

A Recommendation For "Subtle Signs" By Mike Willis

In the June 7, 2001, issue of *Truth Magazine*, Mike Willis wrote about "Subtle Signs" which indicate problems among brethren. Among these "signs" he mentioned "A Loss of The Love of Truth." Some Christians simply do not care. Another matter mentioned was "Castigating Those Who Expose Error." Below is the portion of the article which appeared under this heading.

Another not so subtle change that is occurring among us pertains to brethren's attitude toward those who expose error. Both the Old and New Testaments hold up for emulation the work of those men who risked their lives in standing against sin and error in their day. Here are some of those heroes of faith: Elijah's work in withstanding the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18), the young prophet who announced God's judgment against the altar at Bethel in the days of Jeroboam I (1 Kings 13), Micaiah who foretold the death of Ahab at great personal risk (1 Kings 22), Jeremiah whose prophecies led to his being thrown into a pit (Jer. 38), Paul who withstood Peter to his face (Gal. 2:11-14), and Peter who rebuked the Sanhedrin when they tried to squelch the gospel he was preaching (Acts 4:18-20; 5:29).

Jesus noted the people in his day who sang the praises of the prophets but had the dispositions and attitudes of those who killed them. He said,

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? (Matthew 23:29-33).

What he was describing is the honor and tribute given by word of mouth to the prophets in contrast to the persecution they inflicted on those who walked in the steps of the prophets.

Our own age is not exempt from error. We have popular brethren among us who teach things contrary to divine revelation on divorce and remarriage. When a faithful gospel preacher rises up to challenge the

false teaching being done by a well-known brother, which teaching divides local churches, a large host of brethren condemn the man who exposes the false doctrine, all the while admitting that what the popular preacher teaches on divorce and remarriage is false. One may mouth his tributes to Elijah, Micaiah, Jeremiah, Peter, and Paul, but so long as he condemns and castigates those faithful brethren who walk in the footsteps of those prophets by laying their lives on the line to expose false teaching, he is guilty of the very thing Jesus condemned!

The tragedy of this scenario gets worse. Were you a young preacher witnessing this scene, what would you think about and learn from it? Would you not conclude, "If I want to be a successful preacher, I better keep my mouth shut when some prominent brother teaches error or my brethren will say about me what they are saying about this brother who exposes the false teaching of this popular preacher"? Consequently, this environment creates preachers without the backbone to withstand error.

Brethren, the above is true. In fact, in the same issue of *Truth Magazine*, there are several articles about an incident at the Florida College lectures this past year. A preacher who stood for truth on divorce and remarriage suffered an ungodly attack by other men, with such terms as "McCarthyesque efforts," "Phariseeism," "extremists," and "evil" being applied to him and his work. Sadly, this is not the only case, nor is it the last. These types of things will increase until an all-out "split" has occurred.

We urge you to investigate these matters further. You can find out more at truthmagazine.com.

Steven F. Deaton