

Deceptive Bull's Eyes

Eph. 4:5

“One Lord, one faith, one baptism,”

A Marine recruiting sergeant happened upon an impressive sight while traveling in the country backwoods. At one roadside farm, he saw targets painted just about everywhere—on the barns, on fences, and on all the outbuildings. And exactly in the center of each target's bull's eye, there was a bullet hole!

Knowing the Marine Corps could use a marksman like that, the sergeant stopped at the farm house in hopes of recruiting this sharpshooter. His knock on the door was answered by a gangling, barefoot lad of a not-too-bright appearance who proudly admitted that he had made the targets and bullet holes.

The sergeant asked him how he managed to get a perfect bull's eye with every shot. He drawled, "Aw, that's easy, Sarge. I jes' shoot first, an' then I paint rings around the bullet hole!"

What appears to be “on target” can often be nothing more than a post-painted target around a poorly aimed shot! Many shoot first and paint bull's eyes later! **This brings us to the question, “When is a bull's eye not a bull's eye?” The answer is, “When the shot determines the bull's eye—not the bull's eye determining the shot.”**

In the religious realm there is an epidemic of “shoot-first-paint-later” dullshooters (or missmarksmen). Instead of biblical doctrine being the target at which all should take aim it is often seen that some aim in various directions and place shots that are then painted over with bull's eyes. And the unwary that come by judge the shooter of these post-painted targets as being true sharpshooters. The simple fact is, if one doesn't know where the targets belong then one cannot discern a false target.

The bull's eye of salvation is Acts 2:38. There is no other remedy for sin than God's established target! Any shots elsewhere placed are a miss! The acid test of gospel preaching is NOT the style, the oratory, the popularity—but rather, does the preacher preach salvation as the bottom line and that that line is ONLY possible by full obedience to Acts 2:38? If not, then the target (no matter how nicely painted) is a miss. Preachers who cannot be pinned down to ONE method and ONE method only of salvation are no biblical sharpshooters but rather those who are truly taking a shot in the dark!

Those preachers that will not avow plainly, so that it leaves no doubt, that Jesus Christ is the One True and Only Living God and that any division of the godhead is to be considered false doctrine is NOT God's preacher. “If they preach any other doctrine, let them be accursed.”

2 Pet. 2:1-3 *“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned*

words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”

Knowing the true targets will prevent one from being deceived by those who paint false targets around poorly aimed shots. Those attracted by style, charisma, oratory or anointed sounding voices are those unwary souls that judge bull's eyes that were placed after the fact. *“Ye shall know the TRUTH and the TRUTH shall make you free.”*

The sound of the shot is not the all-important thing but where the shot hits is all important. There are far too many that become excited at the recoil and sound of the shot and dismiss the aim of the shot. 2 Tim. 4:2 instructs the true preacher to *“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”* And 2 John 1:10 commands, *“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into [your] house, neither bid him God speed:”*

In our lifestyles we must aim for the true targets of God. An old bit of carpenter's advice is: “Measure twice, cut once.” The more consequential an action, the more carefully it needs to be thought out. Wise people know it is never a waste of time to ensure accuracy. It is far better to make sure one is right—deliberately, cautiously, and carefully—than hastily and thoughtlessly to act in ways that turn out to be wrong. It is possible for a person's life itself to be “ill-measured.” In regard to God, we sometimes are shockingly careless. By the way, sin is known as “missing the mark” in the original.

“The unexamined life is not worth living”—life is too consequential not to be thoughtful and deliberate about it. We ought to carefully settle on true biblical convictions and then fit our lives to those convictions. Too often we merely do what comes naturally—and then make up a set of “convictions” to fit our lifestyle. The spiritual consequences of “ill-measured” deeds are eternal—we cannot afford to cut now and measure later. We get one life, and only one. Once done, that life cannot be undone. AIM for the TRUE target—eternity is too long to miss!

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