



THE VOICE OF EVANGELISM INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

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We are living in unprecedented times! State governors are banning the assembling of churches. In California, congregations can be no larger than one hundred in attendance, and singing is not allowed. Surely we are living in the last of the last days as we watch the hatred that protesters spew at those who pray publicly and, at times, just try to enter their houses of worship peacefully. Jesus warned His disciples that this day would come. We read in John 15:18-20, ***"If the world hate you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. If you 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. Remember the word that I said under you, The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my sayings, they will keep yours also."*** In this particular passage of Scripture, Christ is warning His disciples of the devastating persecution that will come upon the church, His body, in the time of the end. Ask yourself this question—am I prepared to be hated because of my commitment to Jesus Christ? The day may come when each of us will be forced to answer this harrowing question.

In the Greek, the word "hate" means "to have absolute disdain and utter contempt." It was referenced in this passage regarding those who follow Jesus Christ. I have no misconceptions concerning today's lukewarm church. It is in no way prepared for the coming persecution or the onslaught of hatefulness that will descend on true Christians. Today, hatred is literally seething across America like hot lava spewing and flowing down the sides of an erupting volcano. We are beginning to see it spill over in our communities in a demonic outpouring of malice toward the church.

Recently, church members in upstate New York were harassed as they simply tried to enter their church for a service. In St. Louis, a man who was praying publicly was assaulted by three men. Churches have been vandalized and burned. We read the

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news and are disheartened, but we understand that these incidents are just the beginning of the persecution that believers will experience in the United States.

In the not too distant future, America is going to witness massive fractures as never before. No true believer of Christ can deny the fact that He has warned us of what will ultimately take place as we approach His second coming. Jesus declared heaven and earth would pass away, but His Word would not pass away. Regretfully, the modern church has sought to become a friend to the world which is in absolute opposition to the Word of God. God will not be mocked. Such a secularized church will not stand. I know that sounds counterproductive to the liberal Christian mindset; however, it is factual when mirrored in the Word of God.

The oldest half-brother of Jesus Christ declared in ***James 4:4, "Ye adulterers (men) and adulteresses (women) know ye not that the friendship (or fondness) of the world is enmity (hostile) with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend (fond) of the world is the enemy (foe) of God."*** Let me elaborate on the words of the Apostle James. The modern church has prostituted its relationship with Jesus Christ—it has become utterly compromised. Any time a believer attempts to compromise to obtain something, he loses the original version of it because he did not hold fast to his convictions. He has lost his first love.

Knowing that we are initially joined together as a body of believers in Christ, don't we then become a "harlot-in-spirit" if the church ever steps out of that sphere of fidelity? Sadly, the modern church will get in bed with Hollywood, Nashville, and whatever comes its way—especially for money and worldly influence. Often, churches have worship services reminiscent of secular concerts and media productions that resemble the best from professional studios. While we should do our best to provide an atmosphere of excellence in worship, as I have declared for decades, any matter or substance is always at its greatest strength when it remains in its

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purest form. However, the more you dilute anything from its pure and natural state, the weaker it becomes.

Regretfully, the church has attempted to dilute, pollute, and water-down the Word of God. As a result, we are now witnessing unfathomable secularization in our churches. We have become the lukewarm church about which John wrote in Revelation 3. Because of our tepid state, the church does not have the fire power to counter the hatred and the spirit of malice that now threatens us. The church is about to have an encounter with the world, and this encounter is something the church is not remotely anticipating. Tragically, once this attack is unleashed upon the church, the body of Christ, most believers will stagger and perhaps even crumble—especially with the magnitude of the persecution that is coming.

In John 10:10, Jesus wrote, ***"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy..."*** This is why Satan has sought to tear down the convictions brought by the Word of God and the power of the Holy Ghost to the church, the body of Christ. As the church increasingly denounces the presence and work of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in operation in its services, we are left powerless to discern the deceit of the enemy of our souls. It seems as though many in Hollywood and Nashville are professing to become born again, yet they never seem to forsake or abandon their sinful ways. They claim to be born again, but their lifestyle never changes. This is the very reason why Satan desires the church to have an intimate and deep relationship with the world—weakening its relationship with the Lord—thereby causing the church to become ineffective. The thief is crafty, and we are seeing a rapid decline of true, Spirit-led churches in America.

When sinners, backsliders, and worldly people enter the doors of the true church of God, these individuals should absolutely sense the presence of a Holy God and are thus convicted of their sins and intently

seek repentance. Because the majority of churches have become politically correct, however, they don't want anyone to be offended. These churches don't want anyone to feel badly about themselves, so they don't tell sinners that they need to make a decision concerning repentance and heaven or hell. I know I am old school, but old-school has always worked—no matter what the next generation says. Old school demands serving a holy God, a loving but just God who is our only hope in the days ahead. There is no doubt that persecution is coming! And once this persecution begins, the separation between the true Saints of God and the mere *professors* of God will suddenly be made manifest. Then, these false *professors* of faith will turn against the true believers and attack those who are the true *possessors* of God. I hate to say this, but it must be said—in the coming days, many who you thought were godly people will be manifested for who they truly are. Because these false Christians are of the world, when the intent of their heart is truly revealed, they're going to attack you and hate you without a cause. Remember, Jesus declared the world would love its own and hate you for His sake.

Most of us expect to occasionally be misunderstood or even chided by our associates or family for "*being overboard*" concerning our commitment and devotion to Christ. Let me admonish you to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling and to stand steadfastly for the Word of God which guides you in your convictions. Some time ago, I had a minister friend who went out to eat with a faction of people from their church which happened to be from a Pentecostal denomination. This minister told me that everyone at the dinner table ordered a mixed drink. When the time came for him to order, he ordered water. When he did so, they all with one accord ridiculed and castigated him openly and declared him to be self-righteous because he would not order a mixed drink. I am warning you in the Holy Ghost today; you will be attacked and assaulted by so-called professing Christians because you will not compromise and go their way of Cain which is one of humanism and religion. The Word of God declares again and again that many will fall away from Christ in the last days and that they will turn against the true remnant of the Lord.

You would do well to remember these words the next time you are in a mixed crowd and compromise is being manifested

right in your presence. In **Matthew 7:21** we read, **"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."** Again these are mere *professors* and not genuine *possessors*. My heart is heavy today because I fear some of you who are not wholly committed to Christ may be caught up with this chaff and be burned with the unquenchable fire of our Lord for all eternity. This is not an hour for anyone to be straddling the fence and not having made their calling and election sure.

The apostle Peter declared in **2nd Peter 1:10**, **"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, you shall never fall."** Friends, we are presently living in an hour when the winds of hatred and adversity are sweeping this nation. Regretfully, many will be swept away by this tide of malice. Some of you reading this do not believe that what I am declaring is a reality. Jesus warned us saying, they will go as far as to kill some of us and declare they have done God's service. Hear the word of the Lord found here in **John 16:2**, **"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."** We witnessed one of these incidences early on in the New Testament when the religious leaders stoned Stephen and were confident that they were doing God's will. Look with me at **Acts 7:59**, **"And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."** This deceitful religious crowd believed they were doing God's will, but Stephen declared that what they had done was a sin; thus, Stephen prayed that they not be held accountable for the sin of murdering him.

Our true commitments will be made clear when they start to cost us something—possibly our own lives. What has your faith cost you? A promotion or some other career opportunities? Have you been criticized or even ostracized by coworkers or family members because you maintain your Holy Ghost convictions? Maybe you have been persecuted to the degree of someone taking legal action against you? Sooner or later, following Christ does have a cost, and those who think they can get by without paying it are very misguided. The question must be asked: if there is no cost, is there any true genuine commitment to the Lord in your

life? The truth is, serving Jesus will cost you everything! Look closely at the words of Christ found here in **Luke 9:23**, **"And he said to them all, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.'" Cross bearing must be a daily chore, and it is very difficult because it personifies death and denial. Cross bearing ultimately leads to eternal life with God and to a crown that has been reserved for everyone who lives his life to glorify Him. There is hope for those who believe and who live wholeheartedly for the Lord! We must maintain our focus on things eternal as we walk out these final days in this perverse generation. This generation is filled with covetousness, and they want everything now. Sadly, they possess no patience or willingness to live a life of self-denial. Are you walking daily with the Lord and committed wholly to his immutable word? If so, persecution will follow. Remember, true persecution involves unmerited hostility for doing good works and living our lives after Jesus Christ. Good works are founded upon Holy Ghost convictions. Thus, the righteousness of Christ that abides within us demands we always seek to do the right thing. This is where true freedom lies and, sadly, a place where many nominal Christians will never reside.**

I am grief stricken by the lack of ministries who willfully fail to preach repentance. All men must repent of their sins so that they will be right with God at His second coming or at their demise. Please join us as we pray for a true revival in the churches of America. Let us pray that a spirit of humility will prevail from coast to coast and that many will cry out in repentance and find peace for these troubled times. Though persecution abounds, we have this hope: God is sovereign. He is in control. And Jesus has overcome the world. (**John 16:33**), **"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world"**

As always, we thank you so very much for your fervent prayers in holding us up before our Lord. We are always humbled by the generous gifts of love that you display concerning The Voice of Evangelism. You are making records each and every day, and Jehovah is recording those deeds in the historical chronicles of heaven. We pray that God will richly bless you.

Serving With You All,

Pastor / Evangelist David W. Lankford