

Sticks and Stones (part 2)

Last week we discussed “Sticks and Stones” and conservatives were singled out during a speech by Joe Biden and labeled “fascists.” We certainly won’t lose any sleep over the rhetoric as persecution of this nature will at some point get worse in the future. This is no surprise and we know the end result.

Matthew 10:22- “And you shall be hated by all for My name’s sake; but the one who to endures the end, that one shall be saved.”

Mark 13:13- “And you shall be hated by all men for My name’s sake; but the one who endures to the end, that one shall be saved.”

Luke 21:17- “And you shall be hated by all because of My name.”

John 15: 18- “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.” The world hated Jesus without cause but He has called us out of this world.

John 15:19-25- “If you were of the world, the world would love its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have personally chosen you out of the world, the world hates you for this. Remember the word that I spoke to you: a servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also. If they kept My word, they will keep your word also. But they will do all these things to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know Him Who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have had sin; but now

they have nothing to cover their sin. The one who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no other man has done, they would not have had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father. But this has happened so that the saying might be fulfilled which is written in their law, ‘They hated Me without a cause.’”

As Jesus did, so we must do. We must follow in His footsteps. Just as He was in the world and the world hated Him, we too are in the world and the world will hate us.

Biden’s name calling really struck a nerve with a majority of the population. I’m amazed at how much focus we as humans put on labels and names. With this in mind, I thought we’d revisit the topic of “Sticks and Stones.” As the old saying goes: “sticks and stones can break my bones but names will never hurt me.” This adage has long since gone by the wayside as apparently mislabeling one’s gender nowadays can land you in a lawsuit or even in jail in some countries. We agree Brethren, if you were born with a penis, you’re a male and if you have a vagina, you’re a female. I don’t care if you identify as a wombat or a stalk of celery, reality is reality.

Genesis 1:27- “And God created man in His *own* image, in the image of God He created him. He created them male and female.” They can argue with God and

their meeting is coming. All of the alphabet perverts will have a day of reckoning and I'm sure there will be a few Kodak moments...

We know that this is a mid-term election year with many positions up for grabs.

The conservative right is counting on a sweep in taking back The House and Senate. The left is hard at work with their smear tactics and fear mongering on how detrimental the "MAGA Republicans" would be to our nation should any "sweep" and transition take place. This bickering like a couple of school yard juveniles has been going on for decades. Liberal vs. Conservative, left vs. right.

We even use these terms in describing churches. Some Christians are "liberal" Christians, and some Christians are "conservative" Christians. We tend to judge them by their actions, reactions and practices. We refer to the keeping of the Sabbath more often than not when using these terms. Christianity has certainly compromised its views on Sabbath keeping, keeping of God's Holy Days and fellowshiping with the brethren. I'm surprised there hasn't been more of a fervor on name calling in the political arenas with respect to labels. I guess it doesn't really matter as both sides treat stupidity like it's a virtue.

At one time, a decade or two ago, liberal and conservative labels could have been somewhat unclear as some folks could have fit into either category depending on the topic. Present day America has no difficulty in distinguishing between the two

any longer as evil has run amok. I know we've mentioned these scriptures in the past regarding the "left" and the "right" but a recap is in order.

Ecclesiastes 10:2- "A man's heart *is* at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left."

Is this really a political statement of description of the "left" and the "right"? Let's add Matthew 25 more for consideration.

Matthew 25:32-46- "And He shall gather before Him all the nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

And He shall set the sheep at His right hand, but the goats at His left. Then shall the King say to those at His right hand, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from *the* foundation of *the* world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me *something* to drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; *I was* naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'

Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and fed *You*? Or thirsty, and gave *You* a drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and took *You in*? Or naked, and clothed *You*?

And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and came to You?' And answering, the King shall say to them, 'Truly I say to you, inasmuch as you have done *it* to one *of* the least of these My brethren, you have done *it* to Me.' Then shall He also

say to those on *the* left, ‘Depart from Me, *you* cursed ones, into the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you did not give Me *anything* to eat; I was thirsty, and you did not give Me *anything* to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not take Me in; *I was* naked, and you did not clothe Me; *I was* sick, and in prison, and you did not *come to* visit Me.’ Then they also shall answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and we did not minister to You?’ Then shall He answer them, saying, ‘Truly I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do *it* to one of the least *of* these, neither did you do *it* to Me.’ And they shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

So, is this a political statement? No, not really. It is one of those flukes of language, that several languages use. What has happened, over time in the development of the language, the word that means "right" (right hand or right side) has come to describe conservative values, being right, proper, and good. And the word "left" has morphed into liberal, change, wrong and bad. By society’s description, these terms seemingly fit today’s moral climate and actions of both parties within our nation. Does this mean that God is on the “right?”

Proverbs 4:25-27- “Let your eyes look right on, and let your eyelids look straight before you. Ponder the path of your feet, and all your ways *will be* established. Do not turn to the right hand nor to the left; remove your foot from evil.”

As in the past, we’re revisiting this topic as it’s so easy to get caught up in the political turmoil. Remember “Would Jesus Vote?”

God is neither right or left, He is above all of this. He instructs His children to follow His scriptures and way of life to the letter. Everything God does is righteous, true and correct. We must emulate this in our conduct regarding politics.

We’ve been called out from among them, remember?

2 Corinthians 6:17- “Therefore, come out from the midst of them and be separate,” says *the* Lord, “and touch not *the* unclean, and I will receive you;”

1 Peter 2:9- “But you are a chosen stock, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for a possession *of God*, that you might proclaim His *excellent* virtues, Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;”

God’s Way goes neither to the right or the left. His way is always correct.

Deuteronomy 17:20- “So that his heart may not be lifted up above his brethren, and that he does not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left, to

the end that he may prolong *his* days in his kingdom, he and his children, in the midst of Israel.”

Deuteronomy 5:32- “And you shall be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you. You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.”

Joshua 1:7- “Only be strong and very courageous so that you may observe to do according to all the law which My servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, so that you may prosper wherever you go.”

Isaiah 30:21- “And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “This *is* the way, walk in it,” when you turn to the right hand and when you turn to the left.”

The left and right terms can apply to our way of thinking on certain things, our philosophies and attitudes but the true follower of God and Jesus Christ cannot deviate. We live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. (**Deut. 8:3, Matthew 4:4, Luke 4:4**).

Joe Biden can label conservatives anyway he chooses; however, he left out a couple of terms that are readily thrown about as well. Progressives, moderates, and traditionalists. They’re all probably out dated as of late as the definitive lines seems to have become more clearly, good vs. evil.

Democrats or “Progressives” look forward and advocate for “change” and we all had a belly full of that phrase under Obama. Progressive is a softer title than “socialist.” The definition used for progressive used to mean “progress.” However, it hardly fits today’s representation of any political party. Even Democrat has lost its meaning, as an advocate of democracy or one who believes in social equality. I know we can all see the irony of the state of the political climate we’re in.

Moderates tend to straddle the fence, trying to fit into both categories by not having opinions one way or the other. Sounds remotely like the Laodiceans?
Wishy washy at best.

Traditionalists are conservatives who like to keep things within historical perspectives. One group wants to look forward and change things (specifically to their agenda), one group is the group of indecision and complacency and the other group tends to look toward the past to solve the issues.

We also tend to be forward-looking. Are we not preparing and looking for the return of our Savior Jesus Christ? Are we not looking for His coming Kingdom? Are we not looking forward to taking part in the First Resurrection and reigning with Christ a thousand years? I’d definitely say that is forward-looking but certainly not in alignment with any progressive mind set. Our views on man’s

improvement lie fully in God's plan of salvation for mankind and not the promotion of self that is predominate in our nation today.

So where do we fit in? We know we're not "fascists" as Biden labeled us. We really do not fit into any of the "political" categories mentioned. We are a peculiar people. "Peculiar" is used in all of the following verses in the King James Version. The Free Dictionary On-Line definition of "peculiar" is: not ordinary or usual. Odd or strange (some of us definitely fit this category). Belonging distinctively or primarily to one person, group, or kind, special or unique.

A Faithful Version renders the term "peculiar" as "special treasure."

Exodus 19:5-6- "Now therefore, if you will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'

These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

Deuteronomy 14:2- "For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a specially treasured people to Himself, above all the nations that are on the earth."

Deuteronomy 26:18- "And the LORD has taken you today to be His specially treasured people, as He has promised you, and to keep all His commandments,"

1 Peter 2:9- “But you are a chosen stock, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for a possession *of God*, that you might proclaim His *excellent* virtues, Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;”

Titus 2:14- “Who gave Himself for us, so that He might redeem us from all lawlessness, and might purify for Himself a *unique* people, zealous of good works.”

The use of peculiar is best suited and translated in the Faithful Version. The word “peculiar” comes from the Latin, “peculium” which means “private property.”

So that "peculiar" properly equals "pertaining to the individual." In modern English the word has usually degenerated into a half-colloquial form for "extraordinary," but in Biblical English it is a thoroughly dignified term for "especially one's own." It means a people especially possessed by God and particularly prized by Him, *if* we fulfill our marching orders given in His Word.

In the eyes of other so-called Christian Churches, we are weirdoes. We've rejected the traditions of men for the Commandments of God. Discarding Christmas and Easter for God's Holy Days is tantamount to blasphemy in some circles. As if a fat elf in a red suit and a rabbit with candy makes more sense...

Mark 7:8-9- “For leaving the commandment of God, you hold fast the tradition of men, *such as* the washing of pots and cups; and you practice many other things like

this.” Then He said to them, “Full well do you reject the commandment of God, so that you may observe your *own* tradition.”

Colossians 2:8- “Be on guard so that no one takes you captive through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the traditions of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ.”

We do not fit the mold. And we cannot fit the mold of this world. We are different. We are set apart. The standards we once followed have been laid aside, we have discarded the lies for the absolute truth of God’s Word. The standards by which the world and “religions” judge things no longer apply to us. God is our only judge. His is the only Standard. This does not make us any better than anyone else. It does make us committed and our hope and salvation are assured.

We have come out of the world, and we now belong to our Father in heaven. God has separated us from the world. This means that He has done this to accomplish His purpose in us. He cannot do that by leaving us as part of the world nor will we grow in His ways remaining in it. Our redemption and forgiveness were accomplished by Jesus Christ our Lord through His sacrifice for our sins and His Resurrection. Receiving His way of life through repentance and baptism begins the process of bringing us out of this world totally. When we begin this walk, when we receive His Holy Spirit, we have that distinction and we become separate as the world does not know or have His Holy Spirit.

John 14:17- “Even the Spirit of the truth, which the world cannot receive because it perceives it not, nor knows it; but you know it because it dwells with you, and shall be within you.”

John 17:16- “They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.”

While we may still live here, we are separate. We have a plan to follow and we cannot be consumed or overwhelmed by concerns over politics or names we are called. This is a focus of our calling.

We have all brought our various views from the world with us in our approaches to life. Whether we're called leftist or rightist, liberal or conservative or even “fascist”, we know ours is a journey of conversion that will take the rest of our lives. Our translation is changing the former for the new, to put on the Mind of Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:16- “For who has known *the* mind of *the* Lord? Who shall instruct Him? But we have *the* mind of Christ.” We learn to think like God. God isn't a liberal and God isn't a conservative, God is holy. He is Sovereign. He is our Heavenly Father.

God has called us the only names that really matter, His children, heirs of His promise, special treasure, My beloved. Amen.