



Non-Believers' Reaction to Christ

¹Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. ²Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. ³For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; ⁴for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. (Romans 13:1-4)

¹²“But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name’s sake. ¹³It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony... ¹⁶“But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death, ¹⁷and you will be hated by all because of My name. ¹⁸Yet not a hair of your head will perish. ¹⁹By your endurance you will gain your lives. (Luke 21:12-13, 16-19)

This is going to be the closest thing to an election year political discussion offered at Walk with the Word, and no, there will be no endorsement of either a political party or presidential candidate nor an appeal to return America to some perceived perfect time when everyone was Christian who never missed Sunday School or a prayer meeting. As can be seen in the contrasting passages of Scripture above, there is mandated Christian behavior where governments and politics are concerned when living in “normal” times as provided by Paul in Romans, and quite a difference provided by Jesus Himself as the end of the present age draws to a close and it all comes upon us as stronger and ever-increasingly more frequent birth pangs inevitably initiating the Last Days. Or as that *really* old time Preacher phrased it:

*⁶A time to search and a time to give up as lost;
A time to keep and a time to throw away. (Ecclesiastes 3:6)*

But it very important not to by-pass each and every detail Jesus gives about this time, in particular that what is to be perpetrated on believers in the Last Days is not limited to government institutions represented here as “*prisons...kings and governors*”. (Lk. 21:12) The first antagonists on the list are religious institutions represented by “*synagogues*”, and further into the discourse gets a whole lot more personal when it devolves to “*parents and brothers and relatives and friends*”. (Lk. 21:16)

It is concerning when so many Christians presently fail to understand the times that they live in and cling to the notion that they can reverse the present circumstances by entering the political process and effecting a change back to “the way it was” or even “the way it should be”. I believe we have to be realistic about what is taking place, recognizing that the End Times is at least incipiently underway, and most visible in both the apostasy within the present Church and the inevitable persecution we can already glimpse eclipsing the horizon. And one of the scriptural models which we can draw from which tells us what to expect and how this is coming about, interestingly enough, is Jesus’ arrest and subsequent treatment by a series of non-believers—not just limited to secular “outsiders”, but religious “insiders” as well. What He went through and experienced at their hands is a parallel to what has inexorably begun to take place in the West and, I believe, serves to warn us of what still lies ahead at present.

It Begins From Within

¹When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples. ²Now Judas also, who was betraying Him, knew the place, for Jesus had often met there with His disciples. ³Judas then, having received the Roman cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. ⁴So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and said to them, “Whom do you seek?”

⁵They answered Him, “Jesus the Nazarene.”

He said to them, “I am He.” And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them. ⁶So when He said to them, “I am He,” they drew back and fell to the ground. (John 18:1–6)

Notice that when this founding member of the original Twelve Apostles comes in betrayal of his own, he acts after he “*received the Roman cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees*”. (Jn. 18:3) The very institutions which were supposed to be the most receptive of the Messiah had spent a lot of time leading up to this event not just

compromising with the non-believing secular world, but joining together with it. The non-believers “outside” the Church join together with the non-believers “inside” the Church because, in the end, they have a common agenda in their opposition to Christ and His followers.

We cannot just dismiss the fact that Judas is the closest scriptural type, or teaching, of the Antichrist. Judas and the Antichrist are both called by the same name, “*the son of perdition*”, (Jn. 17:12; 2 Th. 2:3) and are the only two figures in all of history who are not merely *demonically* possessed, but exclusively possessed by Satan personally. This plainly portrays what will ultimately take place in the Second Coming when the Antichrist, having consolidated everything both politically and religiously under him alone personally, comes against Christ. It is no coincidence this all takes place at night, the biblical metaphor for when things are at their spiritual darkest. The Apostle John tells us that one of the chief characteristics of every antichrist figure is that...

¹⁹They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us. (1 John 2:19)

At this present hour, we are witnessing these relationships and affiliations coming together. It is no longer just the Catholic Church attempting an ecumenical union with anyone and everyone; it is difficult to find *any* denomination not actively engaged on some level or some issue which has placed them on this path. And look at how many of these efforts no longer remain within the walls of a single denomination or movement, but now actively enlist secular and governmental assistance to see their plans through. The compromise with the world leading to ultimately not just rejecting but openly opposing Christ has already begun within the religious realm, much less the obvious movements in this direction of the political.

An important feature of Judas and his accompanying opposition is that “*they drew back and fell to the ground*”. (Jn. 18:6) Whereas every legitimate case of someone coming to worship Christ is documented in the Gospels as falling *forward* at the feet of Christ, (Mt. 28:9; Mk. 7:25; Lk. 5:8; 8:35; 10:39; 17:15-16) it is only those who are in outright opposition to Him who are *repulsed*. The elements now rising from within and without the Church and prophetically dictated to come against us are not going to be “mistaken” or “backslidden” or merely possessing a difference of opinion; they will have fully crossed

over to become repulsed by the notion of Christ. This is why they do not merely “follow” the Antichrist, but “worship” him. (Rev. 13:8, 12, 15; 14:11)

They Want the Message Silenced

¹⁹The high priest then questioned Jesus about His disciples, and about His teaching. ²⁰Jesus answered him, “I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret. ²¹Why do you question Me? Question those who have heard what I spoke to them; they know what I said.”

²²When He had said this, one of the officers standing nearby struck Jesus, saying, “Is that the way You answer the high priest?”

²³Jesus answered him, “If I have spoken wrongly, testify of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?” ²⁴So Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. (John 18:19–24)

If you cannot see that Christians are already being smacked in the mouth with court-sanctioned curbs on their free speech, by designating certain views and even particular portions of the Bible as “hate speech”, and seeking removal of anything remotely Christian from every public venue possible, “Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain”. (Rev. 3:2)

They brought Jesus into their legal environment not to find out what He said—they already knew that. Just a cursory look through the Gospels shows these figures present at nearly every miracle and teaching as firsthand witnesses. Their true agenda was to get Him to become a participant in *their* process according to *their* standards so they could manipulate it according to *their* own legalese. This is why Jesus warns us in advance not to participate on their level, but to see it for what it is and act according to His instructions:

¹³“It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony. ¹⁴So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; ¹⁵for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute. (Luke 21:13–15)

In this example of striking Christ to silence Him, non-believers show they are incapable of passively ignoring the Word of Christ. As they have become His enemy, they feel compelled to silence the message. Only someone recently coming out of a years’ long coma is not aware of the many efforts, both without and within the Church itself, to not just silence the Word, but to remove those who would still practice and preach it.

They Want the Messenger Silenced

²⁸Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover. ²⁹Therefore Pilate went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this Man?"

³⁰They answered and said to him, "If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him to you."

³¹So Pilate said to them, "Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law."

The Jews said to him, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death," ³²to fulfill the word of Jesus which He spoke, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die. (John 18:28-32)

What always and inevitably follows non-believers' failed attempt to silence the message? They bring about persecution so as to silence the messenger. In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus specifies that this will come not just through authorities personally distant to us, but also by those the most close to us to the extreme that *"they will put some of you to death"*. (Lk. 21:16) Deception, apostasy and persecution coming against the Church in the Last Days is spoken of more frequently by Christ and the writers of the New Testament than *any* other feature where believers are concerned.

Observe how they do not even *want* a trial or hearing and how they do not even want even the smallest part of the message being exposed in even an already hostile legal system. All they want is for Christ, the ultimate Messenger and Source of the message, to die. Furthermore, they do not see anyone else's opinion or judgment as germane to the process, viewing themselves as the standard by which everyone and everything else should be subject. In fact, in the character of these same religious leaders of the time, such do not have any problem violating their own standards to rid themselves of Christ.

Today, free speech is only for those who say what non-believers want to hear. Today, Christians no longer have the right to assemble, and there have even been private Bible studies and university fellowships which have been shut down while all others continue business as usual. Today, the IRS is taking away the non-profit status of Christian churches or organizations if they cross a line by taking a public stance on certain topics only determined by the IRS itself. Unfortunately, the list goes on, and we are really only at the beginning of the trickle of the inevitable deluge to come. (Pun about Noah's day intended.)

Observe the complete societal reversal on today's college campuses compared to the 60s and 70s. No longer protesting and even rioting for free speech, the right to assemble and demanding that dissenting opinion be heard, the present-day climate is to silence the perceived opposition, refuse them access and to even physically assault and remove them, and to do everything possible to ensure that only one point of view is heard. Our institutions of higher learning are no longer the incubator for pushing the envelope of the Constitution, but would instead support legislating away those rights, but of course only for the perceived opposition. There is no tolerance for even the smallest expression of dissent or alternative view.

Non-believers will remove *any* restriction in the way of achieving their goal of Christian silence.

Truth Becomes Relative

³³Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

³⁴Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?"

³⁵Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?"

³⁶Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."

³⁷Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?"

Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

³⁸Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" (John 18:33–38a)

There is near-universal agreement, both within religious and secular circles, that we have arrived at a Post-Modern age. In this paradigm, truth is no longer propositional or absolute, but considered completely relative. If they fail to completely silence the message and the messenger, they will make every effort to redefine it. Once the notion is accepted that all truth is relative, then no consensus can be reached on what Christ's Word means and it is rendered ineffective.

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We expect this from the world because, after all, they have never strayed from their non-belief. However, as the Church is shaped more and more by its alignment with the world's ways and values, likewise is adopted the notion that *all* truth—even *biblical* truth—is relative. It can easily be argued that the veracity and authority of God's Word has come under attack more from elements *inside* the Church than outright secular ones from without. Over the past 20 or so years alone, Bibles which feel no obligation to hold to the literal interpretation of the original languages and insert whatever they want wherever they want have become top sellers, two of the most egregious being *The Message* and *The Voice*. The Word itself is rendered not just propositional, but editable.

But a myriad of Post-Modern teachings and positions too numerous to even begin to list here have emerged as well from those considered to be the top Christian leaders in the world. A startling example was documented in the *Leadership Journal* in an article titled "Leader's Insight: No Cowardly Flip-Flop and attributed to Brian McLaren as taking place in 2006. This acknowledged leader of the Emergent Church Movement has become synonymous not just with Post-Modernism, but as a major proponent of "post-evangelical thought", declared because there was uncertainty as to the right Christian view on homosexuality, there should be an initial five year moratorium, and an additional five year moratorium if the Church still cannot come to an agreement, but that the impasse at that point should then be resolved by the Church rewriting the Bible, because McLaren asserts it was the Church who wrote it to begin with. The proof we have a Post-Modern church is when something Scripture is absolutely unambiguous about is declared to not just be open to interpretation, but revision according to human will. It should be no surprise then that other areas of fundamental doctrine are likewise undermined such as when he questions the penal substitution interpretation of atonement, that new converts from other religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, etc. can still remain in those religions and simply adapt Jesus to it, or his various attacks on interpreting Scripture literally. Sadly, this is but one of *dozens* of major figures within the walls of the Church whose teachings do not merely digress from the plain text of Scripture, but actually contradict them and yet are still labeled "truth".

They try to silence the message, they try to silence the messenger, but then they attempt to redefine it into something trivial and unsupportable by making *everything* trivial and unsupportable so that the Word becomes indistinguishable.

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They Embrace the Opposite

And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them, "I find no guilt in Him. ³⁹But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover; do you wish then that I release for you the King of the Jews?"

⁴⁰So they cried out again, saying, "Not this Man, but Barabbas." Now Barabbas was a robber. (John 18:38b-40)

This is where all of this ultimately leads where non-believers are concerned, in that they not only embrace something *else* in place of Christ, but they openly oppose Him. The laundry list of replacements for the one and only true Jesus by every false movement, cult, false religion and self-proclaimed spiritual authority at work today is beyond our limited scope here, but this same phenomenon replays itself in each and every instance.

It begins with the fact that non-believers, whether they self-identify as being purely secular or claim some position within the Church, are repulsed by the Person and Word of Christ and therefore want to take action against both. Their desire is not limited to just silencing the message, but the messenger. And in the process, regardless of their success in these efforts, a framework is established in which all truth is rendered relative so that, if possible, God's Word can be rendered ineffective where they are concerned. Ultimately such a deception takes hold within *them*, at least, because they ultimately institute a substitute replacement for Christ, replacing both Him personally *and* His Word with something or someone else.

I would agree that it would be irresponsible for Christians to ignore the opportunity to vote on legislation or provide input on issues that matter if such actually materialize, but such momentary openings need to be recognized within the greater, inexorable spiritual trends actually taking place. What is presently materializing is not exclusively originating from worldly, secular non-believers whom we would never expect to embrace anything Christ-centric, but are being joined against us by non-believers and the deceived and apostatized who actually claim some kind of connection to or heritage in Him. In the same character as Judas coming against Christ with the simultaneous support of *both* the world represented by the Romans and God's own represented by Scribes and Pharisees, this united opposition is coalescing at present, laying the groundwork for the removal of the authentically saved not just from within society in general, but from all religious institutions as well.

³²“Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; ³³so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door. ³⁴Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. ³⁵Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. (Matthew 24:32–35)

In Him,

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