

## Q. Why is Christianity hated by so many while other religions are more tolerated?

A. The answer has two aspects which I'll address separately. I want to begin, however, by briefly stating my agreement with the basic premise of the question. There can be no doubt that some people use a different measuring stick determining their toleration of Christianity than they use for other religions. If you criticize Christianity for its defense of traditional marriage, they will cheer you. But if you criticize Islam for its demeaning treatment of women or for whipping homosexuals, they will accuse you of Islamophobia. Why?

Others who have addressed this issue have pointed out that Christianity is often seen by Liberals<sup>1</sup> as the religion of white Europeans, and the other world religions are the religions of the brown and Asian peoples. The knee-jerk reaction, then, is to categorize Christianity as bad because it is the religion of the people they see as the oppressors and other religions as okay because they are the religions of the people the Liberals see as the oppressed. This thinking is based on some sort of fantasy world that doesn't really exist. There are about 2.1 billion adherents to Christianity in the world, and they come from every race. Besides, to be biased against a religion because you associate it with a particular race is a form of racism and should be rejected as abhorrent. Nevertheless, this twisted outlook is indeed one reason we see such an anti-Christian bias. But I believe it is only an ancillary reason.

Another suggested cause of intolerance toward Christianity and tolerance toward other religions is that Liberalism began within Christian culture as a reaction against it. In short, Christianity is Liberalism's old archenemy, and Liberalism doesn't have a historical grudge against other religions. In fact, Liberalism is nearly blind to other religions. Pick on a world religion, and Liberalism sees you as picking on the *people* who believe that religion. Defend Christianity,

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<sup>1</sup> Please don't take anything I'm saying here as either endorsing or criticizing a political party or philosophy. As I've explained before, my stand on issues is that of a biblical Christian. The Bible teaches some things that sound Conservative and other things that sound Liberal and many things in between. Thus, I will not be pigeonholed as either.

and Liberalism sees you as defending its old enemy. This position is irrational because it isn't based on the good or bad points each religion may have, but is merely the result of an old prejudice. Nevertheless, I agree that this is a factor, but it doesn't get down to the root cause. Why is Christianity Liberalism's old enemy? Why is Christianity still the despised religion?

### **The Bible Very Plainly Answers the Question**

The Bible very plainly tells us why Christianity is so hated: "This is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and doesn't come to the light, lest his works would be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his works may be revealed, that they have been done in God" (John 3:19-21).

Sinners hate Jesus Christ and His Gospel because He and His message expose them for what they are: sinners. Other religions do not expose people as sinners. Islam undeniably is the religion that today presents the greatest physical threat to life and limb. Yet, it is still only a statistically remote possibility that someone living outside of the Middle East or South Asia will fall victim to a Muslim extremist. Thus, it is much easier for a sinner to tolerate and live with Islam than with Christianity. This is because Christianity is the only religion that exposes as without excuse people who reject God's love because they love their sins more.

Sinners may pooh-pooh Christianity as a myth promulgated by dangerous fanatics, but its message pricks at sinners' inner psyches and enrages them. It encroaches on the demigod-like freedom they want to claim for themselves to do whatever they want. The Christian Good News is not good news to reprobate sinners who reject it no matter what their political persuasion. Nevertheless, as I mentioned earlier, Liberalism developed within Christian civilization as the enemy of Christianity. Why? Because Liberals hated the fact that Christianity said that everyone is a sinner in need of salvation from Jesus Christ and that those who reject that salvation will suffer eternal damnation. In other words, Christianity said that people are not inherently good and that they are not autonomous—they are answerable to and dependent upon a God outside of themselves. This is a view that is entirely at odds with and cannot be tolerated by secular humanism, which sees humans as ethically and morally independent without any need for a god.

Unfortunately, some who preach the Gospel do not understand predestination, election, and reprobation, and they are unprepared when they encounter people who do not just say "no thanks" to the Gospel but who consider it inherently abhorrent. Instead of figuratively stamping the dust off their feet and going on their way as Jesus instructed (see Matthew 10:14), they get upset, cry foul, and try to force others to treat them fairly. They don't realize that it is God who determined in eternity what people's reaction to the Gospel would be: "For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are dying, but to us who are saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18). Because he preached the Gospel, Paul said of himself and all who preach it, "For we are a sweet aroma of Christ to God, in those who are saved, and in those who perish; to the one a stench from death to death; to the other a sweet aroma from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Corinthians 2:15-16). The Gospel means life to the elect and death to the reprobate. Thus, the reprobate hate it, the religion that goes with it, and the people of that religion.

Jesus Himself clearly warned us:

If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. But because you are not of the world, since 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 lord." If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will keep yours also.

John 15:18-20

Ever since the Edict of Thessalonica in AD 380 and the Constantinian shift, unbiblical political entanglements between Christian churches and political states have given Christians preferential treatment in western nations (roughly defined as Europe, the Americas, Australia, and New Zealand). But with the rise of secularism and Liberalism in the West, the pendulum has been swinging away from Christianity. Christians should now expect to be hated and should not be surprised when other religions receive a preferred treatment over Christianity. This should not deter us. Christianity was hated and severely persecuted in its infancy, and yet it grew exponentially. It is God who gives the increase as He sees fit (1 Corinthians 3:6-7). Our job is to continue to preach the Gospel.

On the other hand, we can sometimes be our own worst enemy. And that is the second aspect of my answer to this question.

### **Sometimes We're Not a Good Light**

Peter tells us, "But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. 'Don't fear what they fear, neither be troubled'" (1 Peter 3:14). Unfortunately, Christians have been known to think they are suffering for righteousness' sake when, in fact, they are being reviled because they've made themselves unnecessarily obnoxious. In other words, sometimes, it's our own fault that we're treated badly.

I've addressed this problem in other articles, so I'll just summarize it here. We are just asking for trouble and we are not being a light for Christ when:

*We threaten that if we come to power, we will impose biblical law (Christian Reconstructionism).* How dare we want to put on others the very yoke that Christ has lifted from us?

*We preach a message that emphasizes people's sins more than God's grace.* The Holy Spirit convicts the elect of sin; our job is to tell them the good news solution.

*We engage in finger pointing that makes us sound self-righteous.* We must not forget when we see the sinners of the world that, if it weren't for God's undeserved grace, we would be right there with them.

*We promote war rather than peace.* Jesus taught, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9).

*We act in the same spirit as James and John who wanted to command fire to come down from the sky to destroy a village.* Jesus had to rebuke them for wanting to act in this spirit (see Luke 9:55-56).

*We confuse the Gospel with a political movement or with a culture war.* Our Gospel should paint a glorious picture of a kingdom that is not of this world instead of dragging our hearers through the mud of earthly politics.

That so many who speak in the name of Christianity fall into these errors is another reason Christianity is so hated. Let's make sure that our Gospel is pure. Then, when we are despised, we can know that we are hated for righteousness' sake. And we should not be surprised by it, nor should we be angered. We should follow our Lord's example, "Who, when he was cursed, didn't curse back. When he suffered, didn't threaten, but committed himself to him who judges righteously" (1 Peter 2:23).

*Blessed are you when people reproach you, persecute you,  
and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, for my sake.*

Matthew 5:11

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