

## **“PROOF-TEXT” PREACHING**

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Deceased

What changes are transpiring today. We In the kingdom have moved from that time when our preachers gave the “proof-text,” and the church was known for having that kind of preaching, and denominational people spoke with some envy of it as they wished that their own preachers would use more Bible. Yes, the move is now underway, with voices being raised against using the Bible as “proof-text”. A swing, indeed, from one extreme to the other.

Underlying that spirit that says, “No proof-text preaching!” are some attitudes about the Bible which really when all is said and done, reveal a terrible attitude against the Word of God. But the murmurings go like this:

1. **“Using the Bible as a book of law”**: Let us all know that sin is identified by God as transgression of the law (**1 John 3:4**). If men sin then men break the law of God. Law is in effect. The supreme law is that of God, and by the Word of God we a completely finished unto every good work (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**) If it is good to reject evil and to abide by the will of God, then the Bible so directs us. It is a book of law.

2. **“Pronouncing anathema if you don’t abide by the rules”**: It was an inspired apostle, Paul who pronounced anathema upon those who would present to men anything other than the Gospel he had proclaimed (Galatians 1:6-9). It was also the same inspired apostle who pleaded that we must all walk by the same rule (Philippians 3:16). We find, in a late New Testament passage, that he who “GOETH ONWARD AND ABIDETH NOT IN THE TEACHING OF CHRIST, HATH NOT GOD” (**2 John 9**).

These are condemned because, in effect, they did not abide by the rules.

3. **“The stress on obedience”**: Amazing that any would offer any objection to the idea of obedience when inspiration tells us that Jesus became the author of eternal salvation to them that obey Him (**Hebrews 5:9**). And a great picture of the end of time shows men condemned eternally because they did not obey the Gospel of the Lord (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Indeed, these and similar objections are lame and pitiful. And, they certainly reveal a tremendously poor attitude toward the Word of God, amounting, in the final analysis, to a poor attitude toward God Himself. If I love God, I will love His Word to me. If I respect Him, I will respect His Word. If I feel honor toward Him I will honor His Word. It’s as simple as that.

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But on this “proof-text” matter; another simple point or two. First, we ask the question: In whose realm are we operating when we speak of righteousness, holiness, proper living, right behavior, and such like—God’s realm or just an area where man is supreme? Certainly, we are speaking in God’s area. Then, should not God be allowed to speak, since we are dealing with His area? Granting that, the next question would be: How can I know what Gods will happens to be in any area of life, service, and worship concerning which I would speak? I can rule out the sayings of men, and the think-sos of men, because we know we are dealing with God’s area. I am left with the firm truth: I can know only the will of God by looking into that Volume which God states is our Guide, and which furnish us completely unto every good work – the Bible (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**).

There follows another question: If I am dealing in things of God and if I am going to allow God to speak and if I have to get information from God through the Bible, would I have some disposition that forbids my telling men where I found the information? I am dealing with this man’s soul, or that man’s soul, and I am telling them what God has said, and should I not tell them where God said it? If I tell them where God said it, I give the “proof-text” and someone now says that is a wrong method? Peter did not know it, in **Acts 2**, when he cited Joel and David in the course of his sermon. The men in Berea did not know they were behaving in an improper fashion when they read the Scriptures after Paul searching the Word, to see if he had taught them properly (**Acts 17:11**). Rather, they were correct in doing so, for God called them “noble.”

Over the kingdom, we are not hurting because of “proof-text preaching. Rather, great harm is being done today for a tack of “proof-text” preaching, and, sadly, much of that is so because there is no text for what the speaker is saying.