

Christianity Is Under Attack

Jesus warned, "If the world hates you, you know it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own but because you are not of the world, since I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his Lord.' If they persecuted Me they will also persecute you ... All these things will they do to you for My name's sake because they do not know God Who sent Me ... He who hates Me hates My Father also ... This happened so the word (prophecy) may be fulfilled which was written in their law, 'They hated Me without a cause' (John 15:18 to 25; Psalm 69:4).

There are many thousands of truly genuine, dedicated, holy, modern-day Disciples who are wholly focused on the Lord Jesus and serving Him but we are under increasing attack from three sides; from weak carnal, 'lukewarm' 'religious' Christians, from invisible evil forces or from the unsaved and ungodly who hate all things holy. True Christian Disciples whom Jesus referred to as Sheep or Wheat, who know His voice are enduring increasing persecution. "My Sheep hear My voice. I know them and they follow Me" (John 10:27). In this modern world Christians are slowly becoming the minority and are being persecuted, vilified, abused and mocked.

We will look at the three areas from where Christians are being persecuted. The so-called religious people persecuted Jesus so they will persecute genuine Disciples. Christianity is the largest of the world's religions with over two billion people who claim to be Christian, and it is the fastest growing religion worldwide in some parts of the world. Sadly, according to statistics in Europe, America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, Christianity is declining, not growing. Many once-thriving churches and beautiful cathedrals in Europe are empty or are being used for non-Christian purposes. In 1900, over 80% of the world's Christians lived in Europe, North and South America. A survey taken in the year 2000 revealed this number had fallen to below 40%. Europe was once the cradle of modern Christianity but has become mostly secular. Many of the above countries have members of government who are anti-religious. For example, these countries no longer teach creation but focus on the lie of evolution. These countries do not have prayer in school assemblies but will salute their flag. These countries do not allow Christian teaching but have a secular, pseudo, state sanctioned 'religious education', which is not in the least Christian. Genuine Scriptural teaching is being squeezed out. There are many thousands of young people who were raised as Christians in good Christian homes who have consciously turned away from God in their rebellion. Surveys have revealed church attendance has fallen dramatically. Only about 20% of the people aged 15 and over attend church regularly and 43% of those stated they had not attended church for over a year. When God is removed from everyday life, the love of God and natural love grow cold then rebellion, violence, wickedness, lawlessness, misery, mental and physical health problems increase. This is precisely what is happening in the world today. This is what Jesus predicted would happen. "Because iniquity will be multiplied, the love of many will grow cold" (Matthew 24:12).

When so-called Christian schools or churches accept homosexuality, lesbianism, same-sex marriage or people who choose to change their natural-born gender, we know those churches and schools are compromising the truth of the Gospel. These sins are an absolute abomination to God (Leviticus 20:13; Deuteronomy 22:5) and the people who accept these sexual sins as 'normal' are not genuine God fearing believers, they are goats and 'false wheat' or darnel/tares. They call the goodness of righteousness and holiness evil, and they call the evil of these sexual sins, good. Many of these carnal Christians vilify Disciples who want to take a stand for righteousness in their churches or schools. The attacks, both verbal and physical on true Disciples mostly comes from unsaved, ungodly people in the world who hate all things holy but when the attacks on Disciples come from so-called Christians, that is truly despicable. Woe to them for God will judge them according to their wickedness. 'Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness' (Isaiah 5:20). Sexual immorality should have no place in Christian lives. Sex is for marriage between one man and one woman for life. 'From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. A man will leave his father and mother and will join to his wife and the two will become one flesh, so they are no longer two but one flesh. What God has joined together let no man separate' (Mark 10:6 to 9). Homosexuality is not acceptable in true Discipleship. There can be no excuse for accepting the sin of homosexuality in any church (Romans 1:21 to 32). Yes, we love and accept the person but we need to take a strong stand against the sin. Remember, all sexual sin is a sin against one's own body. 'Flee sexual immorality! Every sin a man does is outside the body but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body' (1 Corinthians 6:18). When people turn to God and repent of their sin, God accepts them back as though they had never sinned. 'Do you not realise the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. The sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, prostitutes, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, slanderers or extortioners will never inherit the Kingdom of God. Such as some of you were but you were washed (repented then forgiven) and sanctified. You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and in the Spirit of our God' (1 Corinthians 6:9 to 11).

Why do weak, immature, lukewarm Christians attack the genuine dedicated believers and Disciples whom Jesus calls His Sheep or Wheat? Because they are influenced and deceived by wickedness and are doing the devil's work. 'Be watchful. Your adversary the devil walks around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Withstand him steadfast in your faith' (1 Peter 5:8 & 9). 'Be subject (submissive) to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you' (James 4:7). 'Woe to the earth and to the sea because the devil has gone down to you, having great wrath knowing he has but a short time' (Revelation 12:12). Persecution and hatred from religious people are the fulfilment of prophecies spoken by Jesus. Remember, it was religious people who persecuted Jesus and called for His crucifixion and because they are religious and claim to know God, they have no excuse for their wickedness. Jesus said, "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have had sin but now they have no excuse for their sin ... Now that they have seen My works they hated both Me and My Father" (John 15:22 & 24).

Persecution can come from invisible evil forces. Just as religious people wanted Jesus crucified, so religious people may want to get rid of genuine Disciples too. We are in a dark world ruled by wickedness in heavenly places. If you are being persecuted or if you are hated without any reason or cause, know it is the works of evil trying to destabilise your walk with the Lord. This is where we are called on to stand strong in the Lord against the wiles or strategies of the evil one. 'Put on the whole armour of God so you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, for our wrestling (trouble) is not against flesh and blood but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world's rulers of the darkness of this age and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places' (Ephesians 6:11 & 12). 'We speak wisdom among those who are full grown (mature Disciples) yet a wisdom not of this world nor of the (wicked) rulers of this world who are coming to nothing ... A wisdom which none of the (wicked) rulers of this world has known, for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory' (1 Corinthians 2:6 & 8).

Persecution can come from ungodly unbelievers or from people involved in false religions. Our love for God must surpass the love of anything else. Loving God wholeheartedly rules out any apathy or casual attitudes. The Lord is adamant, we must openly reveal our love for God and not be ashamed to speak about Him. 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus, for it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes ... In it is revealed God's righteousness from faith to faith' (Romans 1:16 & 17). True Christianity is a Spiritual religion led by the Holy Spirit. 'God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and Truth' (John 4:24). People involved in false religions have an unholy, lying religious spirit but they do not have the Spirit of God. The evil religious spirit hates the Holy Spirit so these ungodly people persecute true Christians. There is no decline in people seeking a false 'spiritual' experience but instead of turning to God, they are turning away from God to false religions like Islam, Eastern religions, New Age, Scientology, Buddhism, Zen, Sikhism, Mormonism, Voodoo, so-called 'Christian' sects and cults, the occult, Hinduism and many other soul-destroying beliefs. Worshipping false gods can never save a soul. Only people who are walking closely with the God of Israel at the time of their death will go to heaven, and then only if they have chosen the only Way, Truth and Life through our Jewish Messiah Jesus (John 14:6).

The people who are involved in these false religions are in fact seeking God our Saviour, but they are looking in the wrong direction because they are deceived by the anti-Christian spirit. If they genuinely seek God, they will find Him but if they seek 'spirituality' they will find only false beliefs. 'Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess Jesus came in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the Antichrist' (2 John 1:7). Where can people who are involved in a false religion go? Anybody involved in any false religion needs to seek God the Creator through the Holy Judeo/Christian Bible, find a genuine (not false) Christian church and establish a personal relationship with God by accepting Jesus as your own personal Saviour. Repent and call on God for help by praying and asking for His help, which you can do at home. God wants to establish a personal relationship with every person on earth. That is why He sent Jesus, born as a human Man but truly the Son of God (Philippians 2:8; 1 John 5:1). We all need to realise how much we need God in our lives. Without Him our lives are lost and empty. Modern Christianity needs to bring back into society the knowledge of creation (shunning evolution) and teaching how God is a God of love but He is also God of Judgement. There is life after this earthly life and people who shun God cannot be saved.

The USA began teaching evolution in schools back in 1925. By 1950 evolution was being taught everywhere and even some so-called Christian schools teach it as an option. Today, most schools teach evolution without any thought of creation and it is assumed to be a scientific fact which it is not. Evolution is a terrible lie that has led millions to turn away from God and thus be lost for eternity. Darwin did all he could to erase the concept of our Creator. Churches and church based schools need to speak out loudly and frequently against evolution because the lives and souls of their children depend on it. If you are a Christian and teach evolution in any way, you are teaching a lie and you will be held accountable to God on Judgement Day for leading the little ones away from God. This is what Jesus warned, "Whoever causes one of these little ones (children) who believe in Me to stumble (fall away from God), it would be better for him for a huge millstone

to be hung around his neck and he should be sunk in the depths of the sea" (Matthew 18:6). Teaching our children about God is an edict from Him. God told parents to teach their children themselves not send the young ones off to 'Children's church' to be taught by others. Study and teaching of the Bible is the job of parents. One of the reasons Christianity is under so much attack is the lack of Christian values being taught in the home by parents. God commanded all parents to teach their children about God and one reason God chose Abraham was for that reason (Genesis 18:19). Several times in the Bible, God told parents they must teach their children and grandchildren about the ways of the Lord (Deuteronomy 4:9 & 10; 6:7; 11:19; Psalm 78:5 & 6). How can children learn good behaviour and respect if their parents fail to instruct them? It is the duty of all parents to teach their children about the Lord and be an example to them in Godly living. Any parent who does not teach their children the ways of God are failing their children. 'People were bringing their little children to Jesus so He should lay hands on them but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw it He was indignant. "Allow the little children to come to Me! Do not forbid them." ... He took the children in His arms and blessed them, laying His hands on them' (Mark 10:13 to 16). When we trust in the Lord He will personally lead the parents with young children. 'God will feed His flock like a Shepherd. He will gather the lambs in His arms and carry them in His heart. He will gently lead those with young' (Isaiah 40:11).

Science itself has woken up to the fact an 'Intelligent Designer' would have by necessity initiated creation because of itself, evolution cannot produce any form of life. Eventually, common sense will prevail and people will realise, without God there is no life. God in His wisdom has given us His Word to teach us from generation to generation about the things of God. Many people believe humanity is basically good because since the end of the Second World War, the Western World has seen a comfortable, secure, prosperous and mostly friendly time. At no time in history has the earth been so prosperous and wealthy. Europe is mostly open to anyone. The peace and freedom from war has given humanity a feeling of comfort so millions feel they do not need God. Christians erroneously believe God wants them to have everything good. Those attitudes are wrong. The Bible is filled with warnings about what happens to people who are filled with greed and carnality, who follow their own path versus what happens if they follow God Who created them.

We as Disciples need to have a meaningful discussion about our faith-based belief in God. We need to teach people about the fallen state of our lives and the only hope we have is salvation through the blood and cross where Jesus died, the miracle of His resurrection and His place in heaven at the right hand of the Father. That is reality. That is the Truth. Christians need to teach the world a powerful message, creation is the truth, evolution is a lie. There is too much compromise in the Christian world. During the time when most people were Christians, God did many miracles of healing sick people, deliverance from evil spirits and healing of emotions. Children were raised in the Lord. Most people had happy stable marriages resulting in stable young people who grew up into stable adults. Godlessness is the reason there is so much violence and mental illness today resulting in marriage breakdown, children being neglected spiritually, physically and emotionally or torn between warring parents. Christian parents need to shun divorce and work on your marriage instead of walking out because that will always hurt your children. Divorce is solely due to the hardness of people's hearts and the sin of unforgiveness (Matthew 19:8).

Understanding, talking, teaching and living a life based on the Bible are some of the most powerful tools God has given us. Taking a strong stand against sin, living without compromise, taking a stand against the decline of committed Christianity and unity in the faith (Ephesians 4:13) will be a good witness to the unsaved. A Christian who compromises is a very bad witness and can cause a weaker Christian to stumble. Our mandate on earth is to lead unsaved people to Jesus. To do that, we have to be above reproach (1 Timothy 3:2). When people compromise, their hearts are not with God as He commands. They may honour God with their lips but they do not honour Him with their hearts or their lives (Mark 7:6). Many people attending church are influenced negatively by the world and ignore or disobey the call of God to do His will and the work God He has for them. Many put their family before serving God. Jesus made it very clear, Christians are not allowed to put anything before the Lord or they will be found unworthy (Matthew 10:37). This statement does not only mean family. Some Christians idolise material things like money, make up, their pets, worldly collections (stamps, coins, dolls), clothing, smart phones, social media or equivalent, or anything else they have in abundance they do not really need. Hoarding is sin and foolishness (Luke 12:20 & 21). When people feel the need to answer their phones in church, that phone is their idol. If people stay away from church because of their dog, or if they bring their dog to church, or if they regard their dog as a child, their dog is their idol. It is an animal not a 'child'. What is worse, dogs are Scripturally unclean animals so bringing your dog into church is defiling the holy sanctuary. When people wear thick make up their face has become their idol and the same applies to wearing only the most expensive clothing, when your outfit becomes more important than God or more important than the poor and needy (1 Peter 3:3 & 4). Money often becomes an idol when people love their money more than they love God (Luke 16:14; 1 Timothy 6:10; Hebrews 13:5). These modern idols reduce the richness of their relationship with God and they love their 'things' more than they love God. 'Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world the Father's love is not in them. Everything that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and

the pride of life, is not the Father's but is the world's' (1 John 2:15 & 16). No one can serve two masters so people must choose – God or their worldly idol (Luke 16:13). These types of Christians are like the Pharisees who persecuted and scoffed at Jesus (Luke 16:14).

A true Disciple will love and support Israel and the Jewish people as much as they can because we know Israel and the church are going to be restored together before the Lord returns. Our salvation came from the Jews (John 4:22). Jesus was a Jewish Man, raised in Israel under the Laws of Moses and died in Jerusalem before being raised from the dead and appearing to thousands of people. If any Christian refuses to support Israel they are refusing to support the work of Jesus. When we do good things for any Jewish person, we are doing it for Jesus. If anyone minimises, persecutes or ignores Israel, they are doing it to Jesus too and He will judge them accordingly (Matthew 25:40, 45 & 46). When anyone persecutes a Jewish person God will one day punish the persecutor. Jesus said His people would be persecuted, both Jews and Gentiles. He also said we will be blessed in eternity when we endure persecution. 'Blessed are those who have been persecuted for righteousness' sake for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven' (Matthew 5:10).

When genuine Disciples stand up for righteousness and are vilified or persecuted by ungodly unbelievers or by 'darnel' Christians under the influence of evil, God will punish those carnal Christians. God knows their mind, attitude, pride and their actions. He considers them to be wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked, and unless they repent, they will be spat out from the mouth of God Himself. He wants people to accept Him in His fullness, endure suffering (refined by fire), clothe themselves with righteous actions and living (white garments), and open their eyes to see God for Who He is – our Lord, Saviour, Creator and our Sovereign Lord, and repent from their indifference to Him. God said, "I know your works. You are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were cold or hot but because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I will vomit you out of My mouth. You say, 'I am rich and have need of nothing,' but you do not know you are the wretched one, miserable, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so you may become rich, and white garments so you may clothe yourself and so the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed and eye salve to anoint your eyes so you may see. As many as I love I reprove and chasten. Be zealous therefore and repent' (Revelation 3:15 to 19).

Amen and God bless you.

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