

Accusations Against Truth Teachers (Part 3)

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: John 15:18-21

Those who are opposed to the truth will naturally be opposed to those who speak the truth. Jesus came “to testify to the truth” (John 18:37) and was crucified for it. He warned that we will receive the same kind of treatment. We also see this throughout the book of Acts. We are going to look at the accusations made against truth teachers in Acts. This will hopefully help us prepare for potential accusations that will be made against us today.

He “Stirs Up Dissension” (Acts 24:5)

- When the accusation was made – Paul was on trial before Felix, a Roman governor (Acts 24:1-3); Paul was arrested in Jerusalem and transferred to Caesarea because of a conspiracy to kill him (Acts 23:12-35); Tertullus made the case against Paul (Acts 24:5-9)
- Why the accusation – They wanted the governor to rule against Paul; ultimately, they wanted Paul to be brought back to Jerusalem (Acts 25:1-3)
- Answering the accusation – Paul said the charges could not be proven (Acts 24:10-13); he explained what he taught (Acts 24:14-15); because of his message, he tried not to stir up trouble (Acts 24:16)
- Give no credibility to the accusation – if possible, we are to be at peace with others (Romans 12:18), yet this is not always possible; if there is division, let it be over truth (Matthew 10:34-36; Jude 19, 3)

“You Are Out of Your Mind” (Acts 26:24)

- When the accusation was made – when on trial before Festus, Paul appealed to Caesar (Acts 25:11); there were no formal charges, so Festus asked Agrippa to advise him (Acts 25:24-27); while Paul was making his defense, Festus interrupted with this charge
- Why the accusation – Paul’s “defense” was really an opportunity to preach the gospel; Festus could not make sense of the message, so he made the accusation; this came when Paul mentioned the resurrection (Acts 26:23); this also happened before (Acts 17:32)
- Answering the accusation – Paul said he spoke words of “sober truth” (Acts 26:25); he also said that Agrippa knew about these matters (Acts 26:26); Agrippa may not have believed, but he at least knew that Paul was not crazy
- Give no credibility to the accusation – speak “words of sober truth,” speaking as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11); avoid matters of uncertainty and speculation (1 Timothy 1:3-7); simply “preach the word” (2 Timothy 4:2)

“Undoubtedly This Man Is a Murderer” (Acts 28:4)

- When the accusation was made – the boat carrying Paul to Rome was shipwrecked (Acts 27:39-44); everyone onboard made it to the island of Malta where the natives welcomed them (Acts 28:1-2); while gathering wood for a fire, Paul was bitten by a venomous snake (Acts 28:3)
- Why the accusation – the natives assumed that Paul must be a murderer; they had a concept of divine punishment IN THIS LIFE for wrongdoing; many believe something like this today (karma)
- Answering the accusation – Paul shook the snake off into the fire (Acts 28:5), then healed the sick (Acts 28:7-9); he was doing the work Jesus said the apostles would do (Mark 16:17-20)
- Give no credibility to the accusation – obviously, we should not do wrong (1 Peter 4:15); when others make false assumptions about us, we need to keep doing the Lord’s work (cf. Matthew 10:14); we prove by our actions that there is nothing to the false assumptions/accusations (1 Peter 2:12)

Conclusion

- In these examples, the accusers imagined the truth teachers as something they were not – as troublemakers, as being out of their mind, and even as murderers
- Rather than dealing with imaginations, we are to focus on truth
- Despite any accusations that will be made, we need to keep teaching the truth, following the truth, and encouraging others to believe and obey the truth today