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A Wonderful Christ

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This year has seen a lot of strange and different things... some good, some bad; but none quite as blatant as the attack on Christ. That needs to be said up-front, because it goes to the heart of what we will be studying today. It seems only fitting that today, on Christmas day, we study the life of Christ.

First, Christ was attacked from the very start. When He was born, King Herod (who had heard that a king messiah was born) feared for his throne and ordered the famous "Massacre of the Innocents" in which he had all the babies in Bethlehem slaughtered.

Later and throughout Jesus' adult ministry, there were numerous attempts to slander, mock, trap, jail and kill Jesus; and we all know how He was brutally executed for our sins on the cross.

The point I am trying to make is that Jesus was no stranger to attacks of every kind; in fact, He knew they would come, and He even warned us about them and taught us how to deal with them, which are the first two scripture verses we will read:

"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

(John 16:33)

"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. "

(Matthew 5:11-12)

First of all, we should not be surprised, because Jesus in the two verses above has already warned us that attacks would come. So it is our duty to be prepared for such eventualities. Now when I say be ready, I am talking specifically about two things: we must prepare our emotions, so that when people do attack us that we do not lash out at them in anger, but that we respond the way Christ would. And secondly, that we are fully ready Biblically for the inevitable ministry opportunity that will arise from such an attack.

Every time Jesus was attacked, He always demonstrated those two things. He was always calm under fire, and He was always ready to speak the words of truth to all who would hear Him. Likewise, that is exactly how we must be.

Now these are not easy things, we cannot simply snap our fingers and magically behave as Christ would. It takes effort, discipline, refinement and dedication. I can recall many instances in Martial Arts, where a refinement of a certain skill often involved grueling and frustrating training sessions for me to get the movements exactly right, and our spirit and mind are no different. Yet I can promise you this, as you study the Bible, and train your heart and mind and spirit to behave as Christ would by reminding yourself of scriptures when trials come, it will gradually begin to sharpen into a finely tuned instrument, that you can use in your battles with evil; just as my Martial Arts moves sharpen as I practice.

So if you are feeling down this Christmas because of all the attacks against Christ and Christmas, let me offer you these words of encouragement:

Christ foretold it; it is just another Bible prophecy coming to pass, and one step closer to His return.

We should still fight for Christ, but remember, those who attack him are still lost and searching for a savior. Be prepared to share the love of Christ.

Of course, Jesus said it best:

"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. "
(John 15:18-21)

In closing, I'd like to share a personal story of mine...

During this winter season, I contracted a cold. It progressed to a point where my nasal passages were completely congested and I couldn't breathe at all through my nose. "No big deal! I can still breath through my mouth", I thought to myself; and indeed I did and proceeded to go about my day.

However, when it came time to do something seemingly simple, such as drink a glass of water, the disadvantages of not being able to breath through my nose became very real and apparent. I would start to choke and suffocate. Sleeping or even reclining back was also a show stopper. Suddenly, what I thought I could easily do without became something I had to have.

Well, Jesus is like that. So many of us think we can do without Him, until we come across something seemingly simple that we think we can handle on our own, and then we fail. Well I'm here to tell you that sin is that something that we can't handle on our own, but Jesus paid the ultimate price. He sacrificed Himself on your place, so that you

wouldn't have to die for your sins. If you would like to accept Jesus' sacrifice on your behalf, simply pray the following prayer wherever you are, there's no distance in prayer, you don't have to be in a church. Simply pray:

“Lord Jesus, I realize that I am a sinner, and that I deserve Hell and not Heaven because of my sin. I repent of my sins now, and I turn away from my sins and ask you to forgive me. Make me clean, and be the Lord of my life. In Jesus' name, Amen.”.

If you prayed that simple prayer and meant it truthfully, then God heard that prayer and has now begun a new life in you (that is what being born again means). You are now saved from Hell, and on your way to Heaven.

I encourage you to first, tell me of your new decision so that I can celebrate with you! Also join a good Bible-based church, where you can be with other good Christians.

May you all continue to Rise to the Challenges in your life.

James