

SUMMARY: Whereas we are not responsible to make judgments for the eternal destination of the souls of others, we are required to make certain judgments on earth and follow up that judgment with examples and teachings. If we judge severely, we can be expected to be judged severely.

We are not responsible for judging whether other people of similar or different beliefs, interpretations, or modifications of the scriptures are going to ultimately be saved. That is God's responsibility.

However, we do need to make a stand for God in what the scriptures do say, as the scriptures themselves clearly say that some things will cause you to fall from grace (Gal. 5:4) and that there will be error in religion (Matt. 7:15). The churches at Corinth (I Corinthians 5:1-13), Pergamum (Rev. 2:12-17), and Thyatira (Rev. 2:18-29) were clearly chastised by the apostles Paul and John for tolerating erroneous teachings within the church. Would we be under any lesser obligation?

For this reason, after we read the Bible and understand what it says; we must take the position that we are not scripturally authorized to state or imply that people teaching contrary to what the scriptures teach are going to be acceptable to God. Would not open participation in religious matters with denominations be teaching that we consider them acceptable to God?

This is a positive approach to the situation in that we show others what the Bible says and encourage following the Biblical truths. We are not authorized to go out and negatively say that everyone else is going to Hell. We can certainly say that they are taking an unnecessary chance of going to Hell if they elect to follow their own beliefs rather than the scriptures. God will be their judge.

A sample of things taught by various religious groups which are in conflict to the pattern taught in the New Testament are:

BAPTISM

1. Sprinkling instead of immersion for baptism (Acts 8:38)
2. Non-requirement of baptism for salvation (Acts 2:38)
3. Believe in the depravity (sinfulness) of infants and therefore teach infant baptism (Matthew 18:3 & Acts 2:38)

SCRIPTURES

4. A creed to substitute for the Bible in matters of religious authority (Rev. 22:18-19)
5. That contemporaries can update the Bible (Rev. 22:18-19)
6. That additional revelations are given to Christians or church leaders today (II Tim. 3:16-17)

FAITH

7. That "faith only" can save (James 2:14-26)
8. That you cannot fall from grace (Gal 5:4 & Heb. 6:4-6)

ORGANIZATION

9. The use of church hierarchies other than local elderships. (I Timothy 5:17)
10. That you can call a church leader "Father" (Matt. 23:8-10)
11. That the kingdom (the church) has not already come (Col. 1:13)
12. Using a man's name for the church (I Cor. 1:10-17)
13. That communion does not need to be taken on the first day of each week (Acts 20:7)
14. That women should teach or pray in open public worship services (I Cor. 14:34-35)

MISCELLANEOUS

15. Observance of special religious holidays (Gal. 4:8-11)
16. That homosexual conduct is acceptable to God (Romans 1:26-27)
17. Divorce and remarriage for reasons other than death or adultery of spouse (Matthew 5:32)
18. That they can prophecy the date of Christ's return (II Peter 3:10)
19. Believe that they possess miraculous gifts today (I Cor. 13:8-10)
20. Deny that living Christians are saints (Romans 1:7)
21. Allow use of instrumental music (Eph. 5:19)

This should demonstrate to us that we must make doubly sure of what the scriptures teach and follow it. We must then live our lives in a way which is not judgmental of others on the one hand, but on the other hand which will not indicate approval or give "comfort" to persons or organizations in any teachings which are contrary to the scriptures.

TOPICAL STUDIES

JUDGING OTHERS



NOTE ON PRACTICALITY:

The vast majority of people in all churches today are sincere and honest in their religious practices. As it is our role to convince them to accept the simple gospel truths and practices, being unduly and/or harshly judgmental is counter productive. It will tend to cause hard feelings rather than opening a prospect up to being willing to look at basic scriptural teachings.

JESUS' CAUTION ON JUDGING

Matthew 7:1-5 NASB 1 "Do not judge so that you will not be judged. 2 "For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. 3 "Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4 "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? 5 "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

This is not a statement to not judge anyone. We make judgments all the time. It is more a statement that you are going to be judged like you judge. If you are going to make a judgment that someone else is rationalizing their preferences instead of following the scriptures, you need to make doubly sure you are not doing the same thing on another topic.