



PREPARING SOULS TO SERVE THE LORD

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God Said Kill Her! God Did Not Say Kill Her!

By
Jackie M. Stearsman

In our local paper, the *Lakeland Ledger*, April 12, 1990, 2B, there was the account of a recent decision about a man claiming God directed him to commit murder. The following narrative will present the issue for our purpose in this article.

A man who claimed God told him through the radio to kill is judged innocent because of insanity in fatally shooting a woman in the face.

A parade of mental health experts supported the defense argument that ... [name withheld] truly believed he was acting on God's command when he killed ... [name withheld] as her husband and children watched in horror.

The article went on to say that a jury, after three days deliberation, had arrived at the above decision. The Judge in charge immediately committed the misguided individual to a mental institution. There are some truths in this account that I

ask you to consider.

1. Is An Assertion Proof?

Here is an individual who is making the assertion that God directed his actions. Sane individuals can know this is not true. Many claim God is directing them to believe that which is not biblical or to do that which the Bible does not authorize. If that is not sufficient to explain the folly some have been known to blame their irresponsibility upon the Devil. In the words of Flip Wilson, "The Devil made me do it."

Jeremiah in the long ago expressed the Lord's thoughts as follows: "I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart; Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal. The

prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What



Stearsman

is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour. Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD" (Jer. 23:25-32).

If a sane audience can evaluate and know one case is true, it may know if another is

true. The New Testament admonishes us as follows: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:21-22). Again, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

2. Can People Understand the Bible?

It is significant that the oft heard excuses, "Man cannot understand the Bible alike," and "Everyone has a right to his interpretation in religious matters" was not proposed by those evaluating the false claims made by the "experts," and this is as it should be. Here a jury, a Judge and "a parade of mental health experts" were unanimous in their verdicts.

Could the same body of "experts" apply the same degree of integrity in their evaluation of other Bible truths and arrive at truth there as well? If not why not? Is murder the only action one may falsely assert that God has ordered?

How would you explain the following passages? "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:15-17). Again, "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto

me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)" (Eph. 3:1-4). "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:3). From the above passages, do you conclude that God expects His Word to be understood?

3. Is Bible Truth Objective?

In this matter we may observe the unbiased teaching of the Bible. The subject of taking innocent human life is presented in the Bible without respect of persons. "The commandments, 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not covet,' and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Rom. 13:9, NIV). What it demands of one it demands of all. This is true with all its subjects. Is the Bible addressed to all, and is the Bible to be applied by all? "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16). "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that

judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" (Rom. 2:1-3). And in the same Chapter, "For there is no respect of persons with God" (Rom. 2:11).

4. Is Making Unfounded Assertions an Innocent Matter?

When people claim that God has directed them and he has not done so, it is no innocent matter. It is true that some claims are not as harmful as others. But let us remember, to make assertions about God directing one concerning eternal salvation is no innocent matter. It has eternal consequences. "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 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. Ye therefore,

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beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness" (2 Pet. 3:15-17). Should the same Bible be permitted to direct all investigations?

Conclusion

Do you believe every religious assertion made by men? If not which assertion do you accept and which do you reject? On what basis do you accept some and reject others?

God's Word, the Bible, may be read, understood and obeyed. Sane and honest people may know whether the claims of a Pope, a Pastor or a mentally disturbed person is from God. What does the Bible teach, "how readest thou" (Luke 10:26)?



Biblical Predestination

By

Hugo McCord

Since God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34, 35 literally from the Greek, *God is no face-receiver*; cf. Rom. 2:11), and since each one must give an account of himself (Rom. 14:12), Biblical predestination or foreordination is of *character*, not *persons*.

As regards Romans 9:6, the true Israelites are not fleshly Jews as such (Matt. 3:9), but they whose hearts (Rom. 2:29) are right and who are doers (Rom. 3:25).

As regards Romans 9:7-9, the true seed of Abraham are they who walk in the steps of faith (Rom. 4:12), which Isaac did, but Ishamel did not.

As regards Romans 9:11, God *foreknew* but he did not *foreordain* what kind of characters

would be in Jacob and Esau; they made their own characters, and God on the basis of his foreknowledge made plans for their places in life.

As regards Romans 9:13, God hates nobody (John 3:16); the word hate is used in the sense of losing God's favor by one's own actions.

As regards Romans 9:16, God foreknows all who will be vessels of honor; but God does not decide who will be vessels of honor; each one decides it for himself: "If a man will purge himself ... he will be a vessel of honor" (2 Tim. 2:21). When a man chooses to be selfish and disobedient to God, God knows ahead of time what he will be, and has a place for him to serve, as even a wicked Pharaoh.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified (Rom. 8:29-30).

As regards pleasing God, salvation is based on man's knowledge of Christ (John 6:44-45); Rom. 10:1, 2), not God's foreknowledge or foreordination. No matter how much a wicked man wills or runs or kicks against the pricks, he cannot change God's eternal decrees that he will have mercy on those who obey him and he will punish the disobedient (Psa. 103:17, 18; Rom. 2:4-11). But the man pleasing God must will (Rev. 22:17) and run (1 Cor. 9:24-26).

As regards Ephesians 1:4,

God decided before the world was that the kind of people he would recognize in Christ would be holy and blameless and loving. He foreordained that those characteristics would be the earmarks of his people, but it is up to each one to make himself holy (1 Pet. 1:16), blameless (Phil. 2:14, 15), and loving (1 Thess. 4:9, 10).

As regards Ephesians 1:5, God ordained that the ones accepting Christ would be adopted as God's children.

As regards Ephesians 1:11, God decided that those in Christ, having become holy, blameless, and loving, and having been adopted as children, would have an inheritance. But the inheritance is not unconditional, for the same Ephesians were threatened with being disowned (Rev. 2:5). (Fifty Years of Lectures, 214-215).



Report

By

Gene Burgett

Brian

Kenyon and I attend the Freed-Hardeman Lectures the week of February 1-8.

We took the Florida School of Preaching display with us, as well as the school's lectureship books and the various notes that Jackie and Brian have produced over the years. Our new lectureship book, *Do You Understand Fellowship?* was well received and many copies were purchased. The location of our display was fabulous and I am certain the trip was good exposure for the school.



Gene Burgett

Brian and I are in debt to

Jim and Karen Davis for providing us lodging for an entire week. They were marvelous hosts. I am sure Brian felt right at home as they are his in-laws, but I, too, felt welcome by the warmth of their hospitality.

On Sunday morning we worshiped with the Finger church of Christ, where Earl Edwards and Jim Davis serve as elders. Brian spoke in the morning worship assembly on the subject of decision making.

Brain and I also had an opportunity to worship with the Liberty church of Christ in Dennis, Mississippi. Brother B.C. Carr's funeral was held at that place, and his name is still highly regarded in that region.

The Freed-Hardeman Lectures attract a large segment of our brotherhood. I was proud of Brian's address on Wednesday morning. I heard many lectures, but

none were any better than his presentation as he addressed an often misused text from Job 14:14, "If a man dies shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes." This text is often quoted as if Job were stating his belief in the resurrection, however, as Brian showed, in the context this was one of several statements where Job revealed how hopeless he felt in the face of his suffering.

I must admit I also enjoyed participating in the "pickin" and "singin" tradition that takes place every year during lectureship week. Next year I am sure I will take my guitar.

Though all of these events were worth the trip, my fondest memories are of the many kind words spoken about the Florida School of Preaching.

My proudest moment was

when I spoke briefly with brother Wendell Winkler. Upon learning that I am now working full time with the school as the **Director of Public Relations**, he said: "Brother Burgett, you all are doing a good work down there [in Florida]. Your school has spotless reputation and has not been surrounded by any controversy." Those words meant a lot coming from a man who for many years directed a school of preaching and was also the head of the Bible department at a Christian university. Though I have known for many years that the Florida School of Preaching is doing great service in the kingdom of God, it is always encouraging to learn that others have also taken notice.



Will you keep our work in your prayers? Will you help us find good men to carry the good news to lost people?

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