

## ***Is it wrong to debate the Bible?***

(by George Battey)

If you have been keeping up with the political campaign you know that recently there was a Presidential debate between Barak Obama and John McCain followed a week later by a Vice-Presidential debate between Joe Biden and Sarah Palin. These debates are considered good because both sides are being heard at the same time. Americans are able to hear the candidates speak about the same issues at the same time and clearly see the difference between both parties.

Not too many years ago religious debates were very popular. Preachers from different churches would sign propositions, send out invitations and people would come from all around to hear the two opposing sides debate over what the Bible teaches. This approach proved to be a very effective tool because people in town could hear both sides of an issue at once and error was exposed.

But religious debates are scarce today. Very rarely will preachers from opposing churches gather to discuss their differences publicly and one of the reasons for this is because some people in general feel debating is somehow sinful or un-Christian. We are told it is wrong to argue over the Bible ... and admittedly there are some Bible passages which seem to indicate debating is wrong. For example:

- 1) In Rom 1:29, the KJV clearly shows the Lord condemning men for debating.
- 2) The same thing occurs again in 2 Cor 12:20 in the KJV.

### **THE REAL QUESTION**

Here's the question we need to be asking:

- *Is the Bible saying it is wrong to debate altogether?*

**OR**

- *Is the Bible saying it is wrong to debate against the truth?*

Let's see. Solomon wrote this:

*Proverbs 25:9 (NKJV)*  
9 **Debate** your case with your neighbor,  
And do not disclose the secret to another;

My friend, do you see that it is not wrong to debate? The Holy Bible commands us here to “*debate*” our cause with our neighbor! If it were wrong to debate on behalf of the truth, God would have never said that!

Therefore, when the Bible forbids debating, it is forbidding men who would debate against the truth, but it is not forbidding men to debate on behalf of the truth!

## **THE CASE OF PAUL**

In the epistle to the Philippians the apostle Paul instructed us to:

*Philippians 2:14 (NKJV)*  
14 Do all things without complaining and **disputing**,

Christians are not suppose to dispute and to dispute means to debate. But in Acts 9:29 we are told the apostle Paul:

*Acts 9:29 (NKJV)*  
29 ... spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and **disputed against** the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him.

Now, did this apostle violate the very Scriptures which he himself wrote? Not at all. These passages, when taken together leave only one possible conclusion:

- *It is wrong and sinful for anyone to debate and dispute against the truth*
- *BUT, It is the duty and responsibility for every Christian to debate and dispute against error.*

Neither Jesus nor His apostles disputed against the truth, but all of them continuously debated against error.

## **THE CASE OF JESUS**

Continuously we read of Jesus being involved in disputes and debates with the Pharisees and Sadducees.

**Mt 21:12-16** He disputed with the chief priests and scribes about the selling of merchandise in the temple and about the multitude calling Him the Son of David.

**Mt 21:23-27** He disputed with the chief priests and elders of the people about His authority.

**Mt 22:15-22** He disputed with the Pharisees and Herodians on the subject of paying tribute to Caesar.

**Mt 22:23-33** He disputed and debated with the Sadducees concerning the resurrection and the state of the dead.

Over and over again Bible students see Jesus disputing and debating with men concerning the Word of God!

It is clearly **not** wrong to debate on behalf of the truth. It is not sinful nor un-Christian to dispute on behalf of the truth. The Scriptures teach:

*Titus 1:10-11 (NKJV)*

*10 For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,*

*11 **whose mouths must be stopped**, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.*

How shall the mouths of these false teachers be stopped? Listen again:

*Titus 1:9 (NKJV)*

*9 holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, **by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.***

Contrary to popular opinion, it is not wrong to debate in defense of the truth. In fact, it is the duty of faithful Christians to defend the truth!

BUT it is sinful for men to oppose, dispute and debate against the truth!

*Acts 7:51 (NKJV)*

*51 “You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.*

This is when it becomes wrong to debate ... when men are debating against the truth, but it is not wrong to debate on behalf of the truth!

We of the “church of Christ” stand ready to debate on behalf of the truth. We are prepared to defend the truth of God’s word:

- *Concerning baptism in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for the remission of sins.*
- *Concerning acceptable worship to God.*
- *Concerning women remaining silent in all the public assemblies of the church.*
- *And concerning any other vital question that affects the salvation of men and women!*

## **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](http://www.WillOfTheLord.com) or you may leave your name and phone number at the sound of the tone. One of our brethren will contact you by phone. Please speak plainly and distinctly – you have only one minute to speak after the tone.

## **GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION**

Five steps in God's plan of salvation:

- 1) **Hear** the word of God (Rom 10:17).
- 2) **Believe** Jesus is the Son of God (Mk 16:16).
- 3) **Repent** of sins (change from living a sinful life) (Acts 2:38).
- 4) **Confess** your faith verbally before men (Rom 10:10).
- 5) **Be baptized** (immersed) in water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

*Mark 16:16 (NKJV)*

*16 He who **believes** and is **baptized** will be saved; ...*

*Acts 2:38 (NKJV)*

*38 Then Peter said to them, "**Repent, and** let every one of you **be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ **for the remission of sins**; ...*

After being baptized, one must continue to be faithful (Acts 2:42; Mt 28:20; Rev 2:10).