

Meddling in Other Men's Matters

“For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men's matters” (1 Peter 4:15).

It is interesting to note how the scriptures identify error from a point of receiving man's full agreement, into an area of “it's not that bad.”

Let me explain: Peter said, “...let none of you suffer as a murderer.” Webster defines the term as “the crime of unlawfully killing a person especially with malice aforethought,” to which, the morally upright would affirm.

“...let none of you suffer as a...thief:” i.e., “one that steals especially stealthily or secretly” (Webster's). Jeremiah, in the context of Israel's condition, said, “the thief is ashamed when he is found” (Jeremiah 2:26).

“...let none of you suffer...as an evil-doer:” i.e., “doing evil,” and “wrongs done to our fellowman” (ISBE). Jesus said, “For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man” (Mark 7:21-23). As such, “The immorality may be present when the action is not possible.” Also, the term is described as, “Malefactors or offenders of God's law,” and “used generally of the ungodly:” the ungodly are those who, “array against God and His claims to respect, reverence and obedience. Those whose sins are particularly aggravating and deserving of God's wrath are the ‘ungodly’.” (ISBE).

To these, and other acts that are considered reprehensible to a moral society, the Apostle Peter said, “let none of you suffer” as such. But Peter did not stop there, as he adds, “or as a meddler in other men's matters,” defined as matters “belonging to another person” (Vine's).

It seems to be a general consensus in our society that there are no matters belonging exclusively “to another person,” or persons. So many believe it is their right, their purpose, their job in this world to settle, or to be an instrument of justice in, other men's matters, and thus, there is no evil in the act, nor will it have adverse consequences. However, the Apostle Peter reveals that in so doing the offender will smart for it.

Meditate on the words of Jehoahaz the king of Israel, to Amaziah, the king of Judah, saying, “The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a

wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trod down the thistle. Thou sayest, Lo, thou hast smitten Edom; and thy heart lifteth thee up to boast: abide now at home; why shouldest thou meddle to thy hurt, that thou shouldest fall, even thou, and Judah with thee?" (2 Chronicles 25:18-19): the term "meddle" being, "provoke calamity."