

# Who Will Rise Up

## Against the Evildoers & Grievous Wolves?

### A Biblical View of Confrontational Shepherding

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**W**E LIVE IN A MODERN GENERATION where “diversity” and “inclusiveness” are buzzwords of the liberals for how everyone should think and act. Anything goes, any religion (expect biblically-based religion), any ideas, values or mores (expect those coming from the Bible) are to be accepted. Any perverse and immoral lifestyle is to be accepted without question and woe be to those Bible-thumpers who dare say a word against it. The thought-police and hate crimes enforcers will libel, slander and sue the offender out of existence.

During World War II women left the home and flooded the workplace. In the 1960's and 1970's, the feminist movement helped to diminish the traditional Christian view of marriage and the role of men and women in the family and in society as a whole. The divorce rate skyrocketed. More mothers and housewives flooded the workplace to compete with men and women were given governmental permission to begin murdering their babies.

As women demanded “equal rights” with men, logically, the traditional leadership role of men in the family, government, workplace and in the church had to be diminished to make room for these “liberated” women and to help them feel comfortable with their new role in society.

During this time, we also saw a liberalization of religious standards within the Christian Church. As the divorce rate went up, as the rate of illegitimate births increased, as more women sought careers outside of the home and as women sought ordinations and leadership roles within the Church Bible-reading among Christians went down, along with the amount of time spent in prayer. Biblical illiteracy went up and church attendance went down.

To keep the pews filled and to keep the money rolling in preachers began preaching a more “seeker-sensitive” Gospel message to help make new converts to feel more at home in the church. The term “unchurched” replaced “the lost, damned, heathen, sinners, pagans” in reference to non-“born again” Christians. Puppet shows, Christian rock concerts and entertainment replaced the hard preaching of the Word of Elohim. The main outreach message of the Christian Church went from the biblical message of “Repent, for the kingdom of Elohim is at hand”—a message preached by the fiery-tongued preachers of yesteryear such as Moody, Spurgeon, Finney, Wesley, Edwards and Whitfield—to “Yeshua loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.” Sin-denouncing, Scripture-spitting pulpit preachers gave way to the syrupy, watered-down, feel-good, pop-psychological sermons of our generation.

We now have a whole generation of spiritual leaders in America who cannot call sin sin. Who are reluctant to denounce publicly the false and demonic religions that are threatening to take over and destroy this nation because they fear the liberal media backlash. This new breed of preacher struggles in publicly rebuking the immorality and unrighteousness of our elected officials. They are reluctant to take on the liberal and godless media for the wickedness and perversion emanating there from. Instead of righteous men of Elohim taking society to task for its wickedness, society's mouthpiece, the liberal media, takes them to task the moment these so-called spiritual leaders step out of line by preaching the truths of Scripture. When the media criticizes one of these religious leaders, typically the whooped pastor or Christian leader will apologize to the media for those they have offended and will slink back into the safety of their religious cloister seldom, if ever, to emerge again. We hear and read about this happening on a regular basis.

Yeshua said of these individuals, “For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of Elohim” (John 12:34).

## Who Will Rise Up?

David asked a very serious question: “Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? Or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?” (Ps. 94:16)

The Apostle Paul taught about standing against the wiles of the devil (Eph. 6:11,14). He talked about the spiritual battle of which all Believers are called to be a part. We have no option about this, for it is our job description (Eph. 6:10-18; 2 Cor. 10:3-5). In another place Paul said, “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you [be brave] like men, be strong.” (1 Cor. 16:13).

## What Were the Men of the Bible Really Like?

Were the mighty men of YHVH whose stories are told in the pages of the Bible wimps? If you think so, go read the Hebrews Chapter 11 hall of faith. Or were they men who were willing to fight for righteousness? Did they call a spade a spade, black black and white white? Or were they lukewarm, weak leaders who melted under the slightest opposition from the world, the flesh and the devil?

This is very serious question for Believers to ask themselves. Are you in a fellowship or church where the pastor/shepherd is a mighty man of Elohim or a wimp? Does he take his marching orders from and pattern his life after the Word of Elohim or the latest version of some How-to-Win-Friends-and-Influence-People pop-psychological teaching?

Nehemiah was a mighty man of Elohim who was given a YHVH-ordained mission to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem and to restore Torah-righteousness within. He encountered every type of discouragement, slander, false accuser and enemy plotting to kill him. By YHVH's grace Nehemiah prevailed and the wall was built. Mission accomplished it was his job to reinstitute the weekly Sabbath and to enforce the Torah laws prohibiting buying and selling of goods on the Sabbath. However, there were those who refused to follow the Sabbath commands and other laws of Torah. How did Nehemiah handle the situation? Did he sweet-talk the offenders and plead with them using the latest pop-psychological means to get them to do what he wanted? Let's let Scripture speak for itself in Nehemiah 13:15-21,25,

15 In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and **I testified against them** in the day wherein they sold victuals. 16 There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. 17 **Then I contended with the nobles of Judah**, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? 18 Did not your fathers thus, and did not our Elohim bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath 19 And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, **I commanded that the gates should be shut**, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day. 20 So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. 21 Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? **if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you**. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath. 25 And **I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair**, and made them swear by Elohim, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves.

Was Nehemiah some offbeat, atypical biblical personage in how he dealt with unrighteousness? Can you imagine a modern-day pastor or spiritual leader acting like this? Can you imagine Yeshua or the apostles acting similarly in the face of wickedness and unrighteous behavior? If not, why not? Perhaps it is time to open up and to study the Word of Elohim and to let it mold your thinking!

## What Is a Shepherd/Pastor and What Are His Responsibilities?

The word *pastor* in the Apostolic Scriptures (NT) is the Greek word *poimen* (Strong's G4166) and means *shep-*

*herd*. According to *Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance*, a shepherd is one who not only feeds the flock (Acts 20:28), but tends and guides it, as well, a charge which is often committed to the elders and overseers of a congregation or flock (1 Pet. 5:1-2). *Poimen* is used eight times in the Apostolic Scriptures and all but one time it is translated as *shepherd*. The one time that it is translated as *pastor* is found in Ephesians 4:11.

The word *shepherd* in the Tanakh (OT) is the Hebrew word *ra-ab* (*Strong's* H7462) and is used 173 times in the Tanakh. It is translated as *feed* 75 times; *shepherd* 63 times; *pastor* eight times; *herdmen* seven times, *keep* three times; *companion* two times and miscellaneous terms 15 times. The primary meaning of the word *ra-ab* according to the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* is *to pasture, tend, feed or graze* which is the primary role of a shepherd as shown in Psalm 23:1-2: "YHVH is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures: he leads me beside the still waters."

A shepherd is not only to lead and guide the flock, but to protect it as well. In Psalm 23:4, there is mention of a rod and a staff. The staff was used to tenderly guide the sheep and to keep them safely in the flock or to pull them out of danger while the rod was used as a defensive weapon against attacking predators. In four places in Scripture the term *rod of iron* is used (Ps. 2:9; Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15) in reference to Yeshua, the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4), King Messiah's rule over his Millennial kingdom. Any who oppose his rule will feel the rod across their backs (Rev. 20:7-10). The Hebrew word for *rod* in Psalm 23:4 and 2:9 is the same Hebrew word: *shebet* (*Strong's* H7626) meaning *rod, club (of a shepherd's implement), truncheon, shaft (of a spear) or scepter (mark of authority)*.

YHVH appoints spiritual shepherds to protect and feed his flocks. They are to protect YHVH's flocks from wild beasts and predators and he rebukes the false shepherds who fail in these responsibilities (Ezek. 34:1-31). Yeshua said that he was the Good Shepherd and that he would lay his life down in defending his sheep (John 10:10-18).

As noted above, a shepherd carries not only a staff (to lead and guide the sheep) but a rod (as a defensive weapon to protect the sheep from predators (Ps. 23:4). Those who have ever shepherded sheep know that sheep are virtually defenseless animals. All they can do is run until exhausted. Because of their large bulk and small legs, a predator can run them to exhaustion fairly quickly. A shepherd has to have a defensive weapon ready at all times to defend the sheep. This is why a true shepherd abides in the field with his sheep and keeps watch over his flock by night (Luke 2:8). The author of this article knows the truth of the precluding statements from personal experience in that he was a shepherd on the family sheep farm for 15 years.

There is no better place in the Tanakh that lists the attributes of a true shepherd of Elohim than in Ezekiel 34:11-31. Here we see that a good shepherd seeks and searches out for the lost and scattered sheep and brings them back into the safety of the sheepfold, gives them food and water, gives them a place where they can lie down in safety, heals the weak and wounded, strengthens the sick, protects the sheep from the more aggressive goats and cattle, saves them, and protects them from predators. Though a shepherd acts very tenderly toward the sheep, when predators attack he rises up bravely and aggressively against anyone or anything that would kill, steal or destroy his flock (John 10:1-18).

Biblically, a watchmen and a shepherd are two different ministry positions, though related. A watchman is a prophet (Ezek. 3:17-21; 33:1-9) who is called to warn YHVH's people of approaching danger (Isa. 21:6,11,12; 52:8; 56:10; 62:6; Jer. 6:17; 31:6; 51:12). Watchmen would often perch themselves on the walls of the city to see off in the distance (Isa. 62:6). A prophet was not a shepherd in the strict sense of the word, nor was a shepherd a prophet (Eph. 4:11), but their responsibilities overlapped. A shepherd still must watch over his flock to protect it from wild beasts and those who come to kill, steal and destroy (John 10:10,12; Luke 2:8; Ezek. 34). A watchman who, when he sees danger approaching off in the distance, fails to warn the city or flock by sounding the shofar has failed in his responsibilities and the blood of the people he failed to warn will be upon his head when calamity comes to the city or flock (Ezek. 33:6). Woe be to the shepherd or watchman who does not sound the alarm when danger approaches the flock over which he has responsibility!

Does YHVH hold the shepherds and watchman of Israel to a higher level of responsibility and accountability than the regular sheep? Most definitely! Yeshua the Chief Shepherd and the final Judge of all men said, "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:48). Teachers of the Word of YHVH will receive the greater condemnation if they fail to teach the truth accurately: "Not many of you should become teachers [of the Word of Elohim], brothers, since you know that we will be judged more severely" (Jas. 3:1, CJB).

## What did the Apostle Paul warn his flock about?

Paul commanded the overseer/shepherds he had placed in charge over each congregation he started to watch over the flock and to protect them from grievous wolves who he prophesied would creep into the flock and through false teachings try to steal sheep away:

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Set-Apart Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the congregation of Elohim, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. (Acts 20:28-31)

## **How Did the Apostolic Leaders Deal With Grievous Wolves Threatening YHVH's Flock?**

To answer this question let us simply allow the truth of Scripture to speak for itself. Very little commentary is needed here to make the point:

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark [to look at, observe, direct one's attention to] them which cause divisions [sedition (incitement or rebellion against lawful authority), dissension] and offences [a stumbling block, an occasion to fall] contrary to the doctrine [teaching or instruction] which ye have learned; and avoid [turn aside or shun] them. For they that are such serve not our Master Yeshua the Messiah, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. (Rom. 16:17-18)

From this simple expanded version of the text based on the meaning of the Greek words is it not clear what is to be done with such individuals as described above? Be aware of what they are doing and have no contact with them. There can be no place in the local flock or assembly for such individuals.

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Master Yeshua the Messiah, that ye withdraw [remove depart, abstain from familiar intercourse] yourselves, from every brother that walketh disorderly [out of ranks (as with a soldier), deviating from the prescribed order or rule], and not after the tradition [precept, teaching or instruction] which he received of us. (2 Thes. 3:6)

Be not deceived: evil companionship corrupts virtuous character. (1 Cor. 15:33)

And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note [to mark, distinguish by marking] that man, and have no company [intimate friendship] with him, that he may be ashamed. (2 Thes. 3:14)

But now 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. (2 Cor. 5:1)

A man that is an heretic [schismatic, factious, a follower of a false doctrine] after the first and second admonition [exhortation] reject [avoid, refuse]. (Tit 3:10)

In light of what we have already learned about the biblical role of a shepherd or pastor (or elders and overseers), who should make the determination whether someone in the congregation is a grievous wolf, is causing sedition or offense, bringing in false teachings and resisting lawful authority? What is the role of the shepherd if not to protect the sheep of his flock? Who should pick up the rod and defend the sheep against the individuals involved in the activities listed above? Who should be the one to warn the offending party, urge them to repent and if they refuse to remove them from the flock? Biblically, this is the role of the shepherd over the flock. He is to lay down his life, if necessary, in protecting the flock after the example Yeshua, the Chief Shepherd. (John 10:10-14)

## **Did the Apostles, On Occasion, Name the Names of Those Grievous Wolves Who Were Coming In to Destroy the Flock of YHVH?**

There are those who teach that under no circumstances should the names of grievous wolves be named publicly. To do so, some believe, is to violate the Jewish religious rules of *Lashon Hora* (the evil tongue)—a subject we will discuss later. What is the Scriptural record on the issue on the subject of naming the names of grievous wolves publicly? Again, let us allow the Word of Elohim to speak for itself.

But shun profane and vain babblings [i.e., *lashon hora* or the evil tongue]: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is **Hy-menaeus and Philetus**. (2 Tim. 2:16-17)

**Alexander the coppersmith** did me much evil: YHVH reward him according to his works. (2 Tim. 4:14)

I wrote unto the church: but **Diotrephes**, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of Elohim: but he that doeth evil hath not seen Elohim. (3 John 9-11)

But Peter said unto [**Simon the Sorcerer**], Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of Elohim may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of Elohim. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray Elohim, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. (Acts 8:20-23)

In light of the Scriptures noted above about marking, taking note of or avoiding grievous wolves that come into the flock or congregation to kill, steal and destroy isn't logic that one must know *who* the wolves are in order to avoid them? How could the shepherd properly warn his flock, especially if it were a large flock of hundreds of people against a grievous wolf if he could not name that person's name? If he were to speak only in generalities a few within the flock might know about whom the shepherd is referring, but what about the rest of the flock? What is to prevent them from inadvertently coming into contact with the "marked" unnamed person, and unaware that this is the person to which the shepherd made reference that flock-member could become the next victim of the wolf. To not name names under this circumstances makes little sense. In order to supposedly not speak evil against a grievous wolf, the shepherd speaks in anonymous terms leaving the door wide open for an unknowing sheep to walk right into the jaws of the wolf.

Granted, one must be very careful when naming names. The facts and eyewitness accounts of the person's misdeeds must be absolutely substantiated and various steps must be taken to reconcile that person back to YHVH. Naming names is only a last resort for those who are absolutely unrepentant and defiant in their resistance to lawful, congregational authority. We will discuss this issue more fully later.

## Did the Apostles Ever Name the Names of Heretical Religious Sects and Specific Groups of People?

Again, the Word of Elohim can speak for itself on this matter as we see from the following Scriptures:

**Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.** (Phil. 3:2)

This is referring to Judaizers who believed that one could not be saved unless one was physically circumcised. This was the core issue facing the Apostles at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1,4).

**For such are false apostles, deceitful workers**, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works ... In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among **false brethren**. (2 Cor. 11:13-15,26)

One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, **The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.** (Tit. 1:12)

Here Paul brands and castigates a whole island nation.”

**For there are certain men crept in unawares**, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our Elohim into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord Elohim, and our Master Yeshua the Messiah ... **Woe** [rebuke and denunciation] unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. (Jude 1:4,11)

Here Jude denounces and rebukes unrighteous false teachers who were causing problems within the flock of YHVH.

**Ye adulterers and adulteresses**, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with Elohim? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of Elohim. (Jas. 4:4)

Here James is addressing carnally-minded Believers.

## Did Yeshua Condone Naming Names?

In Matthew 18:15-20, Yeshua instructs his disciples on how to handle offences that would occur within the congregation of Believers. He states that if a brother offends another brother the offended party is to take his grievance to the offending party and seek reconciliation. If the former does not accept the latter, then the offended party is to take with him one or two individuals who witnessed the offense and then meet with the offender once again in order to be reconciled. Finally, if the offender does not repent then the matter is brought before the congregational council of elders (bet din) who will arbitrate between the two parties. If the offender is deemed to be wrong and still refuses to repent then the offender is to be publicly viewed as a heathen and expelled from the congregation. Obviously, for this to have happened, the man's name would have to have been made public before the members of the congregation, otherwise how would the congregation have known who was to be treated as a heathen?

## Other Examples of YHVH's Servants Rebuking Unrighteous Ministers and Ministries

- Amos rebukes and condemns Amaziah, the Priest of Bethel and his ministry (Amos 7:14-17).
- Elijah rebukes the ministry of the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel (1 Kgs. 18:20-40).
- A Prophet of YHVH condemns the ministry of King Ahab (1 Kgs. 20:35-43).
- Micaiah the Prophet predicts Ahab's defeat and death and rebukes the Zedekiah and his ministry (1 Kgs. 22:1-28).
- Elijah rebukes the ministry of King Ahaziah and predicts his death (2 Kgs. 1:16-17).

## Examples of Yeshua Rebuking and Denouncing Ministries, the Unrighteous and Even Whole Cities

On numerous occasions, Yeshua uses the word *woe* against individuals, ministry denominations, whole cities and on one occasion the whole earth. What does *woe* mean? It is *Strong's* G3759 and is "an interjection used in denunciation or grief." According to Webster's dictionary, the word *denounce* means *to pronounce publicly as blameworthy or evil; to proclaim; to announce threateningly; to inform against; accuse; criticize*. Did you know that when Yeshua used the term "woe" he often had this in mind? Let us look at some examples of Yeshua denouncing, publicly as blameworthy, criticizing or accusing various individuals, ministries and other people-groups:

### Rebuking A Specific Individual:

The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. (Referring to Judas, Matt. 26:24)

The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born. (Referring to Judas, Mark 14:21)

And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed! (Luke 22:22)

### **Rebuking Ministries and Denominations:**

But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. (Matt. 23:13)

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. (Matt. 23:14)

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. (Matt. 23:15)

Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! (Matt. 23:16)

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. (Matt. 23:23)

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. (Matt. 23:25)

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. (Matt. 23:27)

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous. (Matt. 23:29)

But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of Elohim: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. (Luke 11:42)

Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets. (Luke 11:43)

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them. (Luke 11:44)

And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. (Luke 11:46)

Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. (Luke 11:47)

Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered. (Luke 11:52)

### **Rebuking The Wealthy and Materialistically Fat:**

But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. (Luke 6:24)

Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall

mourn and weep. (Luke 6:25)

### Rebuking Those Who Receive the Praises of Men:

Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets. (Luke 6:26)

### People in General:

Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! (Luke 17:1)

### Cities:

Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. (Matthew 11:21)

Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. (Luke 10:13)

### Rebuking The Whole World

Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! (Matt. 18:7)

## Yeshua, John the Baptist and Jude and Name-Calling

Let us go one step further. Do we have record in the Apostolic Scriptures of Yeshua or other saintly leaders ever calling people and ministries by derogatory and less than favorable names? Again, let's let the Scriptural record speak for itself:

- **Fox:** Yeshua called Herod "a fox" (In Greek this word refers to "a sly and crafty man") (Luke 13:32).
- **Dogs:** Yeshua called Gentiles "dogs" (or a puppies) (Matt. 7:6; 15:26,27; Mark 7:27,28).
- **Children of the Devil:** Yeshua called the religious Jews of his day "children of the devil." Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. (John 8:44)
- **Vipers:** John the Baptist called the religious denominations of his day known as Pharisees and Sadducees and the multitudes who followed him "vipers."  
But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? (Matt. 3:7)  
Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?
- **Vipers:** Yeshua following in the steps of John the Baptist also referred to the main religious denominations of his day as well as the whole generation living at that time as "vipers." (Luke 3:7)  
O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. (Matt. 12:34)  
Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? (Matt. 23:33)
- **Hypocrites:** Yeshua referred to the religious leaders of his day as "hypocrites." The Greek word *hypocrite* is *Strong's* H5273 and is from 5271 and means *one who answers, an interpreter; an actor, stage player; a dis-*



*sembler, pretender, hypocrite.*

Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (Matt. 6:2)

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (Matt. 6:5)

Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (Matt. 6:16)

Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying. (Matt. 15:7)

And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? (Matt. 16:3)

But Yeshua perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? (Matt. 22:18)

But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. (Matt. 23:13)

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. (Matt. 23:14)

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. (Matt. 23:15)

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. (Matt. 23:23)

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. (Matt. 23:25)

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. (Matt. 23:27)

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous. (Matt. 23:29)

And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matt. 24:51)

He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. (Mark 7:6)

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them. (Luke 11:44)

Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time? (Luke 12:56)

The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? (Luke 13:15)

•**Blind guides:** A term Yeshua used for the religious leaders of his day.

Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! (Matt. 23:16)

Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. (Matt. 23:24)

•**Fools:** A term Yeshua used for the religious leaders of his day and even for his own disciples meaning

Ye fools [*impious or godless*] and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? (Matt. 23:17)

Ye fools [*impious or godless*] and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? (Matt. 23:19)

Ye fools [*senseless, without reason, stupid, without reflection or intelligence, acting rashly*], did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also? (Luke 11:40)

Then he said unto them, O fools [*foolish or unwise*], and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. (Luke 24:25)

•**Whitewashed tombs:** Directed toward the Pharisees, a religious denomination of Yeshua's day.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. (Matt. 23:27)

•**Faithless and perverse:** Yeshua speaking to his disciples.

Then Yeshua answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. (Matt. 17:17)

And Yeshua answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither. (Luke 9:41)

•**Adulterous:** Yeshua speaking to the Scribes and Pharisees (denominational leaders) and to his entire generation.

But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas (Matt. 12:39)

A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed. (Matt. 16:4)

Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. (Mark 8:38)

## An Analysis of Matthew 18

In Matthew 18, Yeshua is teaching the necessity of becoming converted (literally getting *turned around* and headed in the right direction spiritually) and becoming humble and teachable like a little child in order to enter the kingdom of heaven (verses 3-5).

He then goes on to teach that anyone who offends (literally, *scandalizes, put a stumbling block or impediment in the way causing one to trip or fall, to cause a person to distrust and desert one whom he ought to obey, cause to fall away*) a little one who has just turned their spiritual life around and is on the verge of entering the kingdom of Elohim is worthy of death (v. 6).

Yeshua then says that it is inevitable that offenses will come (verse 7) but if they come, he provides a course of action to be taken to resolve the conflicts so that fellowship can be restored between offended parties (verses 15-20). Notice the context: the assembly of called out Believers (the church) (verse 17). This is how offenses are to be handled that occur within a local body of Believers, or some organizational structure to which all the parties belong. The course of action to resolve disputes is this:

(a) if your brother offends you go directly to him with your concerns and attempt to resolve your differences

(verse 15).

- (b) If he refuses to hear you and resolve the issue, then take one or two witnesses who are eyewitnesses to the offense.
- (c) If he refuses to repent after hearing the two or three witnesses then the matter must be taken to the leadership of the congregation (called a *Bet Din* or *House of Judgment*) for them to judge between the parties. They have the spiritual authority to rule on matters within the congregation and to make binding decisions that are literally recognized by the courts of heaven (verse 18-19). If the man refuses to hear the congregational court, then he is dismissed from the assembly and it to be treated as a heathen (verse 17).

What we see in Matthew 18 is how to handle offensive situations occurring within some ecclesiastical organization. The question is begged, however, what is one to do with someone such as a travelling teacher, prophet or evangelist who is a part of no such body and as such is accountable to no one? Furthermore, how about a radio or television biblical teachers, or an author who may be part of another totally separate denomination or church, perhaps even be from another country? How can one properly follow Matthew 18 in these instances? One could possibly follow step (a) and (b), but how is one to bring the matter to conclusion if the parties involved have no governing structure to which they are both accountable?

At this point let us take a brief look at some of the rules pertaining to lashon hora (the evil tongue. This will hopefully help guide (along with the Scriptures already listed pertaining on how to deal with grievous wolves coming into the congregation of Believers) us along the path of how to deal with itinerant biblical teachers who are accountable to no organizational structure or who are accountable, but to an organization to which our local congregation is not apart.

## What Is Lashon Hora?

The word *lashon hora* is a Hebrew word meaning *evil speech* and is a Jewish religious concept founded on the Torah-law of Moses which embodies rules and regulations prohibiting the evil use of the tongue. Below are excerpts from two religious Jewish articles summarizing the concepts of lashon hora:

“*Lashon hora* (evil speech) is negative speech which can degrade, shame or harm a Jew in any way. The Torah strictly prohibits speaking *lashon hora*, or accepting lashon hora that you may hear from another person. If the speech is untrue, the sin is called ‘*motzie shaim ra* (causing a bad reputation).’ If a thing is spoken to the victim that the speech was against, the prohibition is called ‘*rechilus* (tale bearing).’ The prohibition is not limited to evil speech. It includes all negative communications including hints, gestures, faces, statements which can be interpreted either favorably or negatively, statements which cause a response in another which is *lashon hora*, saying something acceptable to one’s enemy or praising someone too much so the listener will say, ‘He is not so good,’ saying a valid thing that is motivated by hate or which could have any negative consequence that is not halachically justifiable, saying a thing that will make the listener think (or say or do) badly against the victim and answering the question ‘Who did this bad thing?’ (compiled from the Chafetz Chaim, the Vilna Gaon and Rav Avraham Asher Zimmerman, z”l; <http://www.shemayisrael.com/rabbiforsythe/zivug/loshonhora.htm>)

“*Lashon hora* is any evil speech that can harm or degrade a person without halachically justified beneficial purpose, especially when based on hearsay rather than being a VERIFIED misdeed that you WITNESSED AND INTERPRETED PERFECTLY yourself. Even neutral talk, or something said in public, that can have a bad interpretation, can be *lashon hora*. Children grow up with a tendency to talk about others (‘I’m telling on you’) and some never outgrow the grip of this destructive trait. Mouths can ruin a person’s life - for example, keeping one from getting into a yeshiva, killing a valid *shiduch* or work opportunity. The Vilna Gaon said that the mouth may only be used for good purposes such as Torah, kindness, peace, dovening, etc. The Chafetz Chayim writes that one risks up to 34 *de’oraisa* sins with a word of *lashon hora* against a fellow Jew. Schools should not condone *lashon hora* and should have practical group exercises on how to overcome this epidemic.” (<http://www.shemayisrael.com>)

com/rabbiforsythe/zivugmag/resultsgood.htm)

In Jewish religious thought (based on the teaching of the Torah-law of Moses), there are the several rules pertaining to *toeles*; that is, when it is permissible to speak evil for a constructive purpose. Here are some rules from the *Chofetz Chaim: A Daily Companion* (pp. 154-155):

- 1) One must be absolutely certain that the information is accurate. Either one had to have witnessed the incident himself, or he investigated the report and found it to be accurate.
- 2) One must think the matter through and be sure that a wrong has actually been committed.
- 3) One must first approach the wrongdoer and attempt to persuade him to rectify his behavior.
- 4) One is not permitted to exaggerate in any way.
- 5) One's intention must be solely to help the person who is being victimized. If one harbors any ill will toward the subject of the report, then he is not permitted to relate it for a constructive reason.
- 6) If one can effect the same result without speaking lashon hora, then he must use that option.

## Conclusion

The rules of *toeles* obviously do not fully address the situation of the grievous wolves entering the flock, or spewing out false teachings over the airwaves, through printed material or at public gatherings. These rules only give us some guidelines to follow and help us to recognize the gravity of speaking against others, even if for a constructive purpose, such as to protect the flock,

In the case of where false teachings, slander, misinformation is disseminated publicly and picked up by members of the local flock or congregation and is in danger of harming individuals the shepherd has to immediately make some tough decisions on how to handle the situation and affect damage control. If, for example, he were to not deal with the issue in his local congregation while attempting to make contact with the public figure who put out the false and damaging information (if he is even able to gain access to the individual) and attempt to rectify the problem and seek retractions and apologies weeks or months may pass. In the mean time, irreparable damage could have already been done behind the scenes within his own flock by the spreading of the false teachings. It seems that a wise shepherd should address the issue on two fronts simultaneously: congregationally and by going to the disseminator of the false and damaging information.

In the first century when the Apostles wrote the Messianic Scriptures the mass media where large numbers of people could be affected instantly was not a factor. The potential impact, due to modern communications, of false teachers is much more widespread at a much faster rate. The wise shepherd must take all these issues into consideration when plotting a course of action when dealing with grievous wolves who are attacking his flock. Much prayer, a thorough understanding of the Word of Elohim, and a healthy fear of YHVH and the leading of the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) will keep the wise shepherd in the path of YHVH's will.

One thing is certain though, YHVH has placed shepherds over his flocks to protect them at all cost. Will YHVH fault a shepherd who is overzealous in his protection of the sheep in his flock against heretical teachers, grievous wolves, dissention, strife, sedition and other destructive activities against YHVH's precious sheep? It is doubtful. If the true shepherds of Israel refuse to stand up in defense of the sheep of YHVH's pasture then as David asked in Psalm 94:16, "Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?"

## A Final Word to the Laity

For those who are not YHVH-appointed shepherds in a congregation several things should be clear from the above teaching:

- The sheep did not carry the rod.
- Nowhere in Scripture did the sheep warn the flock of impending danger.
- Nowhere is there a biblical example of a sheep fighting off a grievous wolf.
- Nowhere in Scripture did a sheep speak negatively about or criticize a false teacher or ministry.
- Nowhere in Scripture does a sheep brand anyone publicly as a heretic.
- Nowhere in Scripture does a sheep name names publicly.
- Nowhere in Scripture does a sheep take on the role, responsibilities or authority of a shepherd.

- Nowhere in Scripture do sheep publicly rebuke or correct a shepherd.
- If a sheep has a grievance against a shepherd, he must come to the shepherd with respect and humility to redress his grievances.
- If a sheep has an accusation to make against a shepherd, that accusation must not be made except there are two or three eye witnesses to the issue.
- Sheep are to abide by the decisions of the shepherds.

What are we saying here? Quite clearly, Scripturally, it is not the position of the sheep to engage in any of the shepherding and leadership activities stated in the body of this article. For them to do so is to step out of line and assume authority they do not have. To do so is to become a potential grievous wolf themselves within the Body of Believers. We simply cannot find any examples of this occurring in Scripture.

What can a sheep do then when he senses danger? First, he should take it to his Heavenly Father in prayer and ask for guidance and wisdom on how to handle the situation. Next, he should go to the shepherds, elders or overseers over him and express his concerns and leave the matter with them.

What if the spiritual overseers refuse to deal with problem. The sheep needs to watch a pray. Perhaps the problem is not as serious an issue as he thinks and perhaps the leaders believe the problem will resolve itself. Perhaps the leaders are waiting for more evidence before they take action. Perhaps the leaders are waiting for the right timing to act. Perhaps there are other factors of which the sheep is unaware.

What if problems arise within the flock and the shepherd still does nothing to protect the sheep? What should the concerned sheep do then? They should pray and fast for their leaders. Talk to their leaders again. Perhaps take one or two eyewitnesses of the situation to the leaders and request another meeting to express their concerns about the impending danger to the flock.

What if danger comes and the leaders do nothing? Seek YHVH about what to do. Perhaps those leading the flock are hirelings who run when danger comes (John 10:12-13) and are not true shepherds. Pray about moving to another flock where there are true, righteous shepherds who feed, lead, warn and protect the flock.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES should members of a congregation go behind the backs of leadership and:

- (a) Sow discord among brethren — which is a form of murder and an abomination that YHVH hates (Prov. 6:16-19).
- (b) Cause strife, division or factions (Gal. 5:20; Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 13:3; 2 Cor. 12:20-21; Phil. 2:3; 1 Tim. 6:3-5). This is a work of the flesh.
- (c) Become an accuser of the brethren. This is a satanic activity (Rev. 12:10).
- (d) Bring an accusation against an elder except to his face with witnesses: “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses” (1 Tim. 5:19).
- (e) Backbite (Pss. 15:3; 34:13).
- (f) Talebear: This is a violation of Torah! “Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer [or spread slander] among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbor: I am the YHVH” (Lev. 19:16)
- (g) By your mouth cause a child of YHVH to stumble. You may bring a judgment of death upon yourself (Matt. 18:6).
- (h) Murmur and complain. “Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer” (1 Cor. 10:10).

REMEMBER! Life and death is in the power of the tongue (Prov. 18:21). Let us follow the example of Yeshua who said:

It is the spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing: **the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.** (John 6:63)

**ONLY LET WORDS COME OUT OF YOUR MOUTH WHICH ARE SPIRIT AND LIFE!**

