

The Imperative of Christ:
A Christian Response to Islam and Global Ecuminicism

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Part 2 of 3

There is a widely held, erroneous notion in many circles, both Christian and worldly, that suggests Christ's message and ministry was to promote peace and cooperation among mankind, and that this was to be achieved above everything else. But this is wrong. Peace in regard to Christ's ministry has only to do with reconciling wayward sinners to a righteous God. That is the peace about which the angels rejoiced at His advent in Luke 2:14, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." This was a joyous reminder that God had not abandoned His corrupt and perverse creation, but actively purposed to collect and preserve a remnant to Himself.

The Peace of Christ shows us that God did not despair in regard to His rebellious creation, but reached beyond all of the sinfulness of man to accomplish His good pleasure and divine will. The peace that Christ accomplished between righteous, almighty God and man, His children in particular, is far more considerable and purposeful than the humanistic notion of universal peace on the face of the Earth. But this does not fit in with the world's religions and human ambition.

So, men borrow or steal from Christ those parts of His message and teachings that best suit their own purposes and are useful to help achieve a man-centered religious authority. The other parts that are disagreeable to human supremacy are then ridiculed and trashed. By doing this, humanistic philosophy and world religions can undermine the perfect, austere position of Christ (they also diminish the severity of man's sin) and selectively hijack His credibility and references to give weight to their own ideas and plans. These same interests paint a picture that from time to time Christ was right-on with His subject, but other times was completely out of his mind. This selectivity is where Christianity must step in with a firm foothold and call a halt to the false testimony regarding Christ's teachings.

But in speaking out for the verity and accuracy of Christ's teachings is where Christians will draw fire and provoke the hatred and hostility of the world. This is where the popular perception that Christianity is symbolic of timidity, weakness, and passivity will be used to challenge and intimidate Christians to retreat from the truth. But that is a worldly standard, and it is fraudulent. Christianity is not militant, and we are not authorized to destroy our enemies, but it is very important that we remember our witness and testimony are to proclaim Jehovah God's glory, and we are equally unauthorized to change His doctrine to satisfy worldly expectations and opposition.

Indeed, many are mistaken in their perception that Christianity is under obligation to achieve a natural peace and to show the rest of the world how to live without conflict. There is an expectation

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perpetuated in the media, and from some pulpits, that Christianity is part of some great brotherhood of humanity, vested with the responsibility of building an earthly, utopian society, and striving for absolute peace and harmony between man and beast, between man and the environment, and among men across the face of the Earth. But in actuality, appeasement, peace, harmony, and accord with temporal societies, associations, philosophies, and religions are not legitimate priorities for Christianity.

It is not incumbent upon Christianity to get along with the world, in society in general, or with the world's religions. Christians are not required by Scripture to be in harmony with the priorities and objectives of worldly institutions. We are required however, at the expense of all else, to be the harbinger of the Gospel of Christ, and to do so without compromise, with devotion, resolve, and vigor.

There is a universal call among worldly interests for Christianity to unite with world religions to form alliances intended to promote a one-world philosophy that promises to be the salvation of all mankind's ills and troubles. These alliances and this philosophy promise that through exploration, technology, science, and education mankind can be lifted out of all suffering, war, disease, and even death. But these humanistic ideas that promote the glory of man are alien to the ways of God and fail to accurately identify the root causes of mankind's condition.

Man suffers because he is rebellious. Man dies because he is sinful. Mankind endures disease, war, and pestilence as the fruit of his very own nature, and man does not have the tools and resources of his own means to overcome this condition. But Christianity is called upon to ignore this, or to neglect it. The world, including Islam, wants Christians to embrace its false ideas and false hopes in order to elevate mankind at the expense of God and to remove the shadow and standard of God. Christians are accused of building walls of separation and unnecessary differences by clinging to Scripture, and ridiculed as superstitious and ignorant for exalting God Almighty.

In the world media, and from a great number of pulpits, it would appear that Christianity is in an identity crisis. There are assertions that Christ taught a tolerant and accepting world view. It is said this view is understanding and excusatory of man's faults, and the secret to achieving harmonious, world peace lies within the grasp of man's powers. This is not true. It is not true because man cannot elevate himself to that standard, and it is not true because Christ did not teach this.

The ecumenical philosophy, that all religions and Christianity are basically the same and share in a universal obligation to promote humanity and achieve world peace, is untrue. It is simply not true that all religions and Christianity are bonded together in the brotherhood of human need and potentially contribute equally to easing the human condition. There is a substance and verity of Christians that distinguishes us from all others, and it is this very difference that is the key to a meaningful understanding of mankind's condition and a true well-spring of hope.

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It is this difference that draws the ire and promotes the animosity of the world, which then really shows its true self. In holding to the faith of Jesus Christ, and exalting Him above humanity and mankind's inventions, it is then that Christians are perceived as intolerant and narrow-minded, and the wrath of the world is unleashed. In dealing with ecuminicism, and Islam, and other world religions, Christians are confronted with the accusation that we are accountable for man's suffering and condition; that it is our intolerance and prejudice against man's ingenuity that jeopardizes the harmony and hope of mankind. Only when men can twist the truth of God into a lie can they then promote humanity. It is the Christian's duty to steadfastly "straighten-out" the misquotations and misrepresentations of the Word of God.

In Matthew 10:34, Christ warns, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword", and it is that sword, the Word of God, that Christians are to abide and champion as the true testament of what is and what is to come. In the Gospels, there is substantial evidence and teaching directly from Christ that indicates man is deceived to think that he can live in a perfect peace and harmony on Earth.

The key to this passage is this business about peace on Earth. Clearly, a preoccupation and obsession with worldly ambition and humanistic objectives is not a valid priority for Christians. Christ further elaborates on this in Matthew 24. The peace that Christ does promise is between God and man, not upon the face of Earth between men. In context, Christ says in John 18:36, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." So clearly, Christians are not to be obsessed with earthly empires or global political dominance.

There are many who view Christianity's resistance to Global Ecuminicism and its struggle with Islam, as a conflict between religions for supremacy. But for the Christian, spiritual warfare against Islam and others in defense and witness of the truth of God is justified by faith and Scripture. The important focus for the Child of God in these struggles is the spiritual implications of the teachings that are set against God's Word. To the Christian, resisting Islam is not merely a quest of cultural dominance and imperialism, but a central fight for Christianity's identity, and the same can be said for its struggle against Ecuminicism. Quite simply, the priorities and duties of Christians while in the Earth are not compatible with the objectives and goals of worldly, humanistic philosophies and institutions.

Islam rejects the central issues of faith critical to Christianity. Ecuminicism demands that these central issues must be flexible and open to various, situational interpretations and cannot be absolutely true. If Christianity is resistant, and refuses to give up these points, remaining steadfast upon the cornerstone of Christ, then the conflict is set, and we must stand firmly grounded in the truth and

testimony of Christ, our Lord. We cannot participate in humanity's conceited exercises and also remain faithful to God.

This struggle and warfare are spiritual and ideological, and the points of contention are at the heart of Christianity's identity. Any peace, in the context required by the world, with Islam would require a compromise of Christian belief, and a repudiation of the diety of Christ; this is not acceptable. There is no common ground for a peaceful coexistence given Islam's aggressive ambitions for domination, and its obsession with building an earthly, global empire.

This fake peace, so desperately sought by Christ's enemies, would serve only to undermine and destroy Christianity. In its rawest form, this peace is actually a power grab, as if mankind could steal power from God by destroying Christianity. But men, in their vile imaginations, do hope, that by destroying and persecuting Christians and the preached Gospel, to escape God Himself.

The apparent failure of Christianity to live up to worldly false expectations of peace and cooperation is most clearly demonstrated in the question of Islam and the manner in which Christianity is expected by the world to respond to its various challenges. Islam presents the world with many counter points to elements of Christianity that the world finds objectionable and offensive. In its insatiable desire for global alliances and universal philosophies, Islam offers the world many human-centered answers and counterpoints to Christianity's testimony.

In this time of unease, these crucial times, it is very important for Christians to be reminded that our witness and testimony are not set for the defense of Christendom, a Christian kingdom here on Earth, but for the testimony and truth of Christ. Jesus himself admonished the disciples, then and now, to prepare for conflict, rejection and difficult divisions and separations that would result from men turning away and rejecting the truth of God. In Luke 12:49, Christ is quoted as saying, "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?" The fire about which he speaks is the controversy and consuming passions that erupt in the conflict between God's truth and mankind's error.

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