

Minister's Message – March 2006

Defending God

Rioting has erupted in many cities around the world as followers of a certain dead prophet seek to defend his honour. In the name of their god, violent mobs have gone on the rampage destroying property and injuring innocent people. Is such religious zeal to be admired? Some might ask why Christians do not show the same zeal for Jesus as these people do for their prophet. There is certainly no lack of pictures and words that mock Jesus and offend his followers. Every day we hear people taking the name of Jesus in vain. Why do those who believe in Jesus not rise up to destroy the perpetrators of such blasphemy?

Firstly Jesus Christ is not dead but alive. He did die. He submitted himself to be crucified at the hands of men, but raised him from the dead and he is alive today. Secondly, Jesus is the Son of God well able to defend himself. This is the great truth of the Bible. Whilst his followers are deeply offended and hurt by such blasphemy they do not take it upon themselves to defend God. As if the Creator of heaven and earth needs weak men whom he created to defend him. Indeed, what sort of god needs men to defend him?

*By the word of the Lord the heavens were made...
Let all the earth fear the Lord
Let the inhabitants of the earth stand in awe of him...
The Lord brings the counsel of nations to nothing
He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect (Psalm 33)*

God is omniscient and omnipotent. He is all powerful, and does not need people to defend him. He is the God who defends his people, the God who goes before them and gives the victory.

Furthermore, the Lord specifically instructed his people through Moses and again through the apostle Paul, that vengeance belongs to the Lord. *Vengeance is mine says the Lord I will repay* (Romans 12). God will judge those who mock him and blaspheme his holy name. His judgment may not be immediate but it is 100% certain. In fact God's judgment is often delayed to give such wicked people time to repent.

Jesus calls upon his followers to love their enemies, and do good to those who hate them (Matthew 5).

If you enemy is hungry feed him, if he is thirsty give him a drink...do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (Romans 12:20, 21). Such behaviour is entirely contrary to the natural reaction of sinful man. As sinners we want to destroy our enemies – and those who mock our God are rightly our enemies. What we see going on in the world today is not holy behaviour it is the natural reaction of sinful men.

Jesus calls upon his followers to be different. *Do not repay evil for evil* he said. How wonderful it is to have a God who can destroy his enemies without our help, but yet a God who loved the world so much that he gave his only Son to die in order that he might forgive all who repent and believe in Jesus.

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