

Unpopular Preachers **by Oliver B Greene**

"Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets."—Luke 6:22,23

Thank God for my preacher friends! I dare not touch God's anointed, but I do not hesitate to say that the dirtiest gang of thieves this side of Hell are the Gospel-denying, compromising liberals and modernists who deny the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures and preach to please people instead of preaching the Word as it is laid down in the Bible.

Hell will be hotter for these preachers than for ordinary sinners who sat in the pews and listened to their social gospel. Oh yes, there will be preachers in Hell (II Cor. 11:13–15). Just as surely as God has God-called preachers, the Devil has Devil-called preachers.

There is no need to blame Hollywood and the liquor crowd for the mess in which we find the world today. The blame lies at the doorsteps of sissy, compromising, back-scratching, ear-tickling, "denomination-pecked" preachers who know the truth yet refuse to preach it for fear that they might hurt someone's feelings.

It is not inviting to be unpopular. No one likes to be shunned. It is not a good feeling to know that you are not appreciated. But our Lord went through all that—and more. He set the example. He said, "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, IS NOT WORTHY OF ME." Also, 'Beware of the man of whom all men speak well.'

Too many preachers stand in too well with the world in this modern era.

The other day while reading the Word, I noticed some of the texts used by a few of the most prominent Bible preachers. I also noticed that these teachers were unpopular. I have no idea that they would receive the good graces of the "brethren" of this day. I have no idea that these fellows would get any free publicity if they came to the average American city to conduct a series of revival services.

These "firebrands" lived a long time ago, and a lot of water has run under the bridge since they preached here on earth. But human nature has not changed one iota. Religious "dandies" are still operating just as they did in the days of these preachers. The spirit of this age is as always: "What are you excited about?"

If you will study the Word, you will find that God's men in every age since God anointed men to carry His message have been excited.

Who were some of the unpopular preachers of the Bible, and what were their texts?

1. Enoch: A "Second Coming" Preacher

Brother Enoch was unpopular in his day. As far as I can find in the record, the Lord God was the only One who would take a walk with him or be caught in his presence (Gen. 5:24).

What was his subject? Enoch preached on the second coming of Jesus!

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly."—Jude 14,15.

The seventh man from Adam was a second-coming preacher. He preached that Jesus will come with tens of thousands of His saints. He believed that Jesus will come for His saints, and then He will come WITH His saints in judgment. Enoch was a premillennial preacher. He believed in the rapture of the saints and in the return of Jesus with His saints to judge the world—that is, the ungodly.

If you and I had been members of a church where Brother Enoch was pastor, we would have heard sermons on the Lord's return to earth with His saints to execute judgment upon the wicked and the ungodly.

I AM NOT CRITICIZING, just asking: How long has it been since YOU heard a sermon on the second coming of Jesus? Facts are facts! I know that some of you dear people who read these lines hear the blessed truth of the Lord's return. But there are thousands of church members who HAVE NEVER heard one sermon on the return of the Lord. They know nothing whatever about His return. The reason why some preachers never preach on the second coming is that they KNOW NOTHING ABOUT

IT. The poor fellows have never been saved (Titus 2:11–15; II Cor. 11:13–15). A born-again preacher should want to preach the blessed hope!

Then, of course, some preachers could not afford to preach about Jesus' coming to judge ungodly men. They say, "All men are good; no one is bad; we are all sons of God." But when God gets His hands on those fellows, they will, to their sorrow, discover that they have believed "the lie" and have preached a lie!

I am afraid that Enoch would have a hard time getting a convention church today.

2. Noah: Calamity Howler, Prophet of Doom

Brother Noah was an unpopular preacher. I doubt if he was invited to any of their suppers and brotherhood meetings. They thought that poor old Noah had lost a button; but he hadn't!

Noah was the listening, working, warning kind of preacher. He listened to God! He worked on the ark! He warned the people! His membership did not grow, and his report at the association would not have been so good. BUT he became the "heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Heb. 11:7).

His name might not have gotten in "Who's Who in Religion," but he got his name on the ROLL CALL OF THE FAITHFUL (Heb. 11:1–40). There were a multitude of people alive while Noah lived, but the only name which I find recorded in the Eternal Record is "faithful Noah."

If Noah preached today, he would be branded as a religious fanatic. He would be called a calamity howler, a prophet of gloom! I doubt if he would get very far in organized religion if he lived today. He would be very unpopular with the "brethren." He would not be invited to very many of the "big churches."

But I don't suppose that that would bother Noah. I suppose he did most of his preaching in the backwoods while he was building the ark; so it wouldn't hurt him to be a "backwoods" preacher again.

It made little difference to Noah what the people said about him or about his message. He had heard from God, and he preached the warning which God had bidden him preach.

So does every man of God, and no man can preach God's Word and not preach judgment! God is love (I John 4:8). The same God is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29). Noah had to stand alone, but he stood! He believed what God said, and he "found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen. 6:8).

3. Joseph Brought Report of Evil Doings of His Brethren

Joseph, a type of Christ, was an unpopular preacher. His subject: "Evil Doings of the Brethren": "...and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report" (Gen. 37:2).

I am afraid that Joseph would not get very far in the preaching business today. You know you should never speak against the brethren, no matter what they say or do. This is the age of "brotherly love," "fellowship," "don't fight; fellowship instead," so the big-shot religionists tell us. Invite the liberals and modernists to your church. Let them sit on your platform and pray in your services. "Love the fellows as brothers," they will say. "You might be able to

help them." THAT'S THE DEVIL'S LINE and has been ever since he became the Devil!

God has always forbidden His servants to hobnob with the Devil's outfit. "Come out from among them"! "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness"! "Preach the word"! "Reprove"! "Rebuke"! "Exhort"! Such is the admonition of the Almighty to His servants (II Cor. 6:17; II Tim. 4:1–4; Eph. 5:11).

Oh yes, it cost Joseph to take a stand against the "evil brethren," but it paid big dividends in the end.

If you are not familiar with the life of Joseph, be sure to read it thoroughly in Genesis. "It pays to serve Jesus!" It may cost now, but it pays off later. A book could be written about Joseph, and then some. But his message on "Evil Doings of the Brethren" didn't make him popular with those brethren.

Joseph is not the last one to lose his popularity through such preaching. Many a dear pastor has been crucified because he dared to take a stand against the evils of the brethren.

The way to be popular is to preach the brotherhood of man, never to look for evil in any man, but always look for the good. "There is good in all men," so say the modernists—BUT that is not what the Lord Jesus preached, and "he knew what was in man" (John 2:25).

4. Moses: Against the Bondage of God's People

Moses was an unpopular preacher—his subject: "Let My People Go!" Pharaoh is dead, but the old boy left his representatives. He has some great, great, great, great, grand-younguns living today, and they are operating in religion. They do their best to keep God's people in bondage and under submission.

Some people don't like the pope of Rome, but you certainly don't have to go to Rome to find a pope. There are plenty of popes in America. They do not go by the name pope, but they dictate to churches and preachers in the same manner.

I say this in love, God bearing me record; I tell the truth in the fear of God, knowing that I must meet the statement which I am about to make: Some dear preachers do not move or budge until they know the orders from headquarters. When the big boys make their wishes known, then the little fellows act accordingly. GOD HAVE MERCY!

I can't understand, to save my life, why people preach grace, grace, grace, then put people under bondage! The Word tells us, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

God pity a preacher who will be the pastor of a group of people, accept their money as a salary, then let some denominational boss tell him what to preach, what to do and when to do it! I cannot, to save my life, understand a man like that.

Here is the text used by Brother Moses: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go, that they may serve me" (Exod. 8:1).

Some precious people don't have time to serve God today. They are too busy with the program. I believe in the right amount of program; it must be if things are done decently and in order, but a good percentage of the modern program needs to be junked. People who name the name of Jesus need to go out into the highways and byways where the dying souls are and preach Christ crucified to a dying world.

The world is going to Hell while a bunch of church folks sit around sipping hot tea, munching on cookies and discussing "ways and means." If they would read their Bibles, then they would discover that "the way of the cross leads Home" and also to the means.

We must first give ourselves to the Lord and then go where dying men are and give them the message of salvation: Christ dying on a cross and risen again!

The children of Israel were in bondage to Pharaoh. They durst not move without his command.

Tens of millions of church people are today in bondage to denominational bosses. They dare not give their money except through the channels mapped out by the denomination. They dare not go to any place of worship, except it be of their own little brand, and even then their report must be sent back to the mother church. They preach grace in word, and they practice law and bondage.

God pity a person who claims to trust Jesus as Saviour of his soul but cannot trust Him to lead him also concerning where to give his money, where to worship or where to go to school!

I believe in church loyalty, BUT ONLY AS THE SPIRIT LEADS! I believe in Christian liberty! I believe in the grace of God! I have always refused to let any man, or any group of men, tell me what to do or where to worship or where to preach!

Moses preached liberty for God's people. A great many of them were killed, and a great number had their feelings hurt. But God must have thought a lot of Moses, for He came down and supervised his funeral (Deut. 34:5,6).

A few dear preachers today are kicking over the traces and demanding liberty for their people. It costs! It costs tremendously, but it will pay big dividends when God's payday comes.

5. Nathan Preached to a Big Shot About His Sin

Nathan was an unpopular preacher. He did not get an honorary degree from the University of Jerusalem, but he got his man! His text was: "Thou Art the Man!"

That type of preaching has never been popular. It is not popular today, and the man who is preaching that kind of Gospel is not a popular preacher. Today, in this modern, liberal age, the preacher is not supposed to point people out or to call their names. They might get offended!

Nathan preached his sermon to a big shot—none other than the king himself. He preached him a red-hot sermon in language easily understood, and then looked him straight in the eyes and said, "Thou art the man"! (II Sam. 12:7).

They all looked alike to Brother Nathan. Big shots or little shots—it made no difference to Nathan. He had a message from God to deliver, and he delivered it just exactly as he received it from God.

Every minister of the Gospel has a message to deliver, and woe be unto the preacher who fails to deliver it just as the Lord God has laid it down.

SAD, BUT SO: The minute some poor little fellows get a little recognition from the big boys, they forget God and His desires. They bow and stoop and sell out to the machine in order to get a position of prominence.

What kind of a God do some people believe in? If God can save a young man and call that young man to preach His Word, don't you believe GOD will give him a place in which to deliver the message? I DO!

Jesus said to His disciples in Mark 11:22, "HAVE FAITH IN GOD"! If we put our trust in God, if we seek first His kingdom, then He will take perfect care of the rest (Matt. 6:33). The disciples informed the rulers in their day, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

God give us more preachers who will first listen to God for the message, then deliver the message of God just as God gives it! The place to find that message is in the Word.

6. Elijah Was Against the Prophets of Baal

Elijah is our sixth unpopular preacher. He wouldn't get to first base with the

modern program. He would have been called a "prophet of gloom"—a fellow who always looks on the dark side—a "calamity howler."

Elijah would have never gotten an invitation to preach the associational sermon. He preached coming judgment. He even went so far as to preach that there would be no rain for three years. He even said that there would be no dew.

Preacher Elijah even prayed that God would shut up the heavens and withhold the rain (Jas. 5:17). You did not find Preacher Elijah going around over the country, praying, "God bless our land." He knew that God could not bless it unless they repented.

God can't bless our fair country today unless we come to our senses and confess our sins; and it needs to begin in the pulpit in many places, and it must begin in the pulpit if it ever reaches the pew. A preacher who does not preach the judgment of God needs to go to the altar and confess his sins. "God is love" (I John 4:8). He is also "a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29).

Elijah was quite a preacher, but he was very unpopular (I Kings 17:1). Read the story of his life in the Old Testament.

7. Micaiah Was Not for Sale

The seventh unpopular preacher whom we will discuss is Micaiah. This poor fellow would today be called "uncouth." They would say today, "Brother Micaiah, you should get a little more training; it would help you to express yourself better and give you a better understanding of the brethren."

You see, Micaiah's text was: "Your Prophets Are Liars!" (II Chron. 18:22). Such language today would certainly be outlawed by the "learned." "The very idea—calling the brethren liars!" But Micaiah did it!

We still have fellows wearing priestly garb and parading as ministers of the Gospel who are just plain liars. Paul describes them in II Corinthians 11:13–15. The Devil is nobody's fool. He works from within. He tries to get into the pulpit. And, sad but so, he has done so in many places.

Micaiah got in jail for preaching the truth of the Lord (II Chron. 18:12–34), but he was one of those fellows who was not for sale!

I know some who used to be balls of fire; now they don't have enough fire to warm a chigger's feet. I used to pray with some of the fellows in school when their car payments were due and they did not know from where the money to make the payments was coming. You could hear them praying for a city block—just plain praying. Of course, some of the fellows are doctors now. Somebody gave them D.D.'s somewhere along the line, and for some reason, they don't pray or preach

as they did when we were in school in the hills.

The price tags on some fellows are so low that they would not even be of service in a five-and-ten-cent store. But Micaiah was not for sale. He preferred jail to selling his Lord down the river.

8. Jeremiah Preached Continually on Judgment Coming

Jeremiah, the weeping prophet! (There have not been enough tears in some pulpits in ten years, if they were all in a bottle, to put out the cigarette in the parson's mouth. And that—the cigarette habit—is an indication of one reason why there are no more tears in the pulpit today. Cigarette-puffing preachers just do not weep over sinners.)

Jeremiah had a fire in his bones. "But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones" (Jer. 20:9). The only fire which some modern preachers have is shut up in bone pipes in their mouths. Their hearts are as cold as the modernistic seminary from which they received their degrees. Jeremiah received his B.A. degree from God Almighty: "B-e not A-fraid"! (Jer. 1:8).

Poor Jeremiah would have a hard time getting a church in the "machine" of today. Every sermon he preached was on backsliding and judgment. "Judgment! Judgment! Judgment!" was his text. He would be accused of being in a rut today. The modern society crowd would declare that his sermons sounded like a broken record.

Most preachers do their best to get up a brand-new sermon for every service, but in most places that is not at all necessary. The same ones need to be preached over and over and over again—that is, if it is Gospel. The majority of folks pay very little attention to the sermon—and a good percentage do exactly nothing about it! Therefore, we need to preach and preach and preach and preach the message of His bidding, fearing only God, until the people do something about it!

The preacher who hammers and hammers and hammers until a little Gospel soaks in, may not be popular with the people of this modern era, but he is popular with God—and that is all that counts anyway.

They put Preacher Jeremiah in a pit, but God removed him. I would much rather be in a pit for God's glory than to be on a pedestal and be compromising with a bunch of scissor-tail, coat-wearing liberals and dancing to the music of some denominational machine.

Thank God for prophets who can weep and season their sermons with tears which flow from hearts broken over the sins of their people! We've heard a lot about the water in the baptistry, but what we need is to see a little water in the eyes of brokenhearted preachers; and when we see it there, we will see tears

around an old-fashioned mourners' bench. But, of course, that is not popular either; not in this day of liberalism.

I have written this message primarily for believers; but if you have read these lines and you are not saved, God grant that right now you will confess your sin and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.