

they are to teach and give warning. God has much to say on this subject both in the Old and New Testaments. Preachers and elders have ample warning.

**We are our brother's keeper** and we must not follow after that wicked one Cain (Gen. 4:9 cp. 1 John 3:12). This is covered by the second great commandment (Matt. 22:39). But notice a few of many other very plain verses: "Son of man, I have made thee **a watchman** unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and **give them warning from me.**"<sup>18</sup>When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but **his blood will I require at thine hand**" (Eze. 3:17,18). We must follow Paul's faithful example: "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men.*"<sup>27</sup>For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). And follow the commandments God gave through this great apostle (2 Thess. 3:6; Rom. 16:17 above).

**The problem is age old, pure and simple: unbelief!** Of course they would deny this, but they surely must think their way is better than God's way (cp. 1 Cor. 1:18ff). I remember speaking many years ago at a preacher's meeting and I used 2 Thessalonians 3:6 and later my wife told me one of the older preachers "rolled his eyes." Yes brother, and I know of an occasion when Jesus was dying on the cross for such sins as this while some "passed by reviled him, wagging their heads" (Matt. 27:39). I know what "rolling the eyes" means and have seen much of that in the church on various subjects and especially concerning the subject of church discipline. Brethren, not only will "eyes roll" (in a different sense), but some "heads will roll" also, so to speak, in the Judgment. It is a serious matter! And God knows more than we do. Remember: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). Are we rejecting Jesus by rejecting His Word?

**Believe God, love souls, and keep the church pure as much as is possible.** I close with these reminders (please see the context): "**his blood will I require at thine hand**" (Eze. 3:17,18); "But I have a few things against thee, because thou ..." whatever the case may be at your present congregation and Jesus, the Judge, knows (cp. Rev. 2:14 and context cp. v.20). ♥



## "Hold fast the form of sound words"

SW

(2 Tim. 1:13 cp. Tit. 1:9; Jude 3)

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### The Faith And Courage Of Phinehas (Church Discipline)

by Perry Sexton

**I am not promoting the murder of wicked people** and Phinehas was not a murderer. Phinehas was carrying out Divine judgment!

<sup>7</sup>And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; <sup>8</sup>And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the **plague was stayed** from the children of Israel. <sup>9</sup>And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand. <sup>10</sup>And **the LORD spake** unto Moses, saying, <sup>11</sup>Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, **hath turned my wrath away** from the children of Israel, while he was **zealous for my sake** among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. <sup>12</sup>Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: <sup>13</sup>And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; **because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.** (Num. 25:7-13, emp. added).

**The Palmist had this to say of the matter by Divine inspiration:** "Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed" (Psalms 106:30).

**Keil and Delitzsch comments on Numbers 25:10ff:** "For this act of divine zeal the eternal possession of the priesthood was promised to Phinehas and his posterity as Jehovah's covenant of peace. יְהוָה, by

displaying my zeal in the midst of them (viz., the Israelites). קְנָאָה is not “zeal for me,” but “**my zeal**,” the zeal of Jehovah with which Phinehas was filled, and impelled to put the daring sinners to death. **By doing this he had averted destruction from the Israelites**, and restrained the working of Jehovah’s zeal, which had manifested itself in the plague.” [Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament Vol. 1, emp. added]

“**And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand**” (Num. 25:9). This was brought on by the anger of the Lord because, “<sup>1</sup>Israel ... began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. <sup>2</sup>And ... sacrifices of their gods: ... and bowed down to their gods. <sup>3</sup>And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel” (Num. 25:1-3).

**These things are written and preserved for us “for our learning**, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Rom. 15:4). What if we do not learn from these history lessons? Are we not bound to fall into the same traps?

**Phinehas acted in a righteous manner. How shall we react to the Lord’s will and commandments today?** Listen to Paul the apostle of the Lord – note these highlights: “<sup>1</sup>It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you,... <sup>2</sup>And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. <sup>3</sup>For I verily, ... have judged already,... concerning him that hath so done this deed, <sup>4</sup>In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,... <sup>5</sup>To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup>... Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? <sup>7</sup>Purge out therefore the old leaven, ... <sup>9</sup>I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:... I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; **with such an one no not to eat... Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person**” (1 Cor. 5:1-13, emp. added, please read the whole context).

**Paul was speaking by inspiration of God: word for word** (2 Tim. 3:16,17; 1 Cor. 2:13). Further note what God would have us to do: “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye **withdraw yourselves from** every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us” (2 Thess. 3:6); “Now I beseech you, brethren, **mark them** which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned;

and **avoid them**” (Rom. 16:17). Now what is hard to understand about what Paul said to do with “such a one” who commits evil, including teaching error which is most serious, but will not repent? There is nothing hard to understand about it for those who love the truth. **Why then are so many so unconcerned in obeying God in this matter?** A few reasons:

1. Too cowardly to obey God seems to be number one.
2. Not zealous for God.
3. Calloused and unloving toward God and His church to keep it pure; unloving toward the offender – to try and save his soul; and unloving toward those without, the unconverted, who see sin in the church and want no part of it!

**The church is not a refuge for “refuse” – those practicing sin!** Yet many who are practicing sin and holding to and teaching error find safe harbor in many congregations. Listen to what God said through these inspired men: “And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, *as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots *they are* and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;*” (2 Peter 2:13, read through v.15); “These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;” (Jude 1:12, read v.4ff). These are deceivers and seek to deceive and corrupt others for their own advantage. Such still goes on, but God has warned us and instructed us how to handle these wicked people – see above, “**Paul was speaking ....**”

**What does God know about us now?** Even if we were perfect in every other way, but the Lord knows and could say about us: “But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication” (cp. Rev. 2:14), we would be in serious trouble! The same is true for any other sin or error (cp. v.20). Brethren, let us learn from these two sister congregations in Pergamos and Thyatira. Learn or repeat the same deadly errors!

**It is shameful that some preachers and elders know of errors and sins** in their home congregation but will not teach and preach against those things (2 Tim. 4:2ff), and elders will not deal with those problems (Titus 1:9ff). Such are not faithful servants of God! They serve their own selfish pride. Of course many preachers are looking to their paychecks and not their own souls, or the souls of those whom