

IN DERISION DAILY

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Four years ago, Colin Kaepernick, a player on the San Francisco Forty-niners football team, did not stand, but rather sat for the playing of the national anthem before a game. He said he refused to stand for the flag of a nation that ‘oppresses black people and people of color.’ Kaepernick’s teammate, Nate Boyer, who was retired from the United States Army, advised him that kneeling would be more respectful. After that, Kaepernick kneeled when the anthem was played, but this posture, too, was controversial. After George Floyd died while in police custody, many took the streets in protest, and they knelt on one knee to demonstrate their resistance. Many of these protesters are associated with the Black Lives Matter organization. This organization was founded by three Black women who identify as Marxist, and as ‘queer,’ which means “denoting or relating to a sexual or gender identity that does not correspond to established ideas of sexuality and gender, especially heterosexual norms.” (Oxford English Dictionary) The organization state that their mission is “to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes.” They have published a creed that, although at many points vague, makes some things quite clear. Much of their program is dedicated to promoting sexual perversion and the destruction of the family. They state:

We make space for transgender brothers and sisters to participate and lead. We are self-reflexive and do the work required to dismantle cisgender privilege and uplift Black trans folk, especially Black trans women who continue to be disproportionately impacted by trans-antagonistic violence... We disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and “villages” that collectively care for one another, especially our children, to the degree that mothers, parents, and children are comfortable. We foster a queer-affirming network. When we gather, we do so with the intention of freeing ourselves from the tight grip of heteronormative thinking, or rather, the belief that all in the world are heterosexual (unless s/he or they disclose otherwise).

The Black Lives Matter organization rebel against God’s design for mankind, and they work to overthrow Christian culture. They call themselves anit-racist, but they are anti-christian. Many major corporations, like Amazon and Microsoft, have offered the movement, not only moral support, but also financial support. Sadly, many Christians, even many pastors, have thrown their lot in with this detestable movement. When one kneels on one knee in a public protest, he demonstrates his solidarity with the Black Lives Matter organization and their mission; when he refuses to kneel, the Black Lives Matter organization judges him to be a despicable bigot. To recite the motto, ‘Black Lives Matter,’ has become a test of cultural orthodoxy, and to say that all lives matter is to blaspheme. Two days ago, an interviewer twice asked Vice President Mike Pence to say, “Black lives matter,” but he would not, and the interviewer was sure to make note of his refusal. Christians who oppose Black Lives Matter, and organizations like them, should expect persecution. However, when they are persecuted, they show that they are true disciples of Jesus, who Himself was persecuted.

After God sent the Assyrian army to conquer the Northern kingdom of Israel because of their sins, He through His prophets warned the Southern Kingdom of Judah that He would send the Babylonian army to conquer them for their sins. After Jeremiah the prophet prophesied the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the temple, the people, rather than repent, plotted against the prophet. They said, “Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words.” (Jeremiah 18:18) When Pashur the priest, who was chief official of the temple of the Lord, learned of Jeremiah’s prophecies, he had him beaten, and put him in stocks by the temple gate. That night, Jeremiah, restrained by the stocks, and made a spectacle, despaired, and he complained to God of his miserable condition, and in his complaint he several times referred to the Thirty-first Psalm, a psalm of David about his own persecution. He said:

O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me. For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay. For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, say they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him. But the LORD is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten. But, O LORD of hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I opened my cause. Sing unto the LORD, praise ye the LORD: for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evildoers. (Jeremiah 20:7-13)

God called Jeremiah to prophesy to the people; to call them to repentance, and warn them of judgment if they continued in their sinful ways. Jeremiah was at first reluctant, because he did not believe that he could speak well. However, God told him that He would give him the words to say. (Jeremiah 1:4-9) So, Jeremiah answered God’s calling, trusting God to tell him what to say. Jeremiah did not, however, expect to be persecuted. He thought that he would speak for God, and that God would be with him, but he did not understand that the people he prophesied against would resent him, and maltreat him. The prophet complained that every day he was in derision; every day the people derided him, laughed at him in contempt. He cried out against the people for their violence and plunder committed by the people, but they would not listen. They rejected his message, and they scorned him. So, he determined that he would no longer prophesy, he would no longer speak of God and His will, no longer speak of coming judgement. Why, after all, should he bother when the people were so hard-hearted, so stiff-necked? Yet, he could not stop, he could not help but to speak, because the word of the Lord was in his heart like a fire burning in his bones, and he could not retain it; he wearied himself by holding it in, and had to speak out. Men slandered him, and he had reason to fear on all sides. Men scrutinized his words, and were ready to inform against him. Even they that had been his friends opposed him, and sought to entangle him in his words. They desired to trap him, so that they might condemn him, and have revenge on him because

he dared call them to repent of their sins. Jeremiah took comfort in God's faithfulness, however. When God first called Jereremiah to be His prophet, He said to him:

Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them. For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee. (Jeremiah 1:17-19)

When God called Jeremiah, He promised to be with him and to defend him, to make him an impregnable fortress. God was Jeremiah's champion, and would fight for him. He would protect him, and humble his persecutors. When Pashur the following day released Jeremiah from the stocks, Jeremiah told him that God would not call him Pashur, but rather Magormissabib, which means *terror on every side*. Pashur terrorized Jeremiah, but God would terrorize him. God would send the army of the Babylonians to conquer the southern kingdom of Judah. The Babylonians would plunder the kingdom, kill Pashur's friends, and carry him and his family into exile in Babylon, where he would die. All this would happen to Pashur because he prophesied lies to the people. In the end, God vindicated the prophet by destroying his enemies.

Of course, the people treated Jesus in the way. Jesus told the people the truth, and He did mighty works to prove His words, but many people, especially the religious leaders, did not believe in Him. In the second year of Jesus's ministry, the people brought to him a man who was mute and possessed by a demon. Jesus cast out the demon, and the deaf man spoke, and everyone marveled at what Jesus had done. The Pharisees, however, said that He cast out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons. Because Jesus exposed the sin of the religious leaders, and was a threat to their sway over the people, they rejected Him. Shortly after this episode, Jesus called to Himself His twelve disciples, and He gave to them power to cast out demons and to heal the sick. He warned them, however, that they would be persecuted. He said:

The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? (Matthew 10:24-25)

The Pharisees said that Jesus worked by the power of Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons. As Jeremiah's enemies sought to trap him in his words, so did Jesus's enemies try to trap Him. One Sabbath day, Jesus went to the synagogue of certain Pharisees, and there was in the synagogue a man with a withered hand. They asked Jesus, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days." Saint Matthew writes that they asked Him this in hope that He would justify violating that Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. (Matthew 12:9-10) On another occasion, Saint Matthew records, the Pharisees asked Jesus, "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?" Saint Matthew writes that they asked Him this so that "they might entangle him in his talk." (Matthew 22:15) On another occasion, Jesus said to His enemies, "Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God." (John 8:40) Jesus told the truth which He received from God, and for that they desired to kill Him. So it is with any unbeliever when he hears the truth, unless God open his heart.

If men spoke evil against the Lord, they would surely speak evil against His disciples. Jesus would privately teach them truths, which they should then publicly proclaim. Their enemies would plot against them, even plot to kill them. He told them not to fear men, however. That is to say, they ought to fear God, more than men, because, although men can kill the body, God is just and can destroy both body and soul by casting them into hell. However, they ought not to fear for another reason, namely, that God loves and cares for His people. He said to His disciples:

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. (Matthew 10:29-31)

Nothing can happen apart from the providence of God, and no one can take the life of one of His people unless it is His will.

Jesus said:

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 10:32, 33)

They that follow Jesus, they that proclaim the truth to unbelievers, will be persecuted, and they must prepare themselves. They must understand that, if they speak to the truth to unbelievers, some of them will oppose them, and maltreat them. Unbelievers will treat them the same way they treated Jeremiah, the same way they treated Jesus. They will try to entangle them in their words, they will slander them, and they will even kill them. If a Christian confesses Christ before men, which is to say, if he speaks the truth to unbelievers, and does not remain silent for fear of persecution, then Christ will confess Him before His Father. If, however, He denies Christ before men, which is to say, if he does not speak the truth, and remains silent for fear of persecution, then Christ will deny him before His Father.

Some people think that Jesus came so that all men might be at peace with each other, and have no conflict with each other. Jesus said, however:

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. (Matthew 10:34-36)

There will be a time in future when all men will be at peace with each other because all men will be Christians. Until that time, however, there will be continuing conflict between believer and unbeliever, such that even a man's family will be against him because he is a Christian. Jesus said:

He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after

me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. (Matthew 10:37-39)

The Christian's loyalty is to Christ above all, even above family. If a man is devoted to his family more than to Christ, then He is not worthy to be Christ's disciple. To be Christ's disciple is to follow after Him. The true disciple of Christ loves Him even more than life itself. He is prepared to die for Him, if need be. If a man seeks to preserve his life on earth, he will lose eternal life; if he gives up his life on earth for the sake of Christ, then he will have eternal life.

Racism is "prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against people of other racial or ethnic groups." (Oxford English Dictionary) Racism is a sin, a violation of the second great commandment that one ought to love his neighbor as himself. Any Christian who commits this sin must repent. Black lives matter, because all lives matter. The Christian ought to affirm this, but he ought not show solidarity with the Black Lives Matter organization. The Black Lives Matter organization is not unique, however, in opposing the Christian religion, however; there are many others. The Christian, if he would be faithful to the Lord Jesus, must speak against all these ungodly movements, and he should expect to be persecuted for doing so. When the Christian is persecuted, he is simply following in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus.

Let us never commit the sin of racism, but rather love our neighbors as ourselves. Let us remember that, as men persecuted the Lord Jesus, so they will persecute His followers. Let us always speak the truth in love, even if we are persecuted for doing so.

Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.