

# The Old-Time Evangelistic News

Evangelist W. Paul Redmond Sr.

Volume 7, Issue 2

July 2010

## The Proper Reaction to Those Who Oppose the Gospel (Part 7) Acts 13:6-12

Last month, we finished up considering Paul's exclamation against Elymas' connection. Paul called Elymas a "*child of the devil*." We must realize the source of all false religions. As I have tried to point out throughout the course of this message, we must stand against what is wrong. We must declare the truth and identify the error. This is not about something that does not matter. This is concerning absolute truth. This concerns the eternal destiny of each sinner. If they are not told the truth, they cannot believe the truth. If error is allowed to propagate, sinners will believe the error. We who hold the truth must fervently preach the truth. This, out of necessity, will mean that we will point out error. This will not be easy, nor will it make us popular. But it will be doing what God wants us to do; it will be the right thing to do.

Because Paul was filled with the Spirit, he knew that Elymas was promoting error. Because Paul was filled with the Spirit, he knew that Elymas was a child of the devil. It is very important that we remember I John 4:1—"*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*" We know this in theory, but we must realize this in practice—all religions are not of God. In fact, as I said earlier, all religions are of the devil. God has provided the only way of salvation—through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is what the Bible clearly teaches. This is what true preachers will preach. Anyone that adds to it, takes away from it, or denies it, is a false teacher and a child of the devil.

We cannot associate with, give money to, pray for, or help, in any

-2-

way, someone who preaches a false gospel. We must identify them for what they are—children of the devil and deceivers of men. We cannot call them "Christian," even if that is what they call themselves. We cannot call them "Brother," even if that is what they want us to call them. We cannot join in revival meetings with them. We should not even join in moral causes with those that deny Scripture. They may vote the same way that we do, but it is contrary to Scripture to yoke together with them in any form whatsoever (II Corinthians 6:14-18). Someone may say, "But they have a good cause. Shouldn't we labor with them? Shouldn't we form an organization and work together to defeat abortion, euthanasia, etc.?" They may have a good cause, but Scripture has a greater cause—obedience to Christ. I mentioned II Corinthians 6:14-18, but I could also mention Ephesians 5:11, II John 9-11, Jude 3, and many others. We cannot labor with them. We must identify them, just like Paul did, as children of the devil.

Please remember that Satan "*is transformed into an angel of light*" (II Corinthians 11:14). Verse 15 goes on to say, "*Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness.*" The false teachers may not always be as contentious as Elymas. Sometimes they will, but oftentimes they will be subtle. They may look very good and talk so smooth. They may sound like they have a good idea. But, like Paul, we must be aware of their tactics, and, like Paul, we must identify them as children of the devil.

Paul also exclaimed *Against his Contentiousness*. About Elymas, Paul says, "*Thou enemy of all righteousness.*" The word enemy carries the idea of hostile; it means hating and opposing. We understand enemies when we talk about physical war. Some will like to think that we can get along with everybody, but there comes a time when, as a nation, you have to realize that some want to destroy you. In the United States that has taken place several times over our 200 year history. As time goes on, we will have to go to war again when some enemy desires to destroy us. When soldiers go to war, they

have one goal—kill the enemy before he kills you. That may sound simplistic, but it is true. The purpose of war is to kill the enemy.

We must realize that we are at war spiritually. Throughout the New Testament, there are scores of references to spiritual warfare. We must realize that the devil desires to destroy us. He will do anything to gain the victory against us. There is never a time to let down our guard. Paul realized this throughout his ministry and, led by the Spirit, wrote many of the verses that describe this warfare. He realized it here in this passage and made those around him aware of it when he called Elymas an enemy.

We must do the same! We must recognize the enemies that we are fighting against. This is what upsets many people. They think that Bible-believing Fundamentalists are always looking for a fight. The problem is not that we are looking for a fight. The reality is that we are in a fight. We do not have to look for it. It has already been declared. The devil is at war against God, the Bible, and believers. The battle has been going on since the time of the apostles (and even in Old Testament times), and will continue to go on until eternity begins. The question is not, “Will there be a fight?” The question is, “Will we engage in the fight?” Will we surrender and give up, or will we do like Paul and other great heroes of the faith and fight? The enemy is present and at work. Will we recognize them and stand against them?

I have mentioned before who the enemies are, but I will mention them again. The list is not complete, but these are the prominent ones in our day: the Roman Catholic Church, Islam, Hinduism, Mormonism, Jehovah Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, liberal Baptists, liberal Methodists, liberal Presbyterians. To sum it up, anyone who denies Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation is an “*enemy of all righteousness.*”

I cannot help but think about those words “*all righteousness.*” Why does Paul use that terminology to describe Elymas? I think it

may be because Elymas and all false teachers deny the Way to true righteousness. True righteousness can only be obtained when a sinner trusts in Jesus Christ alone. At that moment of faith, the sinner passes from death unto life and passes from unrighteousness to righteousness. Paul writes in II Corinthians 5:21—“*That we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*” The only way to be righteous in the sight of God is through faith in Jesus Christ. One who teaches another gospel denies the way to true righteousness.

On the other hand, Elymas and other false teachers declare a false way to righteousness. They say it is by works or some other way. They are enemies “*of all righteousness*” because they teach a false way to obtain righteousness. It does not matter what they say or how they explain it; if what they say adds anything or takes away anything from Christ, IT IS WRONG! Man is unrighteous and needs righteousness. But righteousness cannot be obtained through Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed, the Pope, wafers, wine, water, or anyone or anything else. Righteousness is obtainable through Christ alone. Anyone or anything else is an “*enemy of all righteousness.*”

The last exclamation that Paul makes is *Against his Concern*. Paul asks this question at the end of Acts 13:10, “*Wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?*” The word pervert means to distort; to misinterpret; to corrupt; to turn from the right path. It is the same word translated “to turn away” in verse 8. Paul knew what Elymas was trying to do—turn Sergius Paulus away from the right path of faith in Jesus Christ. Paul recognized what Elymas was doing and confronted him about it. All that we have seen so far in these verses lead up to this point right here. I have tried to point this out throughout the course of the message, but it is really emphasized here. Why is it so important to point out the false gospels and false religions that abound today? Because the souls of men hang in the balance. If we, as those who believe right, do not declare the truth and identify the error, then men will be led astray. Souls will die and burn in Hell for eternity if they follow a false gospel. It is just as

important to identify error as it is to declare truth. In reality, you cannot do one without the other.

What was Elymas in his speech and conduct trying to do? Verse 8 answers that—“*turn away the deputy from the faith.*” We speculated earlier as to why Elymas did this—fame, fortune, prominence. It does not matter exactly why he did this. The deeds of Elymas were wrong and would yield eternal consequences. Paul reacted in the proper manner. We must do the same.

The proponents of false religion have the same desire as Elymas—to turn away others from the faith. It too may be for fame, fortune, or prominence. Why they do it does not really matter. What they are doing is what we must be concerned with. If they are teaching a false gospel, they are espousing a false hope. They are damning souls to Hell. Does it matter what they say? Should we be concerned about what they are doing? Is it important? It concerns the eternal souls of men. Nothing could be more serious! Paul was concerned. We must be too!