

The Lakeview Lamp

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” - Psalm 119:105

October 14, 2007

Silencing God’s Messengers

Frank Himmel

From almost the beginning of time, God has used messengers, both inspired and uninspired, to convey instruction, comfort, and warning to mankind. For just as long, mankind has largely rejected the message. The world’s determination not to hear God is shown, not only by its deaf ear to His word, but also by its efforts to silence His messengers. Consider the variety of ways in which that is done.

Persecution. Mistreatment of Old Testament prophets was so commonplace that Stephen asked, “Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?” (**Acts 7:52**). Jesus warned His apostles that they would be outcasts from the synagogue (**John 16:2**). By the time Paul wrote 2 Corinthians he had already been beaten five times by the Jews and three times by Gentile officials (**2 Cor. 11:24-25**).

Imprisonment. Micaiah was imprisoned for predicting Ahab’s demise (**1 Kn. 22:27-28**). Jeremiah was put in stocks (**Jer. 20:2**), a prison (**37:15**), and a cistern (38:6) to silence him. John the Baptist was locked up because of his pointed preaching about divorce (**Mk. 6:17-18**). The book of Acts relates numerous occasions on which the apostles were imprisoned for preaching Christ.

Death. The plan was to abandon Jeremiah in the cistern so he would die. John was beheaded while in prison. Stephen was stoned to death (**Acts 7:59-60**). Paul was stoned and left for dead at Lystra (**Acts 14:19**). The Jews admitted that their forefathers had a history of killing prophets (**Mt. 22:30-31**). They exhibited that same spirit by crucifying God’s greatest messenger, His own Son, Jesus Christ.

These kinds of molestation are illegal in our country. But let no one think a rebellious world is any less zealous in silencing God’s messengers today. They use other age-old tactics, among them...

Ridicule. Jeremiah was dismissed as too negative, the “bad news” prophet (**Jer. 38:4**; cf. **23:33-40**). Elisha was old “baldy” (**2 Kn. 2:23**). Jesus was a leader of rabble; the elite said of His followers, “No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him, has he? But this crowd which does not know the Law is accursed” (**John 7:48-49**). It is always easier to ridicule the truth, its spokesmen, or its followers than to answer sound arguments from Scripture.

Distortion. Paul’s opponents accused him of proclaiming practices that violated Roman law (**Acts 16:20-21**); of forbidding circumcision or other Jewish customs (**Acts 21:20-21**); of preaching a gospel that amounts to “let us do evil that good may come” (**Rom. 3:8**). These were prejudicial arguments that could quickly

inflame a crowd. Sadly, they were sufficient to blind the thoughtless. It should come as no surprise that adversaries of truth have no qualms about misrepresenting their opponents.

Character assassination. When John the Baptist did not mingle in society the critics said he was demon-possessed. When Jesus did mingle in society the same critics said of him, “Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!” (**Luke 7:33-34**). On other occasions they accused Jesus, too, of having a demon (**John 8:48**). Enemies of truth employed these fabrications to discredit God’s spokesmen publicly and thereby justify themselves. Unfortunately, many modern combatants in various arenas of controversy have also discovered the power of baseless accusations.

Legal maneuvering. The Sanhedrin, the Jewish supreme court, issued a “cease and desist” order regarding the apostles’ preaching (**Acts 4:18**). At Thessalonica, as a result of Jewish complaints, city officials required Jason, Paul’s host, to give them a pledge that Paul would leave town (**Acts 17:5-9**). Though we live in a “free speech” society, the world still finds ways to utilize this approach. Modern examples include efforts to rid religious discussion from any site connected with government and the expansion of “hate speech” legislation.

Conclusion

What does all this mean in practicality? First, do not be surprised by any of these tactics. “There is nothing new under the sun.” Second, do not be deceived by such tactics. Do not let a worldly crowd do your thinking for you. Third, and most important, remember that none of these things did change or will change the truthfulness of God’s word.

$$\begin{array}{r} 1 \text{ Lord} \\ + \quad \underline{3 \text{ nails}} \end{array}$$

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“You are the same, and Your years will have no end.” – Psalm 102:27

Family News

Most of the “regulars” we mention here are feeling better this week. For this we should thank God.

Metty Fain remains in Highland Manor Nursing Home; Room B2; 215 Highland Circle Dr; Portland, TN 37148.

Elmo Ferrell remains in room 101-A at NHC. He has not felt well.

See www.caringbridge.org/visit/nathanandsandlyn for updates on the **Fultz's** who continue to improve.

James Hunt goes Wednesday to Skyline to have a scope and biopsy on his lungs.

Laura Reed remains in room 103-B at NHC for therapy.

Robert Wray is not doing very well and could use some meals. Attend the meeting up front tonight for more details.

Out of town, traveling, or visiting: **Ken and Rhonda Hull** (Spain), **Lyda Plank** (FL).

New Reports from men we support: None known.

Note – If you have any news for the bulletin (out of town, sick, etc.), then please let me know. I will be printing it some weeks on Saturday night, so please get the news to me by then. Thanks! – Troy

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"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks" (1 Thes 5:16-18).