

Let Us Put Away Bitterness
(Ephesians 4:31-32)

Introduction:

1. In Matthew 7:1-5 Jesus taught His followers to avoid "unfair judgment."
2. From Ephesians 4:31-32 we learn that the Lord requires His followers to put away "bitterness" [may be a contributing factor to unfair judgment].
3. We have recently seen a number of political leaders and fellow citizens practice unfair judging, and we have seen them demonstrate bitterness.
4. Regardless of the actions of other people, we must comply with the Lord's instructions.

Discussion:

- I. THE BIBLE TELLS ABOUT MANY PEOPLE WHO WERE OVERCOME WITH BITTERNESS
 - A. Cain
 1. Because of his bitterness he killed Abel (Genesis 4:5-8).
 2. Consequently, God cursed him (vs.11-12).
 - B. Saul
 1. Because of his bitterness he tried to kill David (1 Samuel 18:6-11).
 2. Eventually, Saul lost his kingdom, and David became king.
 - C. Haman
 1. Because of his bitterness he attempted to destroy Mordecai and his people (Esther 3:1-6).
 2. Eventually, he was hung on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai (7:10).
 - D. The rulers of Persia
 1. Because of their bitterness they attempted to destroy Daniel (Daniel 6:1-7).
 2. Eventually, they were cast into the den of lions (vs.24).
 - E. The Jews in Jerusalem
 1. Their bitterness caused Jesus to be crucified (Luke 22:63-71; 23:1-5, 13-25).
 2. Eventually, Jesus prayed for them (vs.34).
- II. THE BIBLE REVEALS THE SOURCE OF BITTERNESS (James 3:14-16)
 - A. Bitterness:
 1. resides in the heart
 2. is associated with earthly wisdom.
 - B. Bitterness is not associated with wisdom from above (vs.17).
- III. THE BIBLE SHOWS HOW BITTERNESS CAN BE FORGIVEN
 - A. We learn from Acts 2 how some people who wanted Jesus to be crucified were forgiven (vs.22-23, 37-38, 41).
 - B. Christians must follow the instructions given in:
 1. Ephesians 4:31
 2. 1 John 1:9
 3. Ephesians 4:32.

Conclusion:

1. We are familiar with the effects of bitterness.
2. We have pointed out the Lord's will concerning bitterness.
3. Let us overcome it and avoid it!