

Are You Causing People to Blaspheme?

Have you ever heard something come out of someone's mouth that was so contrary to who you thought that person was that you simply didn't have a file in your file cabinet in which to place the statement? I'm talking about a statement so radically foreign from what you would expect that person to say that you actually felt your heart skip and the computer in your mind automatically went, for only a moment, to that blue error screen.

This happened to me recently when a well-known pastor with a very large congregation was speaking about the book of Romans and quoted from Chapter 2, verses 28-29 (TLV):

"For one is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision something visible in the flesh. Rather, the Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart—in Spirit not in letter. His praise is not from men, but from God."

And he said "real Jews" are not the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." "No," he went on to say, "True Jews were those in the church who had circumcised hearts."

I have heard this pastor teach for years, and he always seemed to have a basic understanding of the Bible. Through the years, I have gleaned from his messages. So, when I heard him make such an unbiblical statement, I was shocked.

For a moment, I didn't have a drawer in my cabinet in which to file his statement. How could someone so educated and so experienced in biblical study make such an unsound and unbiblical comment? Worse yet, those seated in his massive sanctuary responded with thunderous applause to his proclamation.

You may be asking yourself after reading the above text, “What is the problem? What did the pastor say that was so wrong,” or, “isn’t what he said consistent with those verses from Romans 2?” The answer to all three questions is simple. The pastor pulled two verses out of context and, in doing so, he confused and obfuscated the entire message of the book of Romans.

Over the past few years, I have been working on writing books that help those who read them look at the text of the New Testament in context. My first book on *Galatians in Context* is already available on Amazon, and I will be releasing *Colossians in Context* shortly, followed by *Romans in Context*, *Hebrews in Context* and *Ephesians in Context*.

The purpose for my writing these books is to counter the damage done by those who make statements like the one above. As a result, it can cause Gentile believers to believe something that is untrue, while at the same time drive Jewish people away from belief in Yeshua (Jesus) and the biblical mandate G-D gave to the Jewish people.

Let’s go back to Romans 2:28-29. One of the indisputable truths about Romans 2:28 and 29 is that there are 27 verses in Romans 2 that precede verses 28 and 29. So, if we are to understand verses 28 and 29, it would be important that we first read the verses that come before verses 28 and 29. One very important verse we read within those 27 previous verses is Romans 2:17:

“But if you call yourself Jewish and rely upon the Torah and boast in God” ...

In Paul’s writing of Romans chapter 2:17, he clearly tells us that he is speaking to people who are Jews. As a matter of fact, in proper context, Paul is chastising a group of Jewish believers because they have been bad examples to the Gentile believers who are causing the Gentile believers to live their

lives in ways that are contrary to having faith in Yeshua, which is why Paul writes Romans 2:24:

“For as it is written, “the name of God is slandered among the nations because of you.”

Some translations say, “the name of G-D is blasphemed among the Gentiles.”

If verse 17 isn't enough evidence that Paul is speaking to Jewish believers in Yeshua and not to Gentiles unbelievers in Romans 2, let's go back a little further to Romans 2:14:

“For when Gentiles, who do not have the Torah, do by nature the things of the Torah, they are a law to themselves even though they do not have the Torah.”

Notice that in verse 14, Paul is speaking to one group of people and uses the words “for when Gentiles” to differentiate between the first group, the Jews, and the second group, the Gentiles.

It is also very important for understanding the text in context by looking back in the Bible to previous verses using the same language. In this case, one such verse is found in Deuteronomy 30:6:

“Also Adonai your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants—to love Adonai your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live.”

In context, this is a prophetic word from G-D to the Jewish people concerning their restoration in the end times as He reestablishes Israel and circumcises their hearts so that they would do as it says in Deuteronomy 30:8:

“Then you—you will return and listen to the voice of Adonai and do all His mitzvot that I am commanding you today.”

In Romans 2, Paul is not telling Gentile believers that they

are the “true Jews.” Not at all. Rather Paul is reminding the Jewish believers in Yeshua that because their hearts have been circumcised, they have a prophetic responsibility to be an example to the Gentile believers of what living a biblically repentant life in Yeshua looks like.

If you remove these words from their context and reapply them inconsistently, you cause the Gentile believers in Yeshua to do exactly what Paul was accusing the Jews of doing. You cause Gentiles believers to blaspheme the name of G-D.

How? By removing the context, you change the meaning, and when you change the meaning, you cause the prophetic words G-D spoke to become untrue. Taking Paul’s words out of context and misapplying these words to Gentile believers, in effect, makes G-D a liar, and it causes those to whom you teach to blaspheme or slander G-D. {eo}

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