

Ben Carson Invokes Biblical Reference During Press Conference

Dr. Ben Carson spoke at a press conference Wednesday afternoon at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

During that 13-minute event, nearly three-fourths of which was a question-and-answer session with the press on hand, there was only one topic: the passing of a rumor by the Ted Cruz campaign on Monday night during the Iowa Caucus that he was dropping out of the GOP presidential race. Carson opened the press conference with a brief statement in which he urged the press and voters to evaluate all of the candidates—himself included—by a biblical standard.

“I make no bones about the fact that I am a person of faith,” he said. “I believe what it says in Matthew 7:20 in the Sermon on the Mount, ‘By their fruit you will know them.’ You know people not by what they say, but by what they do, and how their lives are led. I hope people will judge me by those same standards. Not what I say, but what I do.”

During the statement, Carson never made mention of Cruz, or any other candidate, by name, but was immediately asked by a member of the media if his statement indicated he felt Cruz was a hypocrite. Carson tried to avoid discussing Cruz directly, but was eventually drawn in with questions about the Caucus Night rumors.

“It’s clear that there were people who tried to take advantage of a situation, who tried to distort information, there’s no question about that,” he said. “Senator Cruz said he was not aware of that when I talked with him, and that he did not agree with that kind of thing. We’ll wait and see what he does to demonstrate that.”

Asked to clarify what that meant, Carson said he had to “dig deep” into his own campaign during the course of the election cycle, and when he found problems he didn’t agree with, he made changes. He said he expected Cruz to do the same.

“I think that’s what a good leader does,” he said. “If there are things going on that you don’t agree with, you have to make changes. Now, if he agrees with it, he doesn’t need to make changes.”

At points during the press conference, members of the media turned argumentative with Carson, pressing him on whether or not he believed Cruz, and why he would make a biblical reference about the matter. Carson, instead, accused the media of trying to create a distraction.

“You know, this is what is wrong with America,” he said. “We’ve become like ancient Rome. Everybody wanted to go to the Coliseum and see the blood and the gore—‘Oh, this is exciting!’—while their society was crumbling around them. I think I’ve stated very clearly what people need to look at, and how they need to make their evaluation.”

He further explained the biblical reference like this:

“What I am saying is that *you*—the press, and we, the American people—have a perfectly good way of evaluating people. We’ve always had a good way of evaluating people. Will we use it, or will we ignore it? Go back to the previous president, or the current president, when he was running. Were there things there that could’ve been evaluated that would’ve told us a great deal, if we had chosen to look at them? Probably there are.”

Carson said Cruz did apologize to him over the incident, and that he said he didn’t know what the people in his campaign responsible for it had done. He also said the Texas senator said he didn’t agree with what was done.

Another figure in the controversy was U.S. Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa), a national co-chair for the Cruz campaign, who was known to have spread the rumor of Carson dropping out on Caucus Night. Carson said his Iowa state campaign chair, state Rep. Rob Taylor, has reached out several times to King, but has not yet heard back from the congressman.