

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

“... Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

Established 1953

March 2006

Vol. 40 / No. 3

CAN THE WORLD HATE YOU?

by Lee Moses

“*The world cannot hate you*” (John 7:7).

These were the words of rebuke spoken by Jesus Christ to His unbelieving brothers. It is difficult to conceive that Jesus’ own flesh and blood, brought up under the same roof as He, did not believe He was the Messiah (verse 5). Yet the Lord’s manner of rebuking them is similarly remarkable. One has to wonder exactly how much offense was taken at this simple statement. Consider how insulted the most popular girl in school would be if she were told, “There is nobody who does not like you.”

Yet the context indicates that this was indeed a rebuke, given by the Lord to address error in the lives of His brothers. As such, any living today whom the world cannot hate likewise stands in need of correction.

Should One Desire the World’s Hatred?

It is perfectly natural for each human being to desire the friendship and approval of other human beings. As our Creator said Himself, “*It is not good that the man should be alone*” (Genesis 2:18). As such, it would be very **unnatural**, against the goodness of God’s creation (1:31), for a human being to **desire** to be hated by other human beings.

The Lord commands His

people to be a positive influence upon the world (Matthew 5:13-16). Paul stated that one of the reasons the Thessalonians were to keep his commandments was in order “*that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without*” (1 Thessalonians 4:12). Prerequisite to one’s becoming an elder in the Lord’s church is that “*he must have a good report of them which are without*” (1 Timothy 3:7). While one can positively influence another who dislikes or even hates him, the effectiveness of that influence will be greatly lessened. People are more generally motivated to emulate and enjoy the company of those whom they love than those whom they hate. In this sense, being hated by the world even hinders one from serving the Lord’s purpose—to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). Such things should cause one to avoid being hated by the world—when possible (compare with Romans 12:18).

God Himself never **desired** the enmity of the world—if He did, would He express disappointment and disgust at the world’s sin? (Genesis 3:13ff; Isaiah 1:4; Matthew 7:23). Would He have had a desire for reconciliation? (Isaiah 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:4). Would He have given His own Son to obtain a reconciliation that most would reject? (John 3:16;

Acts 13:46; Romans 5:8). When Jesus spoke of being hated by the world, He was not speaking of a **desire** that one must have, but of a **capacity** that must exist.

Whom Does the World Hate?

The world could not hate Jesus’ brothers—“*But me it hateth*” were the words the Lord immediately added (John 7:7). Why would the world hate Jesus, the compassionate Son of God, the Savior of all humanity, and the fulfillment of the great promise of God to bruise the head of Satan? Jesus knew the answer: “*Because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.*”

People generally do not enjoy being told or shown that they are wrong, even when it is for their benefit. Yet this is what Jesus did. Jesus was the light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5);

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God (John 3:19-21).

Seeing that “*the whole world lieth in wickedness*” (1 John

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

USPS Publication #211780

... is a Periodical publication issued monthly by the Church of Christ at Third and Bethel (P.O. Box 251), Mammoth Spring, AR 72554-0251. **POSTMASTER: Please mail all changes of address to the above address.**

FCGN is mailed free of charge to any who care to receive it. We will be happy to add any names to the regular mailing list. If you send in a name we must have a complete address, including number and street name, or R.R. or HCR number, plus box number, or a P.O. Box number and the **NINE DIGIT ZIP CODE**. This paper is supported by voluntary contributions for which we are grateful. Financial information will be furnished upon request. **Mail all address corrections or manuscripts to:**

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

P.O. Box 251

Mammoth Spring, AR 72554

Lee Moses EDITOR
Phone (870) 625-3217
E-Mail cocfcgn@centurytel.net
Website ... www.fultoncountygospelnews.org
Hosted by TheBible.net

continued from page 1

5:19), “the whole world” was rebuked by Jesus. Jesus did this through preaching the truth. And as Christians are to be “the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14; compare with Ephesians 5:8; Philippians 2:15-16), they are to preach the truth and rebuke sin: “*But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light*” (Ephesians 5:13).

The world hated Jesus for preaching the truth and thus rebuking their sin. Certainly the world climate has changed since the first century, but is it that much more favorable to true Christianity? We live in an age in which peace has been struck between atheists, Jews, and professed “Christians”; a peace based upon the premise, “We can agree to disagree, just don’t tell me I’m wrong.” But because sin is ever present, Christians are

compelled to bear with unrelenting zeal the sword that Jesus sends into the earth (Matthew 10:34). Christians are compelled to be distinct from a world of sin, yet, “*If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you*” (John 15:19). Do you strive to please your Lord in your conduct? Do you stand up for truth? Do you oppose wrong? If so, “*Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you*” (1 John 3:13).

Where Do Your Affections Lie?

Since the world hates those who reprove the world’s evil works, all must make a choice: Do we desire the world’s affection or God’s favor? One cannot seek both: “*Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will (‘desires to. . .planning accordingly’) be a friend of the world is the enemy of God*” (James 4:4). Not only can one not seek both, one cannot **have** both. As Paul said, “*If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ*” (Galatians 1:10). Whether we desire the world’s affection or God’s favor hinges upon where our own affections lie.

There is no doubt as to where Jesus’ affections lay. While He had compassion on the multitudes of lost humanity and always sought their good (Matthew 9:36), His loyalty was to the Father and to the truth (John 8:28-29). The Pharisees and Herodians were trying to deceive Christ through flattery, but certainly spoke truth when they said, “*Neither carest thou for any man: for thou*

regardest not the person of men” (Matthew 22:16).

Yet in the religious world, and even in the Lord’s church, there is an increasing regard for the persons of men over the will of God. Churches’ efforts are directed toward erecting large gymnasiums and providing social functions to attract people, rather than toward pricking sin-laden hearts with the truth. Churches poll their neighborhoods as to what they would like in a church, and give them what they want, regardless of whether it is according to truth. Contrast this approach with that of our Lord, Who apparently never read Rick Warren’s *Purpose-Driven Church* or other such drivel intended to bend the church of the Lord to the will of the world.

If our affections lie with the Lord, pleasing men cannot be our primary goal. As Jesus told the highly-esteemed Pharisees, “*Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God*” (Luke 16:15). If we are seeking to please men, it will compromise our purity and truthfulness (1 Thessalonians 2:3-6). As Jesus warned, “*Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets*” (Luke 6:26).

Are we “*strangers and pilgrims*” in the world? (Hebrews 11:13; 1 Peter 2:11). Those who are not at home in the true church will be at home in the world. But those who are not at home in the world will be at home in the true church—and in heaven. Do we savor the things of God or of men? (Matthew 16:23). That is, do we insist upon the hard truth, or do

we rather choose the easy way, avoiding persecution and the reproach of men? (compare with 4:8-9). To His apostles Jesus gave this warning and assurance which should resound for us today: *“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved”* (10:22).

Conclusion

Jesus gave His brothers a memorable rebuke when He told them, *“The world cannot hate you.”* However, this was directly related to His brothers’ lack of faith in Him. After His resurrection, at least some of them believed in Him (Acts 1:14; James 1:1; Jude 1). Was the world later able to hate Jesus’ brothers? Read the book of Jude! Its firm stand against sin and false doctrine could never be palatable to the world. And according to Josephus, Jesus’ brother James was stoned to death. The world could not hate them when they lacked faith, but that certainly changed once they gained faith. If the world cannot hate you, it could be related to your lack of faith.

The hatred of the world is not a goal for which one should ever seek. Neither God the Father nor Jesus ever desired to be hated by the world, but by reproofing its sin, the world’s hatred was assured. But if your affections lie with the Lord in a life of obedience to Him, the world’s hatred is nothing to fear, as the Lord’s favor is assured. As He said, *“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you”* (John 15:18).

“FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS”

by Marvin Rickett

Esther was made queen of Persia in place of Vashti. Queen Vashti had refused the command of the King Ahaseurus to put her beauty on display in front of the princes and nobles. The king replaced her with a new queen chosen from among the fair beauties of the land. Hadassah, a Jewess, cousin to Mordecai, was chosen; and her name was changed to Esther.

After Esther became queen, an evil plot was made to destroy all the Jews of Persia. Mordecai and the Jews appealed to Esther to help them. She was hesitant because of the delicate matter of going uninvited into the king’s presence. Mordecai reminded her that she, being a Jew too, would be included in the orders to destroy them. Then he said, *“Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this”* (Esther 4:14). Mordecai was saying that perhaps God’s providence had placed Esther in the position of queen to save the Jews from destruction at this time. As it turned out, God did indeed use Esther to save His people.

The providence of God means, “God provides for His people.” In times past, God sometimes used miracles to provide for His people. He provided manna for Israel in the wilderness by causing a nourishing food to fall from heaven like a frost (Exodus 16). He provided water for Israel by causing a barren rock to gush forth a spring of water (Exodus 17).

Many times, God provided for

His people in a non-miraculous way, as in the case of Esther. He provided for Jacob and his twelve sons to be spared during the seven years of famine through Joseph. Joseph was sold by his brothers to Ishmaelite traders, who sold him to Potiphar, who cast him into prison, from which he was brought forth because of interpreting dreams, because of which he was made second ruler in Egypt, prepared for the seven years’ famine, and brought his family to Egypt where there was bread. In all of these transactions, God’s providence was working. The only thing miraculous about it was Joseph’s ability to interpret dreams.

The word “providence” is often used today to indicate God’s non-miraculous working to accomplish His purposes. Providence means with and by natural law. Miracle means without and opposite natural law. Providence means God maneuvers within natural laws to work things out for the best. This is what Paul meant in Romans 8:28: *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”* God works within His natural laws to work out His purposes. Why should it seem incredible to us that God can and does use His natural laws, which He gave us in the first place, to work out His purposes in our lives?

Some folks believe that God either must work miracles or He doesn’t work at all. This is a misunderstanding of God. God has not withdrawn from the scene. He is present and active in His providence.

Some folks have the view that the only way God can answer

¹ “Boulomai,” in Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Univ. Of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 182.

prayer is by working a miracle, that if one doesn't expect a miracle it is futile to pray. But answer to prayer doesn't have to be by a miracle. It can be by providence. God can do just as much by providence as He can by miracles, and give man a lot more freedom in the process. God **does** indeed answer prayer. Paul says, *"Be careful in nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God"* (Philippians 4:5). But He does not answer prayer today by miracle.

Some folks think that God heals only by miracle; that if one is healed naturally, God had no hand in it. Therefore, each of their prayers for healing is a request for and expectation of miraculous healing. Yet, why cannot God, who established the laws of healing, manipulate them so as to bring about a recovery? To heal by natural law is no less God's work and no less amazing. God does not heal today by miracles, but he may use His natural laws to speed healing.

Miracles have ceased, because God said so: *"Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away...when that which is perfect is come"* (1 Corinthians 13:8,10). Miracles ceased when the perfect law of liberty, the New Testament, came to completeness (James 1:25). Miracles never were a permanent part of the church. They were given to bring it to a maturity (Ephesians 4:11-16). The church reached this stage of maturity with the completing of

revelation. Miracles ceased.

Sometimes, a religious group will invite others to come to their revival by saying, "Come, expecting a miracle!" They are promising what the Lord has not. If you went, what would you find? When the facts are known, these alleged "miracles" are results of psychological manipulation, natural cause, or just plain old human imagination. God is not the source of their religious fantasies. Miracles have ceased.

However, just because miracles have ceased, do not be deceived into believing that God doesn't work among us today. He does—by His Divine Providence.

P.O. Box 159
Bay, AR 72411

FEBRUARY CONTRIBUTIONS

CHURCHES

Church of Christ (Agnos, AR)50.00
Pilot Church of Christ (Mammoth Spring, AR)40.00
Crossroads Church of Christ (Gepp, AR)	100.00
Church of Christ (Camp, AR)25.00
Gospel Hill Church of Christ (Pottersville, MO)	100.00
Church of Christ (Elizabeth, AR)	25.00
Church of Christ (Viola, AR)	25.00
Oak Grove Church of Christ (Walnut Ridge, AR)	25.00
Dellhalf Church of Christ (Myrtle, MO) ...	30.00
Church of Christ (Moody, MO)	50.00
Moko Church of Christ (Sturkie, AR)	50.00
Jeff Church of Christ (Thayer, MO)	25.00
Church of Christ (Bakersfield, MO)	50.00
Church of Christ (Clarkridge, AR)	75.00
Church of Christ (Poughkeepsie, AR)	50.00
Lowell Church of Christ (Springdale, AR)	50.00
Church of Christ (Garfield, AR)	50.00

INDIVIDUALS

Gary & Ann Wilson (Hot Springs, AR) ...	35.00
Willene and Lucille (Franklin, AR)	20.00
Hazel Stokes (West Plains, MO)	10.00
Lavern Trussell (Clyde, TX)	60.00
Leffel & Dorothy Bean (Mountain Home, AR)	5.00
Louis & Effie Bell (Saint Louis, MO)	15.00
Robert Tice (Little Rock, AR)	25.00
M. C. Kirkpatrick (Tiptonville, TN)	25.00

GOD'S AUTHORIZED WORSHIP - COLOSSIANS 3:17

1. **LORD'S SUPPER** - The New Testament and early church history record that Christians met on the first day of every week (Sunday) to worship God and remember Christ (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-34; 16: 1-2).
2. **PRAYERS** - (Acts 2:42; Philippians 4:6-7; I Thessalonians 5:17-18).
3. **SINGING** - God's word authorizes only vocal music and specifically singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12). The New Testament shows no use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God by the church Christ established. Church history notes no such use for nearly 700 years after the New Testament was completed. It is an innovation of men, not of God.
4. **GIVING** - Free-willed, cheerful, generous, and every week (Acts 20:35; I Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).
5. **PREACHING OF THE WORD** - The gospel of Christ, not men's doctrines nor entertainment, saves and strengthens us (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Romans 10:17; I Corinthians 1:18-23).

CHURCH OF CHRIST
 P.O. BOX 251
 MAMMOTH SPRING, AR 72554
 ADDRESS
 SERVICE
 REQUESTED

Periodical Postage
 Paid At
 Mammoth Spring, AR
 72554-9998
 Publication #211780