

The Gospel Unashamed

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."

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Solomon and Savage Wolves



In **I Kings 3:16-28**, we read about an event that demonstrated the amazing wisdom that God had granted to King Solomon. Two harlots who lived together came to him with one son. They both claimed that the other had smothered her own son while sleeping and switched the babies while the other slept. There was nobody else in the house but the two women and their sons. How could Solomon possibly decide who was telling the truth and who was lying? Of course, Solomon said the child should be cut in half so that both would receive their half of the living child. The one who was lying thought this was a good plan, but the real mother pleaded that the child be given to the other woman rather than killing him.

This event surely shows just how wonderful the wisdom of Solomon was. I can remember learning about it as a small child myself. I remember being on the edge of my seat waiting to hear how he was going to decide such an impossible case. But there is much more to learn about here than just the extent of Solomon's wisdom.

It is clear to me that the woman who was lying was not interested in having the other woman's son for herself. She was perfectly content to let the child die. Obviously, she just could not bear to see the other woman with a son while she had none herself. In other words, she thought, "If I can't have my son; she can't have hers". But the true mother was passionate in her desire that the boy be allowed to live even if it meant that she was deprived of him as a son. That is, she was willing to sacrifice her own pleasure and satisfaction for the life and wellbeing of the child.

Solomon knew how a true parent acts. They are not willing to use their child as a tool or a pawn to inflict pain or punishment on

another. What is best for the child is the most important thing to them. They do not use their child as a means of manipulating others. Briefly, I would like to make two applications here:

1. When politicians are willing to divide the country rather than see their political opponents enjoy success, they are not the true guardians of our nation. Their own interests are more important to them than the good of the nation. We should never elect or reelect such people to office.
2. When people are willing to split the Church rather than see it have success without them being in control, they are not the true guardians of the Lord's body. They are self-willed and are more concerned about their own reputation, power, and position than the good of God's people. We should never follow such people. We should flee from them.

Let's look at this second point in more detail as it is a greater

concern to us. Paul warned the Ephesian elders that men would rise up even from among themselves who would draw disciples away after themselves. He said that such men are savage wolves who do not spare the flock. It was such an important issue to Paul that he warned them for three years with tears about this danger.

“28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God **which He purchased with His own blood.** 29 For I know this, that **after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.** 30 Also **from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.** 31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.” **Acts 20:29-31 (NKJV)**

Why was Paul so concerned about this problem? For one thing, he knew that it would happen. It was not a question of if it would happen, just when. Was he certain of this because of special revelation from God? Maybe, but it seems likely to me that he simply realized that where there are sheep there will always be wolves. It is just a fact of life. It is as certain as saying where there is a carcass there will be vultures.

Secondly, he was concerned because of when it would happen. He said it would be after his departure. Remember that Paul never expected to see these men again, verse 38. He was headed to Jerusalem not knowing what

would happen to him there. He only knew that chains and tribulations awaited him, verses 22-23. This might be the last time he could warn them of these things. On top of that, he would not be there to give them any aid when it happened. They would have to handle it without him. He probably felt a bit like a parent who is sending their child off to college. They know their child will face troubles and that they will not be there to help them.

Thirdly, these wolves would not spare the flock. They would be savage. They would be out to destroy the sheep. These were sheep that Paul cared about. But more importantly they were sheep that God cared about. He cared so much about these sheep that He shed His own blood to purchase them, verse 28.

Fourthly, these wolves would speak perverse things. This means that they would twist or distort the truth. This might be doctrinal truth but it might also be truth that does not involve doctrine. It might be anything that aids their program. Their purpose is to draw disciples away after themselves. They are looking after their own interests, not those of the Lord or His sheep.

Finally, these wolves would come from two different sources. They would come in among them, evidently from without. But they would also rise up from within. Did Paul mean within the church or the eldership? He may have had both in mind. Anybody who draws disciples after themselves is a savage wolf. They are not interested in the good of the flock

or the Lord. They are out for themselves trying to satisfy their own appetites. Be warned that such men (or women) still come in among us and still rise up among us. They will distort the truth to draw disciples after themselves. They will not spare the flock. Be warned and be careful. Keep your eyes and ears open. Do not become one of their victims.

People like this do not care how many sheep they kill, as long as they have their own flock. They are not building the Lord's Kingdom, but their own. When men draw sheep away from the flock, they do not care about the sheep or the flock. These are men who ought to be marked and avoided, not followed.

“17 Now I urge you, brethren, **note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.** 18 For those who are **such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly**, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.” **Romans 16:17-18 (NKJV)**

Too often when a person, or group of people, leave one congregation for another, they are not content with that. They actively seek to convince others to do the same. They go around doing everything they can to draw disciples after themselves and try to destroy the congregation they left. These are savage wolves. They are like the woman whose son was dead, but she wanted the other woman's son to be cut in half. They are like Jonah sitting down to watch the destruction of “those sinners”. If

God does not destroy “those sinners”, they become angry with God. It turns out that the people of Ninevah repented quicker than Jonah. Maybe Jonah was the worse sinner. We sure do not want to follow his example.

Solomon warned us about such people.

“24 Make no friendship with an angry man, And with a furious man do not go, 25 Lest you learn his ways And set a snare for your soul.” Prov. 22:24-25 (NKJV)

Remember Paul’s warning about destroying the temple of God, which is the Church in that context.

“16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17 If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.” I Corinthians 3:16-17 (NKJV)

In politics we need to ask whether our leaders are more interested in the wellbeing of the country or their party. In the church we need to ask whether the men we listen to and follow are more interested in the wellbeing of the flock or are they satisfied to see it divided and destroyed. Good and honest politicians want the country to prosper even if it means sacrifice for them or their party. True leaders in the church want to see the body united and prospering even if it means personal sacrifice for them.

Beware of savage wolves who draw disciples away after themselves. Beware of those who are willing to cut the Church in half and destroy it just to get what they want. Solomon showed us how to discover the true leaders and the savage wolves. Benefit from his wisdom.