

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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The Proper Reaction to Those who Oppose the Gospel (Part 5) Acts 13:6-12

Having considered the Root of the Problem, we now turn to **The Reaction of the Preacher**. It is sad that in our day the problems that Paul faced are still around, but many in our Fundamental Independent Baptist circles do not react the way that Paul did. They say that they do not want to be considered a negative preacher, or that they do not want to offend people, or that they do not want to be misunderstood, or any other list of excuses that could be imagined. Perhaps it is because they are afraid what will happen if they preach for the truth and against error. But the real reason that they do not stand up for what is right and preach against what is wrong is because they are not obedient to Scripture. They may justify what they are not doing however they want to, but throughout the New Testament, you will find examples of the apostles preaching against error and preaching the truth. You will not read long in any of the epistles before you find the Holy Ghost instructing us to stand for the truth and against error. I will not take the time to list all of the references, but if you do not believe me, then just start reading through the epistles. You will find instruction for us to do in our day what Paul has done here. I will mention one of those verses, Jude 3: *“It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”* Jude goes on to say that we must earnestly contend because of the false doctrine that has crept in. Paul contended for the faith; Peter, Jude, and many other writers of Scripture contended for the faith. They stood up for what was right and against what was wrong. Down through church history, many others did the same such as Bob Jones Sr., Harold Sightler, Oliver Greene, J. Frank Norris, and many others. We must be obedient to Scripture and follow these examples.

-2-

Now what should our reaction be and how does it manifest itself? Notice, first, The Explanation for this reaction of Paul. Did Paul just do this because he had a bad attitude? Perhaps it was jealousy and Paul wanted to be the main preacher. Maybe it was because he did not like anyone and could not get along with anyone. I mention these silly thoughts because that is exactly what others will accuse the preacher who reacts like Paul of being like and having. Down through the years preachers who have stood for what is right have been falsely accused and torn down because they stood for what is right. Back in the 1950's, Bob Jones Sr. was accused of jealousy because he spoke out against Billy Graham's disobedience to Scripture when Graham had liberal pastors and preachers backing and supporting his meetings. Thankfully, Bob Jones Sr. did not back down and still stood against the unscriptural deeds of Billy Graham.

Why did Paul react the way that he did? Acts 13:9 says Paul was *“filled with the Holy Ghost.”* The word filled means “to wholly take possession of; to be illuminated, sanctified, and guided by His influence.” Why did Paul so stridently come out against Elymas? It was because he was no longer in command of his life. As we saw in the introduction to the message, Paul had been saved on the road to Damascus. Then he spent some years learning from Christ Himself and serving in various capacities in the church. Somewhere, Paul was taught, perhaps while in the desert with Christ, the full meaning of being filled with the Spirit. He had experienced it when Ananias laid hands on him right after his conversion. Over the years between that initial filling and now, no doubt Paul had been filled many times. He had been trained by Christ and the other apostles as to what the filling of the Spirit meant and how it would lead him. Now, after living a Spirit-filled life for many years, Paul experienced one evidence of a Spirit-filled life—he opposed false doctrine.

Why did Paul so oppose what Elymas was doing? He could do nothing else—he was filled with the Spirit. Paul reacted the way he did because the Holy Ghost opposed what Elymas was doing. Yes, it was Paul doing the speaking; it was Paul that Elymas and others

heard; but it was the Holy Ghost preaching through Paul. It was more than just a man; it was a man under the complete control of God the Holy Ghost! That is what made this reaction so real. That is what made Paul so adamantly against what Elymas was saying and doing. It was because Paul was filled with the Holy Ghost.

I do not believe the statement “*filled with the Holy Ghost*” is in Acts 13:9 just to take up space. It is there because the Holy Ghost wanted us to realize that if we are filled with Him, we will react exactly the way that Paul did. We will not be quiet when others are preaching a false gospel. We will not “get along” just so we will not “ruffle feathers.” We will not yoke together with Catholics, Mormons, etc., as “Christian brothers.” They are not Christian! They are not brothers! They espouse a false religion. They are not doing good. They are damning souls to Hell! We should react to them just like Paul reacted to Elymas. We must point out their error. We must let others know that these are false religions. We must let others know that they do not teach the Bible way of salvation.

I mentioned earlier that some in our Fundamental, Independent Baptist circles do not take a stand or preach against false doctrine. I listed various excuses that are often given, and said that the real reason was that they are disobedient to Scripture. They are disobedient; and they are disobedient to the command given in Ephesians 5:18—“*Be filled with the Spirit.*” If that one command is obeyed, it will take care of all of the problems in our homes and pulpits. Why do some preachers not preach against the false religions? Why do they refuse to condemn the false teachings of religions that are damning souls to Hell? It is because they are not filled with the Spirit. In their own eyes, they do not see anything bad about these religions. In their own eyes, they see no reason to stand up and cry out against them. In their own eyes, they are not concerned with what others are saying. But that is the problem—it is their own eyes. If they are filled with the Spirit, they will not be seeing with their own eyes. If they are filled with the Spirit, they will not be preaching with their own mouth. If they are filled with the

Spirit, they will not be thinking with their own mind. If they are controlled by Him, they will think what He thinks, see what He sees, and say what He says. They will not care who agrees with them. They will know that they are doing what He wants—and that is all that matters. They will be preaching what He wants to be preached—and they will not care if everyone likes it or not. Why does a preacher not preach and stand against error? It is because he is not filled with the Holy Ghost. If you are filled with the Holy Ghost, you will react just like Paul did.

We see what Paul did here because he was filled with the Holy Ghost, but you can also see what the writers of Scripture wrote when they were filled with the Holy Ghost. I mentioned this earlier, but it goes right along with what I am saying concerning being filled with the Holy Ghost. The writers of Scripture did not write down their own words—“they were *moved by the Holy Ghost*” (II Peter 1:21). Jude wrote about earnestly contending for the faith because the Holy Ghost led him to write it. Peter, John, Paul, James, and the other writers of Scripture wrote what the Holy Ghost led them to write. It was not man’s words but God’s words. When we read them, if we are filled with the Holy Ghost, we will want to do what it says. If we are filled with the Holy Ghost, He will say, “I wrote this. I want you to be obedient and do what I said.” If we are filled with the Holy Ghost, we will do what He says in His Word. In this one instance, if we are filled with the Holy Ghost, we will react just like Paul reacted. We will preach and talk like Paul preached and talked. The exact words will be different, but the message will be the same. Do you want to be like Paul? Do you want to stand up for what is right? Do you want to stand against what is wrong? Be filled with the Spirit. You will not be able to react in any other way.

In this reaction, we see not only the explanation, but we notice also The Earnestness. These are not separate reactions. Paul was earnest because he was filled with the Spirit. If we are filled with the Spirit, then we will be earnest as well. Acts 13:9 concludes with the clause, “*set his eyes on him.*” This clause carries the idea “to gaze

intently; to behold earnestly; to look steadfastly.” This was not some half-hearted expression of Paul. I cannot help but sense a red-hot intensity to what Paul was saying and doing. There is some debate about what John the Baptist meant when he said of Jesus, “*He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.*” This is not a literal fire, but the intensity with which one will live for God after he is baptized with the Holy Ghost. Without getting into a long debate, Scripture seems to indicate that the baptism and the filling are the same. Regardless, we often hear someone say, “He (or she) is on fire for God.” What do we mean? He (or she) is filled with the Spirit. They no longer care for the things of the world. They care only for the things of God.

Paul was not half-hearted in this reaction to Elymas. Neither should we be in our reaction to those who oppose the Gospel in our day. In fact, no part of our life or service for God should be half-hearted. We should burn strong for God in every part of our life. We should be earnest in our service for God. Next month we will look at what Paul said to Elymas. May God bless you until then.