

# WHY CHRIST IS OPPOSED

By

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It is only recently that western nations (once Christian) began enacting “hate laws” which, if taken to the extreme, can be directed at anyone who quotes Jesus. But it was Jesus Himself who warned His disciples against the world’s hatred. “Marvel not,” He said, “if the world hates you.”

Jesus strictly warned His disciples that they must be prepared to suffer persecution from the authorities, from religious leaders and from the people. “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you” (John 15:18). In fact, the Biblical record from Christ’s birth down to the apostle John’s vision of things to come is an account of how Christ was bitterly hated and viciously attacked, how His truth is opposed, and how His apostles and disciples are to be despised by the world.

One would think that all people would welcome with joy and gratitude the only perfect and absolutely good man that ever lived, Who “went about doing good,” Who delivered people from sickness, fear, superstition and death, Who gave the best advice the world ever received and Who unselfishly died to reconcile man to God and make immortality possible. Surely no one could oppose such a person and His followers, unless it would be Satan himself.

But such was not to be. The Gospels reveal how the Jews repeatedly sought to kill Him, how He was despised and rejected, had no place to call home, was blasphemed and reviled, and finally tortured to death on the cross. As He predicted, His disciples have suffered persecution and martyrdom for almost 2,000 years, and now, as we near the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, **Christians face the greatest, best organized and most widely supported opposition ever known.**

A century ago, even before abortion, homosexuality, and pornography were acceptable in our land, Professor Henry B. Smith, in his work on apologetics, wrote, “The main characteristic of the attack upon, and defense of, Christianity is that it is all along the line. Forces that have been gathering for centuries are concentrating simultaneously. Forces of science and philosophy hitherto at war have made peace with each other that they may attack the common foe, vis., Christianity.” His words turned out to be prophetic.

Such animosity against Christ is sometimes blamed on the fact that there are so many hypocrites who profess Christ or that there is a great deal of confusion and false teaching in the name of Christianity. But the opposition is not against the hypocrites and the false façade of Christianity but against Christ Himself, against the sincere and faithful Christians, against the Bible and against the truth.

Among many reasons for this opposition, I will name four.

**1. Christ and His disciples renounce the world.** “If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you” (John 15:19). By “world” is meant the human order of things, the system that operates by man’s laws rather than Christ’s commandments.

To see how the way of Christ sets one at variance with the way of the world, just read the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5–7). The world has no respect for the person who is meek, poor in spirit, pure in heart, and who hungers for God’s truth and righteousness, as expressed in the Beatitudes. Going on from there, Jesus makes one’s fellowship with God depend not upon the outward rules of religion but upon the very desires and intents of the heart. Lust is forbidden. What does this say of the world’s literature, art, movies, and television shows? Jesus renounces the world’s system of economics by condemning greed and anxiety over material things. Security is not to be found in government, but one is to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33). If this was heeded by a majority of citizens, the whole system of greed and corruption, from Wall Street to Washington, would collapse.

**2. Christ and His way demand repentance.** This was the first command Jesus made: “repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:17). Repentance means a complete change, a turning from the world and its ways to God and His purpose. Such a change is more than just quitting some bad habits and staying out of jail. It means a change in one’s mind-set, from a humanistic world-view to a Godly world-view, in which everything in one’s life is measured by the Creator’s revealed will and purpose.

Repentance requires self-denial. “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matt. 16:24).

Such self-denial strikes at the heart of man’s pride. All men, from the least to the greatest, like to feel that they are sufficient in themselves, that while they have imperfections, they certainly do not need any such radical change as Jesus demands.

In order to make their message more acceptable, many evangelists have abandoned the command to repent and instead instruct sinners to merely invite Jesus into their hearts and pray. “I’m okay, you’re okay” is the modern message. Leaders of many denominations are trying to get their churches to sanction the practice of homosexuality, rather than have those people repent of their sin which God calls abominable.

The voice of pride in opposition to the repentance Christ demands was clearly stated over 60 years ago by Clemenceau: “At last we are drawing near the day when the God, who so long has been the absolute master of prostrate man, will crumble before the cross-examination of erect man and will leave behind only the ephemeral of a name without substance.” (*The Evening of My Thought*, 1929, quoted from *Therefore Stand* by Wilbur Smith.)

**3. Christ calls all to accountability and judgment.** He refuted the prevailing doctrine of Plato, that all are immortal and never actually die. According to Jesus, eternal life is only for those who follow Him; all others are to perish (John 3:16). He announced a day of resurrection in which all will come forth: “they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment” (John 5:29).

An ancient King of Israel once said, “There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord; but I hate him, for he does not prophesy good concerning me but evil” (I Kings 22:8). Many who hate Christianity, if they were honest, would admit that it is because it does not predict good for them but judgment, because it does not condone what they think or do but rather condemns it, because it sets a standard of morality and ethics which is diametrically opposed to their desires and

wills. They hate Christianity because it calls them to accountability for their evil thoughts and ways.

Jesus said, “And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil. For everyone that does evil hates the light and comes not to the light, lest his works should be reproved” (John 3:19, 20). Note how the Gay sodomites despise Christians who quote the scripture which condemns their perversion.

**4. Christ claims to be the exclusive Savior of mankind.** “No one comes to the Father but by me” (John 14:6b). This plainly brands all religion of the world as false and futile.

In the first century the Romans didn’t care what kind of religion you had or how many gods you worshipped as long as you also worshipped the state and acknowledged Caesar as a god. When Christians rejected the other gods and reused to bow to Caesar, they became enemies of the state and received no sympathy when thrown to the gladiators and lions because their faith in Christ alone was seen as bigotry, as it is in modern American society.

In the face of this opposition, we need to consider Paul’s words to the Philippians: “Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; in no way alarmed by your opponents — which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that, too, from God” (Phil. 1:27, 28).

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