

Misdirected Zeal

Have you ever considered that doing the right thing in the wrong way or for the wrong reason is still the wrong thing? We can often think that our motive and intent is so high and honorable that any degree of compromise is legitimate, as long as the end justifies the means. In today's Templates of Truth, we meet a king who had that very perspective in mind, and we discover as he did, that God still rejects the wrong thing even when for the right cause.

Jehu was anointed king over Israel and given the commission to eradicate all the descendants of Ahab from the land so that never again would Ahab's lineage reign from the throne. This was God's judgment against Ahab & Jezebel (his wife) in response to their evil administration in leading the people of God to worship & serve Baal. Jehu was militant in the task, advancing a royal slaughter unprecedented in Jewish history!

The problem was: Jehu didn't stop with just the descendants of Ahab. He also killed all of the officials who served in any capacity in Ahab's court. Along the way of his bloody crusade, Jehu met a man to whom he extended this invitation – *Come and see my zeal for the Lord* (II Kings 10:16). Once the man accepted the offer, Jehu rallied forth to deceptively gather all the prophets of Baal in their temple where he carried out a mass slaughter killing all of them. Jehu's bloodshed was being promoted & justified under the banner of *zeal for the Lord*. It was, however, misdirected zeal. It went far beyond God's command and embodied some of Jehu's own personal ambition and political agenda.

This Biblical account reminds me of several current events, one recently in which a threat by Terry Jones and members of the Dove World Outreach Center of Gainesville, Florida, was to burn a copy of the Quran on the ninth anniversary of 9/11, in protest against the opening of a Muslim mosque near "Ground Zero" in New York City. National news has given coverage more than once to Pastor Fred Phelps of the Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kansas, in the more than 41,000 anti-gay & anti-abortion protest events his church has staged in over 650 cities nationwide, where signs & banners declare such things as: "God Hates Fags!" Then there was the murder of Dr. David Gunn in March of 1993, as he entered work at the Pensacola (Florida) Women's Medical Services Clinic, by protester, Michael Griffin, who yelled just seconds before firing his weapon at the abortionist, "Don't kill any more babies!" These and similar acts are appalling and none of them are sanctioned Biblically or by the vast majority of godly believers. Yet, all these people thought they were acting in zeal for the Lord. They are modern examples of misdirected zeal.

We would not bat an eye to condemn the person who murders prostitutes, or carries out some form of gay-bashing under the claim that God told them to do so in order to eradicate immoral perversion from the land. Yet, many in our world have no qualm accepting that homosexual partners should have the right to adopt children or serve as foster parents because God's Word teaches that we should care for abandoned, abused & neglected children. This is a classic

example of doing the right thing in the wrong way (if you believe the teaching of God's Word concerning the homosexual lifestyle). In all the things Jehu accomplished in his righteous crusade, he still did not remove the golden calves that were worshipped at Dan and Bethel (II Kings 10:29). Even though the gold symbols were stated to represent Jehovah God, God still did not accept them because of their identification with idol & pagan worship; and, because God condemned their creation in the Ten Commandments. So, worshipping the true God in a pagan manner is another classic example of doing the right thing in the wrong way. God simply does not accept doing the right thing in the wrong way. Partial obedience is still disobedience.

The crusade of Jehu reminds us that it is still best to do the right thing, in the right way, at the right time, for the right reason, and with all the right people according to the righteousness that is clearly defined not by people's standards, but by God's Word. Only then can we be assured that our results will serve a godly purpose. We need to assure that our zeal for the Lord is genuine and that it is served in a way that is uncompromising to the teaching of Scripture, otherwise it is misdirected zeal and will always put us at odds with God's standard & expectation.

That's today's Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide in Christ. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in the Lord Jesus.

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