

31. Why do unbelievers hate God?

March 9, 2014

At Grant Park in Chicago, the night of November 5th, 2008, there was an enormous mob of people. They were celebrating the election of Barack Obama as the next president of the United States of America. They were chanting his name and their slogans "Hope and Change". Even many born-again Christian believers in the United States voted for him against the biblical principles and against the Word of God. They'd rather believe in the empty promises of Obama because they allowed themselves to be spellbound by his slick silver-tongue.

Contrary to what many Christians hoped for, the Lord allowed Obama to be the president of America for the next 8 years to destroy this country because she turned her back against the Lord and chose the gods of money and sex over Him.

Though the people all over the U.S. knew very little about this man's background, multitudes of people voted for him. This mob was completely ignorant about his character, nor did they care about his intention for America. As soon as he took the White House, he became the most hostile president against Christianity in America.

I like what Benjamin Franklin said that a mob was "a monster with enough heads, but no brains." How sad it is when people permit themselves to be led by a few selfish leaders who know the art of manipulation!

It was at this point of the first century that Satan attacked Christianity again, not as the deceiver, but as the destroyer and the murderer. He used a handful of greedy selfish people to instigate a mob protest against Paul and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This was Satan's best effort while Paul was in Ephesus. Let's learn how the enemy attacks the people of God so that we may be aware of his tactics in our lives.

A. COMPLETING A SUCCESSFUL TASK

Acts 19:21-22 When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." 22 So he sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, Paul determined his itinerary. He didn't know when he would go to Rome, but he knew that he would. It just didn't come true in the way he was hoping. He went to Rome in all expenses paid by courtesy of the Roman Empire as a prisoner.

Sometimes the Lord gives us the heart desire to do something for His glory, but He may not want us to jump on it right away. While we wait for His time, we learn patience, endurance, and wisdom from Him.

Isaiah 40:31 But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

B. THE TRUE REASONS FOR OPPOSITION

Acts 19:23-27 And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way. 24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen. 25 He called them

together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: "Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. 26 Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands. 27 So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship."

Ephesus, with its 300,000 inhabitants, was the capital city of the Roman province of Asia and its most important commercial center. Thanks to a large harbor, Ephesus grew wealthy on trade; and, thanks to the temple of Diana, it attracted hosts of visitors who wanted to see this building that was one of the seven wonders of the world.

The temple was probably four centuries old in Paul's day. It measured 418 feet by 239 feet, and boasted of 127 marble columns that stood over 50-60 feet high. In the sacred enclosure of the temple stood the "sacred image" of Diana that was supposed to have fallen from heaven. It was probably a meteorite. Since Diana was a fertility goddess, cultic prostitution was an important part of her worship, and hundreds of "priestesses" were available in the temple.

Wherever the Gospel is preached in the power of God, it will be opposed by people who make money from superstition and sin. Paul did not arouse the opposition of the silversmiths by picketing the temple of Diana or staging anti-idolatry rallies. All he did was teach the truth daily and send out his converts to witness to the lost people in the city. As more and more people got converted, fewer and fewer customers were available for these idol makers.

I like what pastor Chuck Smith taught us, "When you walk into a dark room, you don't pick up a baseball bat to fight with darkness. You simply turn the light on and remove the darkness."

Demetrius and his silversmiths were promoting idolatry and immorality in order to make a living, while Paul was declaring the true God and pointing people to cleansing and purity through the free grace of God. The silversmiths were really more concerned about their job security and their income than they were about Diana and her temple, but they were cunning enough not to make this known.

1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

All of us had been unbelievers and against the Lord some time ago. Some of us might have been staunch atheists or flat out rejected His truth because it was inconvenient to us. Now that we are born-again believers of Jesus Christ, we sometimes forget why unbelievers even hate God.

I am going to go over three groups of people that represent the vast majority of the anti-God people:

1) Atheists

Atheists believe in 'moral relativism'. They don't want anybody dictating their moral framework. They think that they should be able to do whatever they want and they do not want 'God' whom they have to be accountable to.

The problem is that moral relativism is a self-defeating philosophy. Atheists insist that they should be able to do whatever, whenever, and however they want whether it

might harm others or not. But when harm comes to them, they say, "No, you cannot do that." All of sudden, their moral relativism becomes moral absolute. In other words, atheists' moral relativism is unlivable.

Jean-Paul Sartre, the French atheist, said at the end of his life, "I have found my philosophy unlivable." Oscar Wilde, another atheist, said, "As terrible as it was what the world did to me, nothing was as terrible as what I did to myself." And on his deathbed he called for a priest.

2) Homosexuals

Homosexuals insist that the word 'homosexual' is not in the original Greek manuscripts. So they insist that any comment against homosexual is unbiblical. That is true that the word 'homosexual' is not in the original Greek manuscripts. Because the word was not started until 19th century. But the original Greek word is "arsenokoites" which means "one who lies with a male as with a female." The same meaning.

Homosexuality was never started from God contrary to their argument. Nobody was born with homosexuality, but the human sinful nature that came from the disobedience to the Lord populated this perversion. This strong perverse desire demands homosexuals and lesbians to be obedient to their fleshly lust.

Though they are only 3% of the population, they are the squeakiest wheel you would find. They've managed to control the lame-stream media and spineless politicians so that they could promote their perversion driven lifestyle as norm to everyone. But according to the Bible, it is NOT normal, rather abnormal and abomination.

3) Abortion Advocates

The real issue with abortion advocates is not about the women's safety, rather their choice to remove the results of their ungodly lifestyle and decisions through fornications or adulteries. They do not want the inconvenience of having babies and raising them. To them, it might be an inconvenience; but to those unborn babies, it is a matter of survival. No one disputes about potential abortion due to rape and incest, because it is completely understandable.

The abortion industry is a very lucrative business. They make over 1 billion dollars a year from abortions, corporate sponsorship, taxpayers' money through federal, state, and local governments. That is the main reason why they push abortion so much.

The bottom line of the hatred toward God by unbelievers like this Demetrius, a silver-smith, is that they don't want God whose truth reveals their dark lifestyle and behaviors. That is why they reject God and try to ignore Him.

John 3:19-20 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

Does this mean that we should hate unbelievers who hate God? Absolutely not. As I mentioned that we were there before. We should lead them out to the light of God with love and truth. Some might say, "Then, why are you teaching this kind of lesson? To build hatred?" No, to warn Christians not to be sucked into satan's subtle and deceptive propaganda through liberal media.

By now some of you are thinking, "You are not making a whole lot of friends here, are you? Have you ever heard being 'politically correct'?" Yes, but I don't care to be and never will.

C. A FALSE PUBLIC ACCUSATION

Acts 19:28-41 Now when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" 29 So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions. 30 And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him. 31 Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater. 32 Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together. 33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander motioned with his hand, and wanted to make his defense to the people. 34 But when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for about two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" 35 And when the city clerk had quieted the crowd, he said: "Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Zeus? 36 Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly. 37 For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess. 38 Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a case against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. 39 But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly. 40 For we are in danger of being called in question for today's uproar, there being no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering." 41 And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

The amphitheater in Ephesus still exists and is more like a stadium. It can hold at least 25,000 people. Though they did not have microphones and speakers at that time, the warm air coming from Aegean Sea lifted people's voices all the way up to the last row of the theater.

25,000 people filled the theater and they were confused and did not even know the exact reason why they were there in the first place and chanting something they were not so sure. That is a good description of a powder keg of hostility about to explode. Mob mentality is about as stable as the stock market. It can go from love to hatred in a matter of a few seconds.

Being at peace is no problem when our circumstances are serene. But being calm when a riot is raging at our door – that requires true peace, the kind that comes only from relying wholly upon God. He is bigger than any person or mob, and no circumstance – no matter how crazy the situation might be – is out of His control.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.
Philippians 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Paul who was seeing an opportunity to talk to 25,000 people at once in this theater wanted to go in so that he could tell them about the true God, but some of city leaders wisely counseled him to stay away.

The ancient city Ephesus is gone, and so is the worldwide worship of Diana of the Ephesians. The city and the temple are gone, and the silversmiths' guild is gone. Ephesus is a place visited primarily by archeologists and tourists. Yet the Gospel of God's grace and the church of Jesus Christ are still here. The name of Paul is honored, but the name of Demetrius is forgotten.

D. APPLICATION

We must filter our convenience, entertainment, and whatever we do through the Word of God.