

## Responsibilities of an Evangelist

*John Isaac Edwards*

**E**vangelist is the name given in the New Testament to heralds of salvation through Christ (2 Timothy 4:5; Ephesians 4:11-12; Acts 21:8). What particular burden of obligation is upon one who brings the good news of the gospel concerning the way of salvation (Romans 10:15)? All that can be known about the work of an evangelist, his qualifications and responsibilities, is found within the word of God. Taking Paul’s letters to Timothy and Titus, we find the following responsibilities of an evangelist:

**Responsibilities to Self.** Every evangelist’s first responsibility is to himself! He must know how to behave himself and see that he does it. “...that thou mightest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself...” (1 Timothy 3:15). He is responsible to take heed to himself. “Take heed unto thyself...” (1 Timothy 4:16). How can an evangelist expect to save himself or anyone else, if he doesn’t first take heed to self? He is to be an exercising man. “...exercise thyself unto godliness” (1 Timothy 4:7). He is to maintain personal purity. “...keep thyself pure” (1 Timothy 5:22). He must “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed” (2 Timothy 2:15). He has the responsibility of “In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works...” (Titus 2:7). Without going any further in our study, we have a pretty good list of things to keep a fellow busy don’t we?

**Responsibilities to Brethren.** It is necessary for an evangelist to “...put the brethren in remembrance...” (1 Timothy 4:6). He is charged, “...be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12). He must set a good example and not be an example of what a Christian is not to be! He is responsible to treat all the brethren properly. “Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters with all purity. Honour widows that are widows indeed” (1 Timothy 5:1-3). He is to “Charge them that are rich in this world...” (1 Timothy 6:17). He is to be a committing man. “...the things that thou hast heard of me...the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2). As the need arises, an evangelist must be “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves...” (2 Timothy 2:25).

**Responsibilities to Elders.** Elders, also called bishops and pastors in the Scriptures, are a gift separate and distinct from evangelists (Ephesians 4:11). The evangelist is to “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour...” (1 Timothy 5:17). He must “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses” (1 Timothy 5:19). Elders are not immune to sin and “Them

that sin...”, he is commanded, “...rebuke before all” (1 Timothy 5:20). He must do “...nothing by partiality” (1 Timothy 5:21) and “Lay hands suddenly on no man...” (1 Timothy 5:22).

**Responsibilities to the Gospel.** Regarding the gospel, Paul instructed, “These things command and teach” (1 Timothy 4:11). He is to “Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all” (1 Timothy 4:15). He must be unashamed of the gospel. “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord...” (2 Timothy 1:8). And, he is to “...be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel...” (2 Timothy 1:8).

**Responsibilities to the Church.** He is to “...set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders...” (Titus 1:5). This requires the evangelist to teach and preach faithfully on the subject and lead in getting the church properly organized after the New Testament pattern.

**Responsibilities to False Teachers.** Talking with some evangelists, one might get to thinking that all the false teachers have given up their false teachings and everyone is teaching the truth! Just do a little reading and listening, and you’ll find “...many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Anyone who teaches that which is opposed to the truth,

regardless of his character or his motives, is a false teacher! The “evangelist’s handbook” says, “If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness...from such withdraw thyself” (1 Timothy 6:3-5). An evangelist cannot be the uncompromising, militant man the Lord requires and at the same time be extending the right hand of fellowship and rubbing shoulders with those who “teach otherwise”! He is to “...from such turn away” (2 Timothy 3:5). Their “...mouths must be stopped...” (Titus 1:11). The evangelist is to “...rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith” (Titus 1:13).

This is certainly not an exhaustive list, but is a good overview of responsibilities of an evangelist. What do you expect of the preacher? Some today may have such a list of qualifications and responsibilities that even the apostle Paul would not do. Brethren need to be careful not to demand more of evangelists than the Lord expects and evangelists ought not try to get by with less than the Lord accepts.

### ***The Preacher’s Charge***

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:2).

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