

HERESIES MANIFESTING THOSE APPROVED

1Cor.11:19

Ed Dye

A. THE TEXT: Vv.18,19: “For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.”

B. WHAT OTHERS SAY V.19 MEANS, INCLUDING DIFFERENT VERSIONS AND COMMENTATORS.

1. Versions

a. Today’s English Version: “(No doubt there must be divisions among you so that the ones who are in the right may be clearly seen).”

(1) Question: Is that the way and/or the only way those who are ***right*** may be clearly seen?

(2) Must God’s people be divided into factions in order for faithful followers of Christ to be known?

b. The Jerusalem Bible: “since there must no doubt be separate groups among you, to distinguish those who are to be trusted.” (Same questions)

c. The New International Version: “No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God’s approval.”

(1) Question: Does it make sense to say, in order to show which saints have God’s approval, you must be divided into factions?

(2) Or, that the only way to know who the faithful are, the one’s who have God’s approval, is that there must be division among the saints such as they had at Corinth?

(3) Does this idea harmonize with N.T. teaching? Didn’t God through Paul condemn all the division in the Corinthian church?

(4) How then can we have Paul saying in V.19 that you must have division among you in order “to show which of you have God’s approval?”

- d. Goodspeed: “Doubtless there must be parties among you, if those who are right are to be recognized among you.”
 - (1) How in the name of scriptural precedent can we interpret this so as to have Paul saying that the divided condition in the Corinthian church is necessary in order to determine who has God’s approval or who the faithful are?
- e. N.E.B.: “For dissensions are necessary if only to show which of your members are sound.”
 - (1) Question: Is this the way we determine soundness among God’s people?
- f. Think! If this idea, as suggested by these translations, is correct, then even factions in the church caused by heresies are made to serve a good purpose! Who can believe it?

2. Commentators

- a. H.A.W. Meyer: “It is...the end ordained by God, namely, that the tried, those who have not suffered themselves to be carried away by party-agitation, should become manifest.” (emp. his)
- b. E.M. Zerr: “It is clear the word means that heresies are necessary for a certain purpose, and that is stated to be, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. This agrees with the conclusion expressed in the preceding paragraph, namely, that a part only of the congregation was guilty of the divisions among them, the faithful ones being ‘approved’ by their opposition to the heresies.” (emp. his)
- c. Mike Willis, Com. On 1st Cor.: “Dei (must) refers to necessity in the sense of ‘it is God’s plan.’ Hence, God’s purpose is served by the church problems as the latter half of this verse explains... God’s purpose for allowing heresies to occur is to manifest those who are approved...Although the final separation will occur on the judgment day, the problems which occur in a congregation tend to manifest (to make visible, to become known) those who are approved of God.”

- (1) According to bro. Willis, in this case, problems which occur in a congregation involving God's purpose are heresies causing divisions in the congregation, ejd.)

C. MY OWN THOUGHTS IN OPPOSITION TO THE PRECEDING EXPLANATION OF 1Cor.11:19 AS SUGGESTED EITHER BY THE COMMENTATORS QUOTED OR THE VARIOUS VERSIONS CITED.

1. ASV: "For there must be also factions (marg. and KJV: heresies) among you, that they that are approved may be made manifest among you."
 - a. Is this verse really saying or teaching, or does Paul mean by what he says in this verse, what the various commentators quoted say he means? Or, as the various versions cited indicate?
 - b. Careful, lest we put words into Paul's mouth and make him teach something the very opposite of what he is saying or means, or make him approve of something he condemns throughout the Epistle!
 - c. Careful, lest we are guilty of eisegesis rather than exegesis!
 - d. In reality, who are the ones being approved here and by whom? Leaders of the factions? Opposers of the factions? Approved of by man? By God?
 - e. Does God anywhere in any way for any purpose ever approve of the divisions at Corinth? Cf. Mt.18:7; Lk.17:1.
2. How ***must*** there be heresies among them ***that*** the approved may be made manifest? (See Exegetical Analysis With Notes On Epistles, by Isaiah B. Grubbs. See page 5, this outline.)
 - a. Neither from the context (immediate or remote), nor from the language employed in the text is the supposition of any reference to a ***divine decree, or divine plan***, in the case justified, as supposed by those previously quoted in this study.
 - b. The impersonal verb translated ***must*** ranges in meaning all the way from rigid necessity to simple propriety, conventional usage, customary or social.

- c. The conjunction translated *that* denotes here, as in many cases, simply the *result* as the legitimate outcome of the state of things at Corinth which Paul has been discussing and exposing throughout the Epistle, even chapter one.
 - d. The state of things at Corinth, including their attitude expressed from the beginning, even in Ch.1, *resulted* in the division here referred to.
 - (1) Their situation was the *result*, but not the result as per *divine purpose*.
 - (2) It resulted in the division, Yes! But there was no previously, divinely ordained *purpose* for the resultant division!
 - e. Here the word “*must*” does not signify what *ought to be*, and that by divine purpose; but, rather, what in the natural course of things will certainly be, or result, as a consequence of the evil tendencies at work among them – false, evil, unbrotherly attitudes, unscriptural opinions, heresies, etc.
 - f. Heresy which is evident by those approved among you; that is, the leaders of the factions – those approved among them were those whom the Corinthians endorsed as factional leaders!
 - (1) They had man’s approval, not God’s!
 - (2) According to 2Tim.2:19, God knows and approves those who are his whether or not factions arise!
2. Phillips translation of Vv.18,19: “For first, when you meet for worship I hear that you split into small groups, and I think there must be truth in what I hear. For there must be cliques among you or your favorite leaders would not be as conspicuous.”
- a. His translation is in harmony with the truth Paul proclaims throughout the Epistle.
 - b. It puts the blame where it belongs – on man; on the sinful result of man’s evil, unbrotherly attitudes, false ideas, and unscriptural practices!
3. Remember this: Heresy means “a choosing, a choice.” Heresies (Cf. 2Pet.2:1) denote something one selects or chooses, thus a peculiar doctrine or opinion contrary to God’s will. Paul uses it in 1Cor.11:19; with reference to actual divisions which are disrupting the Corinthian church – the necessary outcome of an evil course after it has been chosen!

Isaiah B. Grubbs, Exegetical Analysis With Notes On Epistles.

II. Reproof of the Corinthians on Account of Their Gross Perversion of the Lord's Supper, 1Cor.11:17-34.

1. Limitation of the praise which he had bestowed, V.17.
2. Explanatory reason, V.18.
3. Inference as to the result, V.19.
4. This course is subversive of their object in assembling, V.20.
5. Explanatory reason, V.21.
6. Argument against this perversion of the Lord's Supper into a carnal feast, V.22a.
7. Strong disapprobation of their course, V.22b.
8. Justice of this censure evinced from the source and object of this supper, Vv.23-25.
9. Explanatory comment (as to the proper purpose and manner of observing it, ejd), V.26.
10. Consequent inviolable sacredness of the supper, V.27.
11. Resulting need of self-examination, V.28.
12. Ground of this need, V.29.
13. Indication of this judgment, V.30.
14. The practical lesson hereby enforced, V.31.
15. Object of this judgment, V.32.
16. Consequent exhortation, Vv.33,34a.
17. General reference to other wrongs: "And the rest will I set in order whensoever I come," V.34b.