

WHO DID JESUS REPROVE?



Modern theology, having abandoned true, Biblical evangelism, often establishes a false dichotomy between *Jesus'* handling of hypocritical religion and rank sinners; as if *Jesus* never sternly reproved anyone but the Pharisees. Careful examination of the Gospels reveals such a perceived division is not justifiable. For example, *Jesus* often leveled stinging correction and hell-fire and brimstone preaching to large audiences. He even upbraided entire cities for their unbelief (Matt 11:20). In fact, most of *Jesus'* words, filled with denunciations of all manner of sin, were delivered to the common people.

Of course, there is no question, *Jesus* handled different people in different situations in various ways. Moreover, I concede, His most intense reproofs were directed toward the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. Nevertheless, He never ignored sin in anyone, religious or otherwise—never. However, what many seem to overlook is that the intensity of His confrontations often directly linked with His hearers attitude of heart and their response to His specific ministry. Generally speaking, the religious hypocrites were proud, arrogant, and closed to what they considered an unorthodox challenge to the religious status quo. Usually, when *Jesus* challenged them with the Scriptures, spiritual fireworks ensued. Why? Because they proudly and selfishly resisted the corrective truth He offered them. On the other hand, *Jesus* basically called the *Syrophenician woman (a Gentile)* a *dog*, but her response was one of faith and humility, thus defusing any conflict. She simply received what *Jesus* said and thus He ministered to her accordingly.

Today, what most people fail to understand is that typical American culture is saturated with religious hypocrisy, self-righteousness, and an almost violent recoiling from anything outside of familiar religious traditions. When challenged with the raw Scriptures, most Americans

are too proud, too sinful, and too blind to do anything but frantically resist the light. America is filled with church-going hypocrites who love their sin and refuse to hear anything about obeying God and living pure. In over 23 years of open-air ministry I estimate that upwards of 80% of the American public claim, in one form or another, to be in a right relationship with God (*especially in the South*). Unfortunately, these same 80% will passionately defend and boast in their sin without so much as a blush. Over the past two decades, I can only recall a handful of occasions where someone actually admitted they were ‘*lost*’ and not right with God.

No one who honestly reads the N.T. will deny that *Jesus* was bold, confrontational, offensive, and dogmatic. Many were curious, some were enamored, but most hated Him (*Isa 53:3*). Yes, He was loving, kind, and compassionate, but many seem to forget the root motivation for the intense hatred that fueled His murder...

“The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.” -John 7:7