

BIBLE TALK

Hi – welcome to *Bible Talk*. This is George Battey from the “*CHURCH OF CHRIST*” – the “*churches of Christ salute you*” (Rom 16:16).

This week topic is: ***Is it wrong to proselyte people from other churches?***

This message is being posted **January 12** and will stay posted on Bible Talk until **January 18**.

Let me make these quick announcements:

Our address is: **7191 Fielder Rd., Jonesboro, GA.**

Our services are: **Sundays at 11 AM & 4 PM; Wednesdays at 7 PM** – we are asking you to please come and visit our services.

Our web site is: www.WillOfTheLord.com. You may email us by going to that web site.

Now to the question: ***Is it wrong to proselyte people from other churches?***

The word proselyte means “*convert.*” The question we are asking is this: ***Is it wrong to purposefully try to convert people from their present church and try to make them members of another church?***

Many people answer this question with a resounding, “*NO!*” In fact, there is a passage of Scripture which seems to say that proselyting, or converting men from one religion to another is wrong.

Matthew 23:15 (NKJV)

*15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one **proselyte**, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.*

Is, then, this passage and is the Bible in general saying that it is wrong and “unchristian” to convert men from one church to another church?

LOOK CLOSELY AT THE PASSAGE

Let us begin by looking closely at the passage we just read and let's see exactly what Jesus was condemning in that text.

Matthew 23:15 (NKJV)

15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

If we treat this passage fairly, Jesus was not condemning the act of proselyting, or converting men. He was condemning the scribes and Pharisees because when they did convert men they were not converting them to serve God. Instead of converting men from sin and encouraging them to serve God they were simply fashioning men to be "children of hell."

"PROSELYTES" IN THE CHURCH

In contrast to the proselytes of the Pharisees, there were good proselytes in the early church who served the Lord.

Acts 6:5 (NKJV)

*5 ... [there was a disciple named] Nicolas, a **proselyte** from Antioch,*

Acts 13:43 (NKJV)

*43 Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout **proselytes** followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.*

These men that are called "proselytes" use to be heathens. Formerly they had been pagans and had worshiped idols, but they become proselytes – that is, they had been converted and so believed in and worshiped the true God of heaven.

So then, whether it is right or wrong to “*proselyte*” men depends upon what you convert them to.

On the one hand, if you proselyte, or convert a man to believe and practice error, then it is wrong to proselyte men to that. This is exactly what Jesus condemned the Pharisees for in Matthew 23:15.

On the other hand, if you proselyte, or convert a man to believe and practice truth, it is right to proselyte men to that!

A COMMAND TO “PROSELYTE”

In fact, did you know that in the Bible we are commanded to convert men and women to the truth.

Matthew 28:19-20 (NKJV)

*19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

Here Jesus instructs His disciples to go forth into all the world, to “*compass land and sea*” and “*proselyte*” or convert men to the gospel. Men and women must be taught the truth and they must be baptized to have their sins washed away.

Obviously, then, if a man or woman is a member of a church that teaches false doctrine (and there is false doctrine), they must be converted from that to believe the truth. If people are in a church that practices unscriptural worship (and there is such a thing as vain worship), then they must be converted from that to practice the truth.

James 5:19-20 (NKJV)

*19 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back,
20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.*

According to this, when men and women stray away from the truth they become lost. Their soul is headed for hell. Would it be right to remain silent? Would it be the “*Christian*” thing to do to simply say nothing and not warn the sinner who has strayed away? Certainly not! We must warn them and in so doing we save a soul from death in hell and a multitude of sins is hidden in the process!

This is the goal of this “*Bible Talk*” program – to convert men and women from error to truth; to encourage people to leave behind false doctrine and erroneous practices and to turn to the truth found in the inspired pages of the New Testament.

2 Corinthians 6:17-18 (NKJV)

17 Therefore

*"Come out from among them
And be separate, says the Lord.
Do not touch what is unclean,
And I will receive you."*

18 *I will be a Father to you,
And you shall be My sons and daughters,
Says the LORD Almighty."*

This is the Lord speaking! You must “*come out from among*” those who teach and practice error and remain separate from them. If you do this, God said, “*I will receive you and will be a Father unto you and ye shall be my sons and daughters.*”

It is not wrong to “*proselyte*” men and women to the truth, but it is wrong to “*proselyte*” them to error.

ANNOUNCEMENT

To speak with someone from the congregation in person, call: **770-946-4532** or **770-946-3117**.

If you would like to receive more information about the church of Christ, you may visit our web site www.WillOfTheLord.com where you may also download the notes from the message you just listened to. Or, if you wish, you may leave your name and phone number at the sound of the tone and one of our brethren will contact you by phone. Please speak plainly and distinctly – you have only one minute to speak after the tone.