

# Controversy is Inevitable

**TEXT:** Acts 20:29-30

## **INTRODUCTION:**

- A. MOST PEOPLE DON'T LIKE CONTROVERSY.
- B. "CONTROVERSY" FOUND ONCE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT (**1 Tim. 3:16**)
  1. In this passage "without controversy" is translated from one word.
  2. **CONTROVERSY** (WITHOUT) **homologoumenos**, "confessedly, by common consent," akin to homologeo, "to confess" (**homos**, "same," **lego**, "to speak"), is rendered in **1 Tim 3:16** "without controversy"; some translate it "confessedly." (**Vine's**)
  3. **1** a discussion marked especially by the expression of opposing views : **DISPUTE** **2** : **QUARREL, STRIFE** (**Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary**).
- C. ASKED TO SPEAK ON CONTROVERSY, I WILL BEGIN SPEAKING ON THE INEVITABILITY OF ERROR.

## **I. THE INEVITABILITY OF ERROR.**

- A. PAUL'S STATEMENT TO THE EPHESIAN ELDERS (**Acts 20:29-30**).
- B. HIS WARNINGS TO TIMOTHY (**1 Tim. 4:1-2**; **2 Tim. 4:3-4**).
- C. PETER (**2 Pet. 2:1-2, 17**).
- D. JOHN (**1 John 4:1**)
- E. JESUS (**Matt. 24:11**).
- F. SOME WILL INSIST THAT THESE WARNING APPLY ONLY TO SPECIFIC HERESIES, AND DO NOT APPLY TODAY. LET'S LOOK.

## **II. THE MOTIVES FOR TEACHING ERROR.**

- A. IN NEW TESTAMENT DAYS.
  1. **Jude 11**. Money (**2 Tim. 6:3-5, 9-10**).
  2. To please men (**Gal. 1:10**; **2 Tim. 4:3-4**).
  3. Carnal Minded (**2 Tim. 3:5-7**; **2 Pet. 2:1, 18-19**).
  4. Stubborn and self-willed (**Col. 2:20-23**; **2 Pet. 2:9-10**)
  5. **Col. 2:8**. Human Wisdom (**Eph. 4:17-19**; **1 Cor. 3:18**).
  6. A desire for preeminence (**3 John 9**).
  7. Unyielding devotion to tradition (**Matt. 15:1-9**; **Col. 2:8**).
  8. Some are ignorant (**Matt. 22:29**).
  9. Some are deceived (**2 Tim. 3:13**).
  10. There were some who were just evil (**Rom 16:18**; **Phil. 3:18-19**; **2 Thess. 3:2**).
- B. PEOPLE ARE SIMILARLY MOTIVATED TODAY!
  1. Human nature doesn't change!
  2. We could name some who are so disposed.

## **III. ERROR IS HERE ... AND RAMPANT AMONG US!**

- A. INSTITUTIONALISM. AN ATTACK ON THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH.
- B. DIVORCE & DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE (**2 Pet. 2:1-2, 17-19**).
- C. NEO-CALVINISM – ALIVE AND WELL IN THE CHURCH.
- D. THE CHURCH GROWTH MOVEMENT AND THE NEW ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT.

1. New emphasis, philosophy, direction, focus.
  - a. Numerical growth takes preeminence. Bean Counters in charge.
  - b. Marketing the church ... “We offer these services” vs. “these opportunities to serve.”
  - c. Naked flattery (**1 Thess. 2:5-6**). Emphasis on relationships.
  - d. Open fellowship (**2 John 9**). **Unity Trumps Truth**.
2. The Language of Ashdod (**Neh. 13;23-25**).
  - a. A new church requires a new language. Examples:
    - i. Old words, new meanings – **Edify**, love, truth, etc.
    - ii. New words – outreach, devotional, house church.
    - iii. Jargon of apostasy – “harsh,” “negative,” “threatening,” “**splinter groups**.”  
**Why?**
  - b. New terms not necessarily wrong.
    - i. May be OK, but indicate a compromising relationship – “revival.”
    - ii. From whose trough are we eating now?
3. The trashing of the “Restoration Principle.”
  - a. We can be New Testament style Christians by following the pattern (**2 Tim. 1:13**).
  - b. Unity is based on following the same pattern and not deviating(**1 Cor. 1:10; 4:7, 6**).
  - c. We can understand the Bible alike (**Eph. 3:3-4**).
  - d. One body – spirit – hope – Lord - faith – baptism – God (**Eph. 4:4-6**).

### III. WHAT TO DO? GOD PROVIDES!

- A. PRIMARY DEFENSE IS EDIFICATION
  1. The church’s business (**Eph. 4:11-16**)
  2. The church’s tool? (**Acts 20:32**) “The word of his grace”
- B. TAKE HEED (**Col. 2:8**)
- C. TRUST NO ONE WITH YOUR SOUL BUT JESUS (**Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1**).
- D. COMMIT TO OBEDIENCE (**1 Pet. 4:19; 3:15**).

### CONCLUSION:

- A. ERROR IS INEVITABLE.
- B. WHEN MEN STAND AGAINST ERROR, CONTROVERSY RESULTS (**1 Cor. 4:6**).
- C. MEN DON’T ALWAYS STAND AGAINST ERROR.
- D. CONTROVERSY IS NOT INEVITIBLE.