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THINGS ARE HEATING UP!

1 Pet. 4:12: ***Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.***

Things are heating up. When I say that, I'm not referring to today's temperature, nor to some supposed "global warming." Rather, I'm referring to the increasing animosity being displayed in our own country, as well as world-wide, mainly against two groups of people: Jews and Christians. This is not surprising inasmuch as both arouse the wrath of Satan. The Jews, descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (a.k.a. Israel) were God's old-covenant people, through whom Jesus Christ was born. Jesus said, "Salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22b). Christians (using this term in its broadest sense) seek to follow Christ and present Him to the world. The devil's greatest delight would be to remove these two reminders of our Creator from the earth.

Anti-Semitism is on the rise worldwide. Fueled by Islamic attacks upon the Israeli nation by Islamic Hamas, Muslims are reported to be expanding attacks upon Jews elsewhere as well. Some time ago I saw a video on the Internet of a street-demonstration in Miami of a Muslim mob chanting in support of Hamas, and mouthing hatred toward Jews. The Jewish photographer filming the event was repeatedly assaulted and threatened. Such is happening in many countries, including in Europe, as Islam is increasing in numbers and influence.

In Muslim and Hindu nations, Christians, as well as Jews, are being killed and suffering violence. I understand that in central India the open practice of Christianity has been outlawed. Throughout Muslim nations, including Iraq, Christians are told, "Convert, pay the tax (50%) or die." Many are becoming refugees, fleeing for their lives. For the first time in nearly 2000 years, the city of Mosul in Iraq is now totally empty of Christians. Muslims converting to Christ become worthy of death. The situation continues to grow uglier. Communist China, too, is increasingly hostile to Christianity.

While in our own once-Christian nation the situation is far less threatening than elsewhere, Judeo-Christian values, however, are being scorned, and certain Christian liberties are being questioned. Political correctness triumphs over liberty. If you're a

Muslim, you have a better chance to be appointed to a federal post than if you are a Christian—especially if you believe marriage is the sacred union of a man and a woman. Private business owners are sued for discrimination if Christian owners will not honor deviant lifestyles. Satan works incrementally, step by step, to increase hatred toward those who yield to God's way rather than to his.

As Christians, regardless of the degree of intimidation and persecution, we are to be properly armored spiritually that we may "stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). If we do not take a stand for righteousness when the threat is light, how can we be expected to stand when opposition gets fully "heated up"?

--Ron

"There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Romans 3:18).

God's Word draws a picture of what happens when we don't know God. When we create a righteousness of our own, nothing is wrong unless we want it to be wrong. There is no shame in our eyes, and no restraints on our behavior because there is no longer fear of God. This was the picture of the religious hypocrites at the time of Jesus. Unfortunately, many who fill churches on Sunday today are the same. Let's seek a revival in our own lives, and begin with fearing God and keeping His commandments.

—David Grubb

CAN YOU CHANGE EVERY CELL IN YOUR BODY?

That may sound like a silly question—because, of course, you can't. Yet that is what would be required if you, as others, should decide you are tired of being identified culturally as either male or female. How far are we going to go in defying the standards set forth in God's word, the Bible? Since the sexual revolution of the '60s, all aspects of human sexuality, as set forth in Scripture, have been ignored and attacked. Beginning with popularizing of premarital sex, we moved to acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle, then to the redefinition of marriage to include same-sex "marriage", and now even the Biblical definition of male and female is to be no longer accepted. If a man, for instance, decides he no longer wants to be regarded as a man, he is at liberty to change his name, take on the appearance of a woman, and gain access to the ladies' bathroom and school-shower. If you insist on calling him "Mr.", or by his birth-name, you may find yourself losing your job, or suffer other dire consequences. (Continue next column)

All of this is nothing less than defiance of God and His word. Jesus said, "Haven't you read that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female?" (Matthew 19:4). Those who would ignore the Creator seem to delight in spitting in His eye over and over. Too, God has not changed His mind since He decreed in Deuteronomy 22:5, "A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the Lord your God."

This movement is becoming even more vile as children are being targeted to confuse them as to their gender, as teachers will be expected to recognize “gender diversity.” The British government already has plans for “Relationships Education” in all public schools, regardless of parental objection. You can only imagine what kind of “relationships” will be promoted. In our own country, drag queens are addressing children in libraries, upholding their perverse lifestyle. It is reported that there is a growing number of even teenage girls seeking to “change their identity, thinking they will be more popular with their peers.

Scientifically, as well as Biblically, one’s sex is fixed at conception, not by one’s later choice. At the time of entrance into this world, every boy baby comes in with an XY gene, and every girl is born with an XX gene. Not surprisingly, our baby boy grew up to be a man, and our baby girl grew up to be a woman. So it is with the whole human race, and the taking of hormone treatments, undergoing surgery and donning of the opposite sex’s clothing will change nothing but to put one in a state declared to be an abomination to God. Every cell in every body is coded with either the XY gene or the XX gene, determining whether they are male or female. One’s identity is written in his/her genes. –Ron

“A TOUGH CHOICE” (Part 2) will be today’s message, with Dan. 3:8-21 as our text. What can we do when a nation’s culture runs counter to our faith?

PRAYER CONCERNS: Doris; Ruby Bradd (Clinton; cancer, but doing well after treatments; aand Wayne Polk (Shelbyville minister; health problems. Pray for our nation as we see the spread of lawlessness, COVID-19 and political turmoil.