



## "Is It Wrong to Criticize Other Religions?"

(By Craig Thomas)



**W**E have received several reprimands for criticizing other religions. We've received such criticism in phone calls, letters to the editor, and personal letters. We welcome criticism and would be foolish not to carefully consider it for "He who disdains instruction despises his own soul, But he who heeds rebuke gets understanding." (Prov. 15:32) So we ask, "What saith the Scriptures"? Is it wrong to criticize other religions? We shall make our appeal to Scripture rather than emotion, so consider that...

**1) Jesus Criticized Other Religions.** If it's wrong to criticize other religions then Jesus was the "chief of sinners" for He often criticized the religion of his contemporaries (Matt. 15:3-14; chap. 23). His criticisms even "offended" many who heard Him (Matt. 15:12). He warned of not a few, but "many" false prophets (Matt. 7:15) who would propagate false teachings that would "deceive many" (Matt. 24:11). These warnings are necessary because false teachers and religions do not advertise their true nature (Matt. 7:15). The Bible says to "mark," (lit. 'take aim at') false teachers! (Rom. 16:17)

**2) Old Testament Prophets Criticized Other Religions.** Christians who think it's wrong to criticize other religions have not read and studied the Old Testament, or else they do not believe it. Did Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel think it was undignified to rebuke the false doctrines and practices of others? Was Moses wrong when he criticized his own brethren for making the "molten calf"? (see Exodus 32) Was Elijah wrong when he derided and "mocked" the false prophets of Baal? (see 1 Kgs. 18) He even "slew them"! (1 Kgs. 18:40) Was Isaiah wrong when he very purposely, pointedly and emphatically showed the foolishness of "other religions"? (see Isa. 44:9-20) Who sent John the Baptist to criticize and condemn his own generation? (Matt. 3:2-12) Was it not God Himself?

**3) Apostles Criticized Other Religions.** A continuing theme in many New Testament epistles is the criticism of other religions. Peter warned "there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies" (2 Pet. 2:1). He reminded and warned us to beware of such false religious teachers "lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked" (2 Pet. 3:17). Paul criticized the Galatians for being so "foolish" as to be led away by "another gospel" (i.e., "other religion" if you will; Gal. 1:6-9; 3:1). He warned that some religious teachers would "cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men,

according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ" (Col. 2:8).  
Would we point an accusing finger at Peter or Paul for such criticisms?

Often those protesting it's wrong to criticize another's religion are those whose religious teachings cannot withstand Biblical scrutiny. Since their views and doctrines will not survive careful Scripture analysis, they cry "foul," saying, "it is a sign of bigotry and dogmatic intolerance to criticize another's religion." "It's wrong to criticize" is the last resort of a religious enthusiast whose faith is founded upon the sands of human creeds, traditions, superstitions, and self-will.

Think about it, the Old Testament prophets, the apostles, and the Lord would not have met untimely deaths if not for their criticism of 'other religions.' How will you react to criticism? Will you criticize us in return or will you follow our ardent plea to "search the Scriptures" to determine (1 Jn. 1:6).

