

PARK HEIGHTS CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Thus Saith the Lord

ANSWERING A FOOL (Part 1)

By Jeff Sweeten

There is a Jewish proverb that says, "When a wise man talks to a fool, two fools are conversing." One of the most difficult exercises in self-restraint is to allow an idiot to rant unanswered. A Christian is naturally concerned about righteousness, set for the defense of the truth, and in a situation where a person's humble, meager knowledge might help someone out of the darkness of his or her ignorant condition, an honest disciple's inclination is to lend a hand... which often gets bit.

"Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Peter 2:21-23). It is a picture of perfect wisdom to see Jesus before his detractors, calmly taking abuse, belittling, and caustic defamation with calm resignation. In Matthew 27:14, at a key moment in Jesus trial, with Pilate groping for any straw to justify Jesus' presence in his court, Jesus "answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marveled greatly." Several false witnesses had testified against Him, but Pilate knew it was a setup "for he knew that for envy they had delivered him" (v. 18). He could have set Jesus free. Instead, he vainly washed his hands; and Jesus "answered nothing" (cf. Mark 15:5; Isaiah 53:7).

Ask the question: What possible productive consequence could have resulted in Jesus' defense of His innocence? The jury was fixed! The crowd had been baited; "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matthew 27:25). "And they cried out again, Crucify him. Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him" (Mark 15:13-14). They were not interested in the truth, only a defense of their defenseless, jealous conduct. Ego had driven them to riotous, unreasoned, ungodly conduct that even a heathen like Pilate recognized as sin.

Ironically, attempts to rescue the rebellious sinner, no matter how sincere, are often ill spent. Jesus was a living illustration of what He had previously taught His disciples: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Matthew 7:6).

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SUNDAY: 9:30 a.m. Bible Class • 10:25 a.m. Morning Worship • 1:30 p.m. Afternoon Worship

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