

Declaring Holy War

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Micah 3:5

In this chapter, the rulers of God's people were condemned, yet the false prophets tolerated it because they were comfortable, and they attacked anyone who jeopardized the current arrangement. In the same way today, false teachers are content when they have their livelihood, but when this is threatened, they "declare holy war." This same mentality exists among various groups today – more than just false teachers/prophets. They are concerned with their livelihood, wealth, status, etc. When that is threatened, they will invoke God, the Bible, a sense of morality, etc. as a defense for their "right" to have what does not rightfully belong to them.

Who Is Declaring Holy War?

- Prosperous preachers – they enrich themselves by preaching what people want to hear; false teachers are an example of this (2 Timothy 4:3-4); they declare "holy" war because they claim to be doing God's work
- Lazy freeloaders – they refuse to try to provide for themselves; the masters of the slave girl in Philippi are examples of this when their "free money" was gone (Acts 16:16-21); they declare "holy" war, claiming that those who deny their livelihood are troublemakers
- Greedy entrepreneurs – they profit off of the sinful attitudes and behaviors of others; Demetrius and the tradesmen whose business depended on idolatry were examples of this (Acts 19:23-27); they declare "holy" war, opposing the gospel based on their support of an idol
- Entitled elites – they are in positions of power and influence over others; the Pharisees were examples of this who wanted to hold onto their position despite Jesus performing undeniable miracles (Matthew 23:2, 6-7; John 11:47-48); they declare "holy" war, supposing themselves to be in the place of God
- Corrupt politicians – they use power for their own benefit; Herod was an example of this, doing evil when it was politically expedient to do so (Acts 12:1-4); they declare "holy" war because they believe they are the highest power

How Do We Fight Back?

- Against prosperous preachers – preach the word (2 Timothy 4:2, 5); silence false teachers (Titus 1:10-11); mark them (Romans 16:17); have no fellowship with them (2 John 10-11)
- Against lazy freeloaders – stop enabling those who refuse to work (2 Thessalonians 3:10) and allow their hunger to work for them (Proverbs 16:26); help those who are actually in need (Galatians 6:10)

- Against greedy entrepreneurs – turn people away from the idols or vices they profit from (Acts 19:26); do this by preaching the gospel (Acts 19:8-10)
- Against entitled elites – expose their hypocrisy (Matthew 23:13-33); refuse to regard them above others (principle of James 2:1-4)
- Against corrupt politicians – refuse to submit to ungodly laws (Acts 5:29); recognize that we are under no obligation to submit to them beyond what God requires (Acts 16:35-40; 1 Peter 2:13, 16)

Conclusion

- Often those who are opposed to the truth and want to continue in sin will claim the moral high ground
- They condemn God's people as being unloving, uncaring, legalistic troublemakers – so they declare “holy” war
- But no matter how they react, we must remain faithful to God – the opposite of the rulers who the false prophets were tolerating; be just, love good, hate evil, practice good deeds