

THE SECT EVERYWHERE SPOKEN AGAINST (Acts 28:22)

I. For preaching change.

- A. Judaism and paganism ruled the day.
- B. Judaism had existed for well over a 1,000 years and paganism for a long time before that.
- C. The Jews charged early Christians with corruption of the Old Law.
 - 1. This is what Paul was first charged with in Jerusalem (Acts 21:27-28).
 - 2. All along the missionary journeys of Paul, you read of the Jews standing against Paul because of the message of change from Judaism to Christianity.
- D. The pagans of the day also stood against the truth as well.
 - 1. Acts 19:23ff.
 - 2. It happened in Philippi as well after Paul removed a demon from a young lady (Acts 16:16-22).
- E. The early church was persecuted for not worshiping the image of the Roman Emperor.
 - 1. They were faithful citizens of the Roman Empire but many refused to worship Caesar.
 - 2. Because of that, the church was persecuted numerous times in the 1st-3rd centuries.
- F. At times, the church today is persecuted because we preach change as well.
 - 1. We ought never preach a change from God's will as some do.
 - 2. However, we do preach a change of life that many don't want to make.

II. For parting ways with the world.

- A. Persecution is part of the Christian life (2 Timothy 3:12).
 - 1. Paul had let the Thessalonians know that persecution would come (1 Thessalonians 3:1-4).
 - 2. They had experienced some already (2:14).
- B. Peter let his readers know the same thing (1 Peter 4:12).
 - 1. Notice his words.
 - 2. Don't think it is strange or unheard of; in other words, they should have been prepared for it.
- C. Jesus let the church at Smyrna know persecution was coming (Revelation 2:10).
- D. The reason for the persecution oftentimes was told by Peter (1 Peter 4:3-4).
 - 1. His readers used to live just as those around them were then living.
 - 2. They fulfilled the desires of the flesh however they chose.
 - 3. When conversion took place, those around them thought they were strange for not doing what they had been doing.
- E. People often hate what they don't understand.

1. It scares us many times.
 2. The neighbors of the Christians couldn't understand why they no longer lived like everyone else.
- F. Christians then and now are called to a different lifestyle (1 Peter 4:1-2).
1. There has to be a change, as there was with the Corinthian brethren.
 2. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.
- G. Today, when we part ways with the world, we will be thought strange and at times, we will be persecuted.

III. For partaking of the Lord's Supper.

- A. No doubt that early Christians thought nothing of partaking of the Lord's Supper.
1. It had been instituted by the Lord Himself (Matthew 26:26-29).
 2. It was a practice of the early Christians to partake of it every Lord's Day (Acts 20:7).
 3. It was taught wherever the gospel went (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).
- B. Jesus told that unless we partake of His body and His blood we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven (John 6:51-57).
1. As we read in Matthew's account, Jesus stated the unleavened bread represented His body and the fruit of the vine represented His blood.
 2. Unless we partake of the Lord's Supper as we should, there is no spiritual life in us.
- C. The early church understood this so they partook of the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day.
- D. Because of talk about eating the body and drinking the blood of Christ, there were many that charged Christians with practicing cannibalism.
1. When charges were brought against a Christian, this was often one that went along with refusing to pay homage to the image of the Caesar.
 2. There were even stories about eating infants that were made up, but nevertheless, used against Christians.
- E. There is still prejudice today against Christians for partaking of the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day.
1. We are simply following New Testament commands.
 2. Most have no problem with the supper itself, it is with the weekly observing of it where there is conflict.