

The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth...!

The above words, declared daily in Magistrates and Crown courts the length of Britain, are meant to bind people by swearing an oath on the Bible, to tell the truth. Ironically, such a request for an oath on the bible is actually in direct opposition to God's word, for Jesus expressly commanded:

"But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one." (Matthew 5:34-37)

Words echoed by James:

"But above all my brethren, do not swear either by heaven or earth or with any other oath. But let your "yes" be "yes" and your "no", be "no", lest you fall into judgment. (James 5:12)

The British justice system, whose role is to establish truth in court, opens proceedings by asking people to make an oath in opposition to God's word, yet will convict the righteous for doing the Lord's will. Recently two street preachers were convicted for committing a 'religiously aggravated public order offence', which falls under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.ⁱ Both were fined and one, a UK citizen, may well have a 'Criminal Behaviour Order' (CBO) ⁱⁱimposed upon him restricting his ability to share the gospel publicly. A CBO (replaced ASBOs' in 2014) can stay on file for life and show up in DBS checks.

Friends, the season in which Disciples of Christ are finding themselves at odds with our secular-humanist society is firmly upon us. Such a case as above should be a wake up call. No longer can we bury our heads in the sand but must lift them, prepare and equip ourselves for challenging times ahead. We are deceived if we think trouble will not come to followers of Jesus Christ in the UK. We may not lose our heads or suffer the brutal violence our brethren are in the Middle East, but the spirit of the anti-Christ is rampant in the UK manifesting in many forms. Some of its methods are overt, others covert, including fear and intimidation to silence and disempower.

Now is the time to prepare by seeking the Kingdom of Heaven and the righteousness of God. The challenge we will face is that many of the commands, laws and precepts of the Kingdom of Heaven conflict with modern 21st century culture - and even some church doctrine! For God's way are not man's ways and increasingly not even the church's either.

"You will be hated by everyone on account of My name, but the one who perseveres to the end will be saved." (Matthew 24:13)

The bible tells us tests, trials and tribulations will happen to refine our faith, but also encourages us by saying: *"who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? Romans 8:35* The answer is a firm 'no'!

Nothing can separate us - accept perhaps our falling away and apostasy? But as for tribulation or distress these cannot separate us from Christ's love. So be careful not to accept pre-tribulation rapture doctrines - these are false. It's also deeply insulting to the millions of Christians already in the tribulation now: one Christian was killed every six minutes in 2016 for their faith! Why does the British church think it is above the suffering of the brethren in the rest of the world?

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. James 1:22

Meanwhile, because the British government is turning against Christ and criminalising the laws of God's Kingdom, we know trouble will follow. The spirit of the antichrist is active in the UK and we, as Disciples of Christ, must learn to fight with the weapons He has given us. So:

Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand....take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord. – that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful. (James 5:8,10-11)

Rejoice, for your salvation draws near and your God is compassionate and merciful!

ⁱ <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/newsroom/2017/02/street-preachers-convicted-of-religiously-aggravated-public-order/>

ⁱⁱ <http://hub.unlock.org.uk/knowledgebase/criminal-behaviour-order-cbo/>