



The Humbleheart Messenger

"Contending For The Christian Faith"

Fall
2009

"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39) NASB

A Good Finish To Life



"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." (2 Timothy 4:7) NASB

God has given us His Word and the Scriptures have been preserved through the ages. We are blessed by the rich examples written down so that we can learn from history how to live and die by faith. Only by the grace of God has this been accomplished, and to this day the Bible remains the greatest book of all time. It is the greatest in subject matter, influence on lives and nations, and answers mankind's greatest need, "Salvation." History, science, archeology, nature, language and all creation can be found within its pages. With God as its author and time as its test, we can be confident when turning to Scripture as our final authority.

Out of the 27 books we know as the New Testament Scriptures, the Apostle Paul penned 13. We first meet "Saul" later called "Paul" in Acts 7:58 who was present at the stoning to death of Stephen, the first Christian Martyr. Paul was a Jewish Pharisee and persecutor of Christians until he was converted by the Lord on the road to Damascus. (Acts 9) Jesus prepared Paul for what he would be doing for the rest of his life when he said, *"For I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."*

Luke is the writer of the book of Acts as well as one of the four Gospels bearing his name. Luke was a doctor and companion of Paul who most likely had several occasions for treating Paul's wounds in times of suffering. Paul described a few details of his injuries in his second letter to the Corinthians.

"...In far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches." (2 Corinthians 11:23b-28)

As a reflection of his entire ministry recorded in Scripture, Paul would not want us to focus on his scars. Instead, he would want us to concentrate on the persecution and Cross of Jesus Christ, His bodily resurrection and to be ready for His return.

In humility Paul wrote, *"For I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed."* (1 Corinthians 15:9-11)

Paul's second letter to Timothy and the Church to this day gives assurance of God's Word, warning, instruction, encouragement and a great testimony of how to live by faith in the midst of a wicked world.

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves

teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths. But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.” (2 Timothy 3:16-4:8)

Paul was executed not long after, and all his hopes were fulfilled just as he had written and preached because he was absent from the body and at home with the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:8)

The persecution of Christians still continues in many different forms worldwide. It was reported that an estimated 300 million Christians around the world suffered persecution during 2008. (CTS News R. M. Landau) The Bible tells us these numbers will increase before Jesus returns as promised. The Bible also tells us that many will fall away from the faith, and a person would need to be spiritually blind not to notice these things are already happening before our eyes.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I is the Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch, and thus “first among equals” in the Eastern Orthodox Communion. He is the spiritual leader of 300 million Orthodox Christians around the world. On the PBS Charlie Rose program November 2nd 2009 Archbishop Bartholomew I said he was honored to be called the “Green” Patriarch because of his roll in the fight against Global Warming and saving the planet. During the same interview he made the following comment concerning other world religions Islam, Judaism, etc... “We are all God’s children and worship the same God though different names like Allah, Yahweh, etc...”

We can also read about Pope Benedict XVI dubbed as “The Green Pope” - who has embraced environmentalism. He’s using church teachings to urge the world’s 1.1 Billion Roman Catholics to take care of the earth. He is also well known for his ecumenical “Inter Faith” gatherings of world religions.

Most of the world’s leading statisticians calculate about one third (33%) of the world’s population as being Christians. Within that category estimated at 2.1 Billion worldwide, not only are the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican and independent churches listed, but also included are the non-Christian Cults.

The Mormons (LDS), Jehovah’s Witnesses, Ellen White SDA, Baha’i, Unitarians, Unification Church, Christian Science, Unity, Spiritualist Church and hundreds of other sects – all could easily total 100 million combined worldwide. These are cults because they deny essential historical and Biblical doctrines of the Christian faith, especially the Deity of Jesus Christ.

It puts things in a sobering and serious perspective doesn’t it? John 1:12 says, “*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.*” According to Scripture, without receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of your life you are not a child of God. Allah is not the God of the Bible! Is Jesus Allah? Just ask a Muslim that question and you shall be corrected!

In my first years of ministry I remember hearing about a movement that included former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and the idea of what was being called the “Green Army.” This global task would be focused on saving the planet earth and if necessary by military force to control greenhouse gases, cutting down trees or other things they deemed necessary. Conspiracy theorists pegged it as the early stages of a future one-world government or “New World Order.” George H. W. Bush (41) was counseled not to keep using the phrase. I considered the rhetoric rather extreme and far-fetched. I also remember a man righting a book on the subject of saving the planet and following examples of cultures who worship “Mother Earth.” His name was Al Gore. I couldn’t believe it when he was elected vice president of our nation. The real name of the “Green” organization that still exists today is called, “Green Cross International (GCI)” founded by Mikhail Gorbachev. It’s an environmental program of the UN. I’m not a conspiracy theorists nor a prophet. I’m not even sure exactly what all these things add up to. We have an expression in my neck of the woods when trying to sniff out a trail of information, “I smell a skunk!” That means the search is over.

This I do know for sure, I can’t turn on my TV, radio, read a magazine or newspaper, go shopping or even open my utility bills without being told to “GO GREEN!” Meanwhile the small amount of green stuff I have in my wallet temporarily is losing its value every day. We are told there are no jobs in our communities. However, soon there will be “green” jobs available. On top of all these things I’m being told my evolutionary cousins, the apes, are suffering because we did not go green a long time ago. Yet, the worst of all this bad news is that millions of Christians are buying the lies. We are falling for the trappings of a world void of Jesus Christ.

Listen to the Apostle Paul in the midst of this wicked world. Fight the good fight by defending sound Biblical doctrine without compromise. Stay the course and don’t give up until you cross the finish line. Stay in the Word of God and do not be afraid. They Lord is with you always. Share the truth with others. Let hope abound in you for the day when the Lord will say to you, “well done! You kept the faith!”

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