

# SHOULD WE AGGRESSIVELY, DEFEND THE WORD OF GOD?

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Our age is an age characterized by a lack of conviction and a liberal dose of compromise. On every hand we are taught by the liberal media, politicians and the entertainment world to accept everybody and everything no matter what they believe or practice. This is a result of the humanistic teaching which has slowly, but surely, permeated our land through our school system and into our homes over the television airways. This liberal way of thinking has now made its way deeply into the hearts of the Lord's church in many places. It manifests itself in the form of those who do not believe we ought to aggressively and militantly defend the word of God. In many places the idea of "live and let live" is flown higher on the banner than the inspired word of God.

What are the consequences of such a thinking? First, the Lord's church is thought of as nothing more than a denomination among denominations. The advocates of this theory teach the church is a product of our heritage and tradition. They credit Alexander Campbell with its origin. Second, a generation has now been reared who believe this nonsense. Consequently, the church in many places has become ignorant of the truth. Their appreciation for the precious bride of Christ has been lowered to the equivalent of a harlot or mistress. Of course, they do not realize this because they have been fed the lies of Satan in the form of liberal preachers and denominational hirelings. Third, the word of God has been replaced with the feelings and subjective thoughts of humans. The standard of God's word has been lowered and the opinions of men have been raised to sit on the throne. Fourth, faithful congregations who aggressively defend the word of God have been labeled as "troublemakers" or "legalists." Gospel preachers have been "raked over the coals" because they **STAND IN THE GAP** and defend God's word. The conclusion to the whole matter is that Satan wins a decisive victory because he has confused the majority who will not study, but who will listen to humans. The masses continue to follow him to a Devil's hell and take their innocent young people with them!

What can we do to help these from being eternally separated from God and His glory? The answer is aggressively and militantly defend the word of God. We will notice some principles which teach us the fact God wants His word defended with all diligence and militance.

## GOD HAS ALWAYS DEMANDED AGGRESSIVENESS FROM HIS PREACHERS

James writes: *"Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience."* -- *James 5:10*. When we look to the prophets for examples of those who have spoken in the name of the Lord, we see those men who were aggressive in that speaking. Elijah was one example of aggressiveness. When in the presence of the wicked Ahab we hear this exchange: *"And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel;*

*but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim." -- 1 Ki 18:17-18.* Elijah didn't give some wimpy, "wishy-washy" type of answer. He spoke directly and to the point. He laid the blame at the feet of the person who was at blame. The Bible had said of Ahab: *"And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshiped him. And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him." -- 1 Ki 16:31-33.* In the face of that person, Elijah denied being the trouble-maker, but told who really was. Ahab, because he had denied God, was the one causing trouble. Today we need men who will tell the truth about who causes trouble. Those who advocate liberalism in the church are the ones causing trouble. We need to point that out clearly and convincingly. We do not need to be ashamed and we do not need members who will not support that kind of preaching. Later on Mount Carmel at the confrontation (something many brethren hate), Elijah made this statement: *"...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 Ki 18:21.* We need to be asking people the same thing. How long will you halt between the truth and error? If God be God follow Him, and if the liberals (Rubel, Max, Jeff, etc.) be "god" then follow them! Elijah went on to show the power of God and we need to do the same today.

Another great prophet who was aggressive was Micaiah. In First Kings chapter twenty-two we are introduced to him as Jehoshaphat attempts to go to war with Ahab against the Syrians. Ahab asked his 400 prophets if he would be successful if he went to war and they said go ahead. Jehoshaphat realized something about that situation and wanted another opinion. Micaiah was discussed, but Ahab hated him, probably as much as he did Elijah. **Isn't it shame to see gospel preachers hated today because they speak the truth also!!** Micaiah was summonsed and on the way he was told: *"And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good." -- 1 Ki 22:13.* In other words he was told not to rock the boat, but to go along with everyone else and everybody would be happy. Micaiah's answer was a classic: *"And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak." -- 1 Ki 22:14.* We see the aggressiveness of Micaiah. He would not go along to get along. He spoke as he ought! We need to be like him today and be yet one man for the Lord!

Isaiah was also one who was aggressive when it came to speaking. We read in Isaiah chapter one: *"Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your*

**hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;" -- Isa 1:10-16.** Does not Isaiah sound aggressive? He, of course, spoke and wrote by inspiration, but what does that say about God's attitude? God wanted him to be aggressive when he spoke to God's people.

Another prophet who spoke aggressively was Ezekiel. God warned him about the people to whom he was going: **"For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD."** -- Ezek 2:4. God told Ezekiel to go to His people and to say, "Thus saith the Lord." That kind of preaching is ridiculed and rejected by the many today, but that is the kind of preaching God demands. Later God would tell Ezekiel: **"Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads."** -- Ezek 3:8. It takes diligence to be aggressive. A sentiment which is common in the book of Ezekiel is expressed in this verse: **"And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them."** -- Ezek 33:33. God wanted Ezekiel to speak in such a way that they would know a prophet had been in the land. God demands preachers today who will speak in such a way that the people will know the truth has been preached!

We could notice the minor prophets who also were very aggressive. Joel said: **"And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil."** -- Joel 2:13. We could notice Amos who spoke with candor and clarity: **"Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!"** -- Amos 6:1. Obadiah spoke with courage and conviction: **"The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD."** -- Oba 3-4. Obadiah did not pull any punches and neither should we.

These examples (and multitudes more which we could notice) from the Old Testament show how God expected His prophets to be aggressive as they defended His word. We do not see any compromise in their preaching. They aggressively defended the word of God.

As we look to the New Testament we see more of the same. Paul wrote to Timothy and said: **"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 Tim 2:3-4. We are to be soldiers in the army of God and we are not to be afraid or ashamed! Paul asked for the prayers of the church that he might speak as ought: **"And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."** -- Eph 6:19-20. There are far too many preachers, and elders, who pride themselves in NOT speaking boldly. They major in speaking in such a way as to **not** say a thing!! If you question what they say, they respond by saying, "You misunderstood me," or "You took me out of context!" What they need to do is just open their mouth and speak boldly!!

**Satan devours his victims by being aggressive**

Peter warned about our adversary: ***"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:" -- 1 Pet 5:8.*** Satan will use any and everything at his disposal to deceive and devour his victims, but he will be aggressive in it. One needs to remember how aggressive Satan was in dealing with Job. He was relentless and ruthless as he devoured Job's material possessions in one day. He next went after Job's health and did so aggressively. Satan is as relentless and ruthless today and he is also aggressive.

This is why we must be aggressive with truth. We must battle him unless we want to lose. Paul wrote: ***"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." -- Eph 6:12.*** We are engaged in a spiritual battle with an opponent who is capable of devouring us if we do not use the proper armor. That armor is the truth and we must be aggressive in its proclamation in order to protect ourselves and produce fruit unto God.

## Soldiers today must determine to be aggressive and militant in defense of God's truth

Christians today must determine in their hearts and minds to be aggressive in the proclamation of the truth. God demands such from those who would teach and preach. We need to once again speak out against all sin and error. In order to do this, we must remember some things. First, we need to remember it is the word of God which saves: ***"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." -- Rom 1:16....."Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." -- James 1:21.*** We can not save ourselves with our own words. We must carry the word of God to the lost if they would be saved.

Second, we need to remember what is at stake – the souls of the world. This includes our own souls, the souls of our children and grandchildren, and the souls of families and friends. We do not help those who are closest to us if we “water-down” God's message. In fact, we do not even care about them if we do this. We must aggressively teach them so they can come of the darkness and into the light. It would be the same principle as if they were in a burning house and we saw the house burning and did not rush to them, trying to get them out. How many of us would do that? NONE!! Why do we not see the urgency to be aggressive with truth because those outside the church are in a position to burn forever!! We must once again come to that realization and act accordingly! May God helps us be aggressive and militant in proclaiming His word!!

We also need to be aggressive in opposing those who teach error and would lead others down their road of destruction. Just as God's prophets and preachers in the past aggressively taught, they also aggressively defended!! God demands we be aggressive, Satan devours aggressively and we must aggressively oppose!

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