

Who Is The Greatest?

Mark 9:33-50

In Mark chapter nine, Jesus caught the disciples arguing about which one of them would be the greatest. He told them that the one who was least and like a little child would be the greatest.

If, as Rome says, Peter was considered the greatest, why were they arguing about it? The argument continues today. Rome says we must join them because Peter was “the greatest.”

Then the subject of one casting out demons in the name of Jesus comes up in verses 38-42. The disciples sought to forbid him because he was not following them. Rome and others seem to have had the same notion. But Jesus said that, “he who is not against us is on our side.” Evangelicals must be considered part of the body of Christ if they do miracles in His name. When lives are transformed by Christ, what greater miracle and deliverance from demons can there be?

Then Jesus goes on to discuss the cutting off of hands, feet, and eyes if they cause us to sin (vs. 43-48). What does this have to do with the context? In the context of the preceding verses, He seems to be referring to the same thing Paul discussed in First Corinthians twelve concerning the body of Christ, except there he is discussing the need for the diversity of gifts in the body. Paul says, “And the eye cannot say to the hand, ‘have no need of you’; nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you’” (1Cor 12:21 NKJV).

Rome was causing many to sin at the time of the Reformation. Pope Alexander had illegitimate children and committed many horrendous sins publicly. Luther listed 95 atrocious policies of Rome. There was a great need to reform these corruptions and “cut off” the offending body parts in obedience to Christ.

Jesus says in verse 37, “Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me.” Who was the “little child” in the days of the apostles? Who was the “little child” in the case of the Reformers? Who is the “little child” today? Is it not the one who “casts out demons” in the name of Jesus, so to speak?

Jesus then concludes that if anyone offends one of these little ones he will be “cast into Gehenna-- where ‘Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched.’ For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another” (vs, 49&50).

The Roman Church has been cast into the fire of Gehenna. Every Roman Catholic country in the world has been suffering under the “fire” of poverty and political turmoil ever since the Reformation. To this day the fire is not quenched. On the other hand, every Calvinist nation became prosperous and peaceful.

Even though Rome now considers evangelicals “stepchildren” instead of enemies, they still persist in insisting that we all join them by “coming home” because they are “the greatest.” The fire and the salt will not have completed their work of “peace” until we once again are all at peace with one another by returning to the faith of the fathers. He commands, “Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another.”

I believe the “fire” and the “salt” will eventually do their work. I believe that day will come when we all return to the faith of the Puritan hope. This exhortation does not apply to Rome only. It applies to all those churches who no longer hold to the faith of the Puritan hope and to those who preach a “seeker friendly” Gospel. They may have the

power and the mega success now, but God's Word predicts that they will end up where the "worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched."