or Rod and Wrath?", every day of our lives we must choose anew to live for and serve the Lord. It



is a constant battle between the old man of the flesh, and the new man of the Spirit. As we learned in part one of this series, this battle occurs in our mind. Throughout history, God has always forced the people who are called by His name to make a choice. Consider some of the following verses:

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:"

Deuteronomy 30:19, KJV

"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Joshua 24:15, KJV

"And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word."

1 Kings 18:21, KJV

During the period of the Judges which lasted about four hundred years, the Lord also raised up certain individuals to shepherd the children of Israel, and keep them in line to the Divine Will. These included such notable persons as Samson, Baruch, Deborah, Gideon and the like. I discuss this subject in some of my other articles such as "The Children of God and Politics".

Following the period of the Judges, the Lord raised up the Old Testament Prophets. You are no doubt familiar with some of them, beginning with Samuel. In reading their accounts, we discover that a large part of their ministries was to constantly warn, judge and sometimes chastise the kings and spiritual hierarchy of Israel due to their rebellious ways. Similar to some of the people today who shout "Judge not!", some of those religious elders and hardhearted kings said the very same things to the Prophets who were sent to warn them of God's impending judgments: "What gives you the right to judge us? We are your leaders! How dare you say this is the Word of the Lord! Blasphemer! Traitor! Away with you!"

Please go to part three for the conclusion of this series.

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EXPOSING THE "JUDGE NOT" FALLACY: PART 3

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The Old Testament Prophets Were Persecuted And Murdered, Rebellious Jewish Leadership Killed Christ, We Are Tools Of God's Judgment And Salvation, Persecution Of First Century Church, God Will Judge Our Persecutors, Persecution May Be Coming For Modern Christians, Modern False Church, Will The False Church Persecute God's True Church?, We Are All Born In Sin, No Room To Brag, God Will Complete His Work In Us, We Are God's Watchmen, Light Of The Word, God's Word Exposes Sin, Condemnation For Rejecting The Light, We Are Messengers Of God's Word, Judged Or Cleansed By God's Word, We Are Made Accountable By God's Word, Judge Righteously, Fight The Good Fight Of Faith, Members Of God's Royal Household, We Are The Children Of Light, Closing Remarks, Suggested Reading List

As I point out in other articles, many of God's Prophets were persecuted, and even martyred, because by the Word of the Lord, they righteously judged those false shepherds who claimed to be God's leadership. For example, Jeremiah was imprisoned and thrown into a mud pit. The Prophet Isaiah is said to have been cut in half after being stretched out on the racks. Elijah was forced to flee from evil King Ahab and wicked Queen Jezebel. There are many other examples. All of these treacherous acts were performed by both the political and the religious leadership of the day. So being a Prophet

of the Lord was not an easy or popular task. The following verses bear full record of their heinous sins which were committed against the Lord's servants:

"Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the LORD, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; but ye would not hear, saith the LORD."

Jeremiah 29:19, KJV

"I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me."

Jeremiah 35:15, KJV

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Matthew 23:29-39, KJV

"Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets,

and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation."

Luke 11:47-51, KJV

"And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy."

Revelation 16:5-6, KJV

"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."

Revelation 18:20-24, KJV

As I explained earlier in this series, this rebellious attitude on the part of both the political and spiritual leadership of Israel continued right up to Jesus' day. Even as He set about to accomplish His Father's Will, the Jews rebelled against it, and exposed their own hypocrisy through their unrighteous judgment of Him. Their unrighteousness was epitomized when they finally managed to get the Lord strung up on a Roman cross, and they, along with the Romans, then

continued to persecute the Lord's children after that as well.

Today, almost two thousand years later, it is we modern-day Christians who have been delegated the responsibility of helping to fulfill God's Will on Earth. This we each do by preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, in the face of mounting opposition, and criticism from an unbelieving world. Every time we open our mouths to preach the Gospel, or to expose the sins of this current generation, we are in effect serving as both God's tools of Judgment and Salvation. Why? Because by sharing His Word, we are forcing people to make a decision either for or against God and His Kingdom. People must either repent, or else harden their hearts even more against the truth.

As I explain in the series "Civil Disobedience and Christian Persecution", just as the Prophets, Apostles and Disciples of the past were persecuted for standing up for God's Truth, so too, we should expect the same kind of behavior today from those people who refuse to hear our message and repent. Consider the following verses where Jesus and the Apostle Paul warn the Disciples of what was to befall them during the First Century:

"And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."

Matthew 10:18-20, KJV

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another."

Matthew 24:9-10, KJV

"But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them."

Mark 13:9, KJV

"But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls."

Luke 21:12-19, KJV

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."

John 15:18-21, KJV

"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."

John 16:2, KJV

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:"

2 Timothy 2:12, KJV

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

2 Timothy 3:12, KJV

There are two important things I would like to point out in these verses. First of all, while such people may criticize us, and accuse us of being judgmental, or self-righteous, or label us as homophobes, or whatever they may say, what they fail to realize is that, as Jesus points out in the previous verses, it will be "for a testimony against them and the

Gentiles". In other words, they can say whatever they want about us, but it is God who will be judging them according to how they react to our message. After all, you reap what you sow.

Notice also what John writes in his Gospel. In so many words, he is saying "The time will come when whoever kills you, will think that by doing so, he is serving God." Wow! What deception! But isn't that exactly what Saul of Tarsus thought before God struck him blind for three days? We all know that some of our Christian brethren are already being persecuted, imprisoned, and sometimes even killed in some countries around the world, such as in the Muslim countries. Exactly how bad, or to what magnitude such persecution will eventually grow, I honestly don't know. We will just have to wait and see.

Another important fact worth pointing out is that prior to his conversion, Paul belonged to the established religious order of his day. As I explain in other articles, he was a very dedicated Pharisee. Now, we all know that the modern church is filled with sin and compromise. I won't go into great detail here, being as I already discuss this subject in considerable detail in other articles. But you know how disgusting it has already become in some churches. Clearly, such churches represent the false church. They certainly do not preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But my point is this: Is it possible that someday the modern false church will also begin to persecute God's true children? We have seen it happen before when the false religionists self-righteously persecuted the true Christians during the Inquisition. They too believed that they were doing God's Will.

So then, if we sweep away the smokescreen of all of this shouting and yelling of "Judge not!" and finger-pointing by the enemies of the Word of God, what are we left with? Well, first of all, as humble and honest Christians, we need to recognize that we are no better than anyone else. We are all partakers of the sinful nature. We are all wretched sinners who were once lost, and who even now are only saved by the Grace of God through faith in the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. So the only difference is that we have accepted God's Love, Grace, Mercy and Forgiveness through Jesus' atoning Blood on the Cross at Calvary, while many of our critics and accusers have not. We're still human. We still make mistakes. We still

sin. In short, we have absolutely nothing to brag about. It is not our own righteousness, but only the righteousness of Christ. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. He began this work in us, and He alone shall complete it to the end, as we see by the following verses:

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Hebrews 12:2, KJV

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:"

Philippians 1:6, KJV

But just like the Prophets, Apostles and Disciples of old, despite our own sinful condition, as the Lord's current representatives on Earth, we have a job to do; and it isn't always a pleasant one or a popular one. To tell someone that they are going in the wrong direction; to inform them that they are in fact a sinner; to tell them that they are doing something which is not pleasing to the Lord; is not an easy task. Yet, as emissaries of our King, it is something which we are called to do. It is our responsibility. In the Old Testament, the Prophet Ezekiel received the following word from the Lord, which I believe applies to us today as well:

"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."

Ezekiel 3:17-19, KJV

In order to bring a person into the Kingdom of Light, we must first help them to understand that they are dwelling in darkness. As you will already know, the way to do this is by sharing the Word of God with them. That is, if they are at



all willing to receive it. After all, as King David wrote so long ago, God's Word is a light unto our feet, and a lamp unto our path -- Psalm 119:105. But that is not all. As we learned in part one, God's Word is also a piercing two-edged sword which exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. As we all know, some people obviously don't like this. It makes them feel very uncomfortable to have their sins exposed, so they go on the attack, as many of us Christians have already experienced. As Jesus himself said in the Gospel of John:

"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin."

John 15:22, KJV

You will recall from our discussion in part two that this is in fact the condemnation that is in the world, because some people purposely choose to hide in the dark, because they do not want to come to the Light of Jesus Christ. They do not want their sins revealed. But regardless of how people react to God's Word, we all need to realize that we have already been judged and found wanting by the Lord through His Word. Therefore, when a Christian quotes Scriptures from the Bible, he or she is merely delivering the Word of the Lord, much like the Prophets of old. He or she is simply telling that person what the Bible says so that they are made aware of the Truth.

In other words, there is really no judgment on the part of the messenger. Do you understand? It is through their own acceptance or rejection of that Word that a person is in effect judging themselves. We have merely served as their ministers of Judgment or Salvation. If a person accepts the Word of Truth into their heart, then they are cleansed and justified by it. Hopefully, it will lead to their Salvation. As Jesus said in the Gospel of John:

"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

John 15:3, KJV

On the other hand, if a person rejects the Word, then as we have already seen, he or she will be judged by that very same Truth. This is why Jesus said that the Jewish Elders no longer had a cloak for their sins. Once a person hears the Truth, they are accountable for their actions. Up until that

point, the Lord remains very merciful and very patient. It is very similar to being a parent. Until we make the rules known to our children, we can't very well punish them for breaking them. The Lord treats us the same way. That is why His judgments are always righteous; much more so than our own.

In conclusion, as the servants of the Lord, as members of His royal household of faith, as soldiers in His spiritual army, we must fight the good fight of faith despite all that our enemies might do or say. We must endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. If they want to accuse us of being judgmental or self-righteous, or if they want to call us homophobes, or whatever, so be it. Who cares. Just make sure that your judgment is righteous judgment according to God's Word. Also, remember that if we raise our Shields of Faith, their words cannot do anything to us. They are like puffs of smoke which vanish away. Following is a final selection of verses for your consideration which validate the previous points:

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."

1 Timothy 6:12, KJV

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."

2 Timothy 2:3-4, KJV

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."

Romans 13:12, KJV

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

2 Corinthians 4:6, KJV

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light . . . And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove

them."

Ephesians 5:8, 11, KJV

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"

Colossians 1:13, KJV

"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness."

1 Thessalonians 5:4-5, KJV

"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:"

1 John 1:6, KJV

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:"

1 Peter 2:9, KJV

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

Galatians 6:10, KJV

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;"

Ephesians 2:19, KJV

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"

Isaiah 52:7, KJV

"His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

Matthew 25:21, KJV

With these inspiring verses, I will bring this series to a close. It is my hope that you have found it informative and enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life as well. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter or Google+, I would really appreciate if you would take the time to click on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were also mentioned in this series, or which are related to this series, and which are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server.

All Are Given a Chance, But . . .  
Beholding the Evil and the Good  
Civil Disobedience and Christian Persecution  
Do You Want Love and Light, or Rod and Wrath?  
Free Will and Personal Choice  
God's Mercy, Judgment and Fallen Angels  
Is the Message of Salvation Meant for All Men?  
Judgment of Azazel: Scapegoat of the High Priest  
Love, Mercy, Forgiveness and Chastisement  
Not Everyone is a Child of God  
The Children of God and Politics  
The Children of Light: Are You One of Us?  
The Judgement of Angels, Demons and Men  
To Pray or Not to Pray? That is the Question

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