

## **JUDGE, JUDGE NOT**

### **Mt.7:1; Jno.7:24**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. It's true, the N.T. says, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," and that it also says "judge righteous judgment." But it is not true that the Bible prohibits, absolutely forbids, all judgment as some claim or infer from a misunderstanding and a perversion of Mt.7:1.
2. The Bible contains two sets of judgment passages: One which says "Judge not," and another set which says we are to "judge".
  - a. Yet there is no contradiction between the two sets of passages.
  - b. The context of the passages reveals why.
3. Yet people, either out of ignorance of Bible teaching, or out of prejudice, or out of a mean spirit trying to discredit the Bible as untrustworthy, uninspired and the product of mere men, do one of two things.
  - a. Either they focus only on a part of the passages which contain the expression "judge not" and claim that all judging of another and of different doctrines and religious orders is prohibited.
  - b. Or, they try to array one set of passages against the other set and "prove" (?) their claim that the Scriptures are contradictory, therefore uninspired, an untrustworthy product of mere human origin rather than divine.
4. Our purpose in this study is to examine both the "judge" and the "judge not" passages in their context, especially the judge not passages, to determine what kind of judging is and is not prohibited.
5. Obviously, since we believe the scriptures are "God-breathed" (2Tim.3:16,17), or verbally inspired of God, and thus free from contradiction; we also claim there is a kind of judging that is prohibited and a kind of judging that is not only not prohibited, but is required.
6. Let us see whether or not the evidence supports our claim.
7. This introduction explains our topic: Judge, Judge Not.

#### **II. DISCUSSION**

- A. FIRST, THE JUDGE NOT PASSAGES, EMPHASIZING THAT EACH SAYS, "JUDGE NOT"**
1. Mt.7:1.
  2. Rom.2:2a.
  3. Rom.14:3,4,10,13.
  4. Jas.4:12.
  5. Question: Do these passages condemn or prohibit all kinds of judging, or just certain kinds of judging?

6. We shall return to each of these passages and their context and answer that question. But before doing that, let us consider

## **B. THE SHALT JUDGE PASSAGES**

1. Gal.6:1.
  - a. Obviously this passages is dealing with judging. Show why.
  - b. In fact, here we have a dual judging required.
    - (1) Of a brother.
    - (2) Of self.
2. Mt.18:15-17. We have three levels of judgment here.
3. 1Cor.5:1-13 (v.3; v.5; v.7; vv.9-11; v.13)
4. 1Cor.15:33.
5. Gal.6:7-9.
6. Jno.7:24.
  - a. This passage brings all the “judge not” and the “shalt judge” passages together, showing the harmony that exists between them and why there is no contradiction between the two sets of passages.
  - b. It reveals there is a kind of judging that is prohibited and a kind of judging that is required – one kind condemned; one kind authorized.
  - c. In other words, there are passages which say “don’t judge like this,” and passages which say “we must judge like this”.
  - d. Or, as Jno.7:24 teaches “don’t judge like that” but “judge like this”.
7. Surely, all can see there is no passage which prohibits or condemns all judging of another.

## **C. THE JUDGE NOT PASSAGES STUDIED IN CONTEXT**

1. Mt.7:1 and its context
  - a. What it says – the entire verse.
  - b. Why does it say this? Emphasize the latter part of the verse, v.1b, along with v.2.
    - (1) In v.2 we have a “For”. A reason for the previous statement is given.
  - c. What truth is he trying to get the one doing the prohibited judging to see or to understand about his judging his brother, and why the judging of v.1 is prohibited?
    - (1) By whatever standard or type of judgment you judge or condemn your brother, you shall be judged and condemned by the same standard or type of judgment.
  - d. The kind of judging prohibited in v.1 is further explained and illustrated in vv,3m4
  - e. Note what v.5 says and does regarding the brother told not to judge in v.1.

- (1) It brands the person doing the kind of judgment here prohibited as a “hypocrite”.
    - (a) He is guilty of hypocritical judgment.
    - (b) Harsh, hypocritical judgment, or hyper-critical judgment, or censoriousness, is the kind of judgment herein forbidden.
  - (2) This hypocritical judge is told to do two things.
    - (a) “First cast out the beam out of thine own eye”
    - (b) “then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.”
    - (c) Each brother has a problem; but the hypocritical-judging brother has a greater problem, which he is ignoring and is applying a standard to his brother by which he himself will not abide.
  - (3) He is not prohibited from judging his brother or casting the mote out of his brother’s eye; but before judging his brother, he must first judge himself, cast the beam out of his own eye, clean up his own life – don’t play the hypocrite by applying a double standard – live by one and apply another to his brother.
- f. Thus we see that Mt.7:1-5 has three distinct parts:
- a. Vv.1,2, the prohibition statement in literal terms.
  - b. Vv.3,4, the prohibition statement in figurative terms.
  - c. V.5, the procedural statement: how we should proceed; the proper procedure Vs the improper procedure condemned in the preceding verses.
  - g. V.6 follows with a statement which obviously demands judging.
  - h. So Mt.7:1 in context prohibits one kind of judgment and requires another.
  - i. So Mt.7:1-5 is both a “shalt not judge” passage and a “thou shalt judge” passage.
2. Rom.2:1a and its context.
- a. “Therefore thou are inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest,”(v.1a), is only a part of the verse.
  - b. The rest of the verse reveals why the man doing the judging is inexcusable: he is guilty of self-condemning, hypocritical judging.
  - c. By his judgment and condemnation of another he condemns himself, because he himself does the same things for which he condemns the other. If his brother is wrong, so is he. For he does the same thing!
  - d. According to v.2, the judgment of God is against them (all of them) who commit such things, i.e., the things referred in v.1.

- e. V.3 is a rhetorical question to the effect, and leaving no doubt, that the man in question, the man doing this kind of judging, shall not escape the judgment or the condemnation of God!
  - f. Vv.17-24 furnish the details of the kind of judging herein condemned and the ones to whom he refers who are guilty as charged.
  - g. Again, it is self-condemning hypocrisy!
3. Rom.14, the judging here condemned and why.
- a. One believes that doing certain things is wrong, is sinful, another does not, Vv.2,5,6.
  - b. Each one is forbidden to judge or condemn the other or set at naught the other. The strong brother is not to put a stumbling block or a occasion to fall or stumble in the weak brother's way, nor walk uncharitably toward him, nor destroy him with thy meat, for whom the Lord died; but to follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another; and for meat destroy not the work of God, Vv.3,4,10,13,15,19,20; Cf. 1Cor.8:4-8-13.
  - c. Why does the one brother believe the things are wrong and why would it be wrong for him to practice them?
    - (1) Is it because these things are contrary to and in violation of divine law?
      - (a) No! For God accepts both the one that eateth and the one that eateth not, Vv.3,4,6,18
      - (b) No! For the things under consideration for which one is not to judge or condemn the other are not unclean (unlawful) in and of themselves, Vv.3,14,18,20.
      - (c) No! For the one who eats does not sin. And the one who does not eat does not sin. No sin is involved in eating or in not eating; no divine law is violated by either one!
      - (d) Divine law has not bound such things on anyone. Each one is free to eat or not eat!
    - (2) It is because for conscience' sake he has bound the practice upon himself; he binds upon himself by his conscience things that are not bound by divine law, i.e., he believes it is wrong; and if he eats, he eats "not of faith" if he eats while doubting that to do so is right, he would then violate his conscience and it would be sin for him, Vv.5,6,12,14,22,23.
    - (3) One must be true to one's own conscience. Even things right within themselves, such as the things of Rom.14, would be wrong for the one who violated his conscience by engaging in them.

- (4) But one's conscience cannot become law for another or for all others!
- d. There are two ways to violate Rom.14 and sin:
  - (1) By becoming a stumbling block to the weak brother and make thy brother to offend – i.e., influencing him to eat in violation of his conscience, Vv.13,15,20,21; Cf. 1Cor.8:11-13.
  - (2) By judging or condemning or setting at naught thy brother or judging him unworthy of fellowship as a brother in Christ, Vv.3,4,10,13a.
- 5. Jas.4:12 must be interpreted and understood in the light of its context.
  - a. This verse does not stand alone; if so, it would be a blanket condemnation of or a prohibition of all judging of another, which, of course, would contradict Jesus in Jno.7:24.
  - b. It must be interpreted and understood in the light of its context going all the way back to Ch.3:13 down to Ch.4:12.
    - (1) The context speaks of two kinds of men or people and two kinds of wisdom among you, only one of which in each case is approved of God.
    - (2) There is the wise man endued with knowledge, showing out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom, the wisdom that is from above, Ch.3:13,17a.
    - (3) Also, there is the man acting out of and from a wisdom that descendeth not from above, which:
      - (a) “Is earthly, sensual, devilish,” 3:15.
      - (b) Results is “bitter envying and strife,” and where these are, “there is confusion and every evil work...wars and fightings among you (which )come ... even of lusts that war in your members,” Ch.3:14,16; 4:1
      - (c) According to 4:3 this causes their prayers to go unheard.
    - (4) “But the wisdom that is from above” (3:17,18)
      - (a) “Is first pure,”
      - (b) “then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy”
      - (c) “and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.”
  - c. In view of the preceding and in Ch.4:6-12, he instructs, urges and enjoins upon them what to do and not to do to avoid the evil of the one and to produce the good of the other.
    - (1) First, in 4:6-10, in order to be lifted up (v.10b), he urges them to:

- (a) “Resist the devil”, vv.6,7.
  - (b) “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you,” v.8a.
  - (c) “Cleanse your hands, ye sinners,” v.8b.
  - (d) “Purify your hearts, ye double minded,” v.8c.
  - (e) “Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep,” v.9a.
  - (f) “Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness,” v.9b.
  - (g) “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up,” v.10.
- (2) Finally, in our text, Jas.4:11,12, he tells them what not to do, and the kind of judging they are not to do, with reference to one another and why.

### III. CONCLUSION

1. Is it not easy now to see:
  - a. There is no contradiction between the two sets of texts dealing with judging, one saying to judge, the other, to judge not?
  - b. That not all judging is wrong?
  - c. That, in fact, we are required under certain circumstances to judge?
  - d. That the people who claim emphatically that all judging of another is prohibited and therefore wrong, are themselves wrong in their claim and are, in fact, guilty of judging?
  - e. There is judging of which we are not to be guilty?
  - f. Also, there is a judging we must do – must not be guilty of refraining from doing?
2. Remember Jno.7:24.
3. Let us be careful in judging. Make sure we always judge righteous judgment!
4. Emphasize: Rom.14 has no reference:
  - a. To marriage, divorce and remarriage because that is governed by and bound by divine law, while the things of Rom.14 are not.
  - b. To the Institutional questions of Congregational Cooperation in Evangelism and Benevolence – and for the same reason.
  - c. To purely doctrinal matters, or the doctrinal basis upon which Fellowship may be extended to one, because that, too, is governed by and bound by divine law.
  - d. To whether or not one is to be baptized in water for the remission of sins, or to the manner or mode of baptism, for that, too, is governed by divine law.

--credit to Harold Turner for most of these notes.

