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"?

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