

When Tolerance Is Intolerable

Separation from Sinners

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As incredible as it may seem, in just over a century this nation's understanding of tolerance has been redefined and accepted by society as a whole to have been changed from civility toward disagreeable persons, not as acceptance of contrary views. In contrast, today's definition of tolerance demands acceptance of politically correct views. Tolerance has become intolerance toward those who cling to traditional Christian values. The media regularly mocks Christians, casting us in a derogatory light. The people of this society do not take kindly to getting their feelings hurt when told to stop sinning, so we receive what we call persecution.

Humanly, tolerance is never neutral. Its boundaries change with the wind of pop culture influenced and directed by corrupt immoral governments authorizing public values through self-serving religious leaders. But the governments are only one of the tools in this satanically driven deception to make us tolerate the evil things of this world. The transformation from tolerance to intolerance just does not happen overnight.

During the last century socialist and communist social engineers began using tolerance as an effective weapon against biblical values. Trained infiltrators in schools, government, corporations, and churches began turning cultural norms upside down. Then they pressed the people into submitting to the new cultural guidelines, especially in schools, beginning with elementary school.

For most of this last century, humanist educators have sought ways to use education to transform both the world and its people. National Education Association (NEA) leader, Willard Givens, in 1934, encouraged and advocated this covert agenda for the public school system:

All of us, including the owners, must be subjected to a large degree of social control. The major function of the school is the social orientation of the individual. It must seek to give him an understanding of the transition to a new social order.

Nations everywhere conform their education systems to international standards, just as our states are conforming to national standards. Educational indoctrinators are dishonest, to say the least. North Carolina school superintendent, Dr. Jim Causby, summarized it well at a 1994 international model school conference in Atlanta:

We have actually been given a course in how not to tell the truth. How many of you are administrators? You've had that course in public relations where you learn to put the best spin on things.

Purposely today's indoctrinators avoid clear definitions. Ambiguous promises do far more to persuade the public, subdue the opposition, and create consensus, especially with regard to government school officials. We must always test what we hear in light of the truth and the facts. Whatever comes out of this world, whatever the source is, we always have to weigh it against God's inspired written Word, the truth of the matter.

Unless we decode the deceptive spin put forth as fact, in light of new regulations and the stated goals of education leaders, we may, or probably will, be deceived in this area. In fact, just in my conversations with church members over the years, it has become obvious that many have been deceived by the propaganda being put forth in this nation and in the world.

This insidious program of intimidation, control, and cultural transformation is a process that began years ago and is now manifesting its ominous, evil nature. Decades ago, Raymond Houghton, Professor of Secondary Education at Rhode Island College, predicted that few Americans would know what is happening:

. . . absolute behavior control is imminent . . . The critical point of behavior control, in effect, is sneaking up on mankind without his

self-conscious realization that a crisis is at hand. Man will . . .
never self-consciously know that it has happened.

As we see the world go on with its normal day-to-day activities, we see them falling deeper and deeper into the quagmire of the sinful behavior that we see in this society.

Government education systems are designed to instill a utopian vision of global interdependence in people everywhere. While at one and the same time, American culture, in many ways a blessing to the entire world despite its evils, is vilified by humanist socialist indoctrinators. This vision looks enticing enough to motivate many to accept unthinkable environmental and social restraints. The Patriot Act is a good example of that, how we have lost a tremendous amount of our freedoms in this nation, and it will not be long before we lose our freedom of speech.

In these education systems, using "zero tolerance" policies to shock, embarrass, and intimidate dutiful students into compliance with irrational rules fits the Globalists' plan. When students are caught in the confusing web of federal regulations, they must endure long sessions in "conflict resolution" and "anger management." These are used to instill a submissive, communitarian mentality.

They have already become standard procedure in most of this nation's classrooms. Children, even five and six year olds, are being put into these conflict resolution and anger management courses against their will and against their parents' will. They can spend months in these courses as they are re-indoctrinated. One six year old boy was put in one of these programs because he said something to another six year old girl of a sexual nature. He did not understand what he was saying, but he is tagged now by the school system as having that problem. The generation now graduating and those to come have learned intolerance as a way of life. It is sure to continue to increase openly in public.

Worldly tolerance can produce false security and false assurances of peace. The Old Testament shows that the deceptions of ambitious leaders have

stayed remarkably constant through the centuries. Ezekiel spoke against the exiled Israel's feeling of false security and peace that led them to think that judgment upon them from God was not imminent.

They had received encouragement not to worry by the visions and divination of the false prophets, who represented not only the religious leaders, but the voice of the nation's leadership as well. As prophets they had been in the hierarchy of the nation and in influential places. They encouraged tolerance of the people's sins which led to complacency in the face of God's judgment.

Ezekiel 13:8-10 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Because you have spoken nonsense and envisioned lies, therefore I am indeed against you," says the Lord GOD. "My hand will be against the prophets who envision futility and who divine lies; they shall not be in the assembly of My people, nor be written in the record of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord GOD. Because, indeed, because they have seduced My people, saying, 'Peace!' when there is no peace—and one builds a wall, and they plaster it with untempered mortar"

The false prophets and leaders of Israel had failed as watchmen. They had failed to warn the people of their sins and the impending judgment that was coming. They cried peace and safety much the same as the United States government and media try to deceive its citizens and other nations. They say that the United States economy is strong, that crime is reducing, that immorality is acceptable, and that education is better and more tolerant of differing viewpoints than it has ever been. To that I say, well how wonderful.

All these things are the direct opposite of reality. This is a very sick, insane nation and world. All that we hear from the critics of the government is that it is a horrible world, but we hear nothing but good from the leading party in our government.

God's verdict against this nonsense and lies in Israel is simple and clear: "I am indeed against you." Ezekiel repeated the reasons for the judgment in repetitive statements. God declares that He will bring judgment upon these lying leaders by cutting them off from the nation because they had misled the

people. These leaders, the false prophets, the religious leaders, and the political leaders, were all looking at facing harsher judgments because they led the people astray.

Their punishment is to be threefold:

First, they will lose the place of honor which they have long enjoyed among the leading citizens of Israel. The assembly (or council) mentioned in verse 9 means the inner circle of the community. So these false prophets and leaders that are leading the people astray will not have the blessing of being able to be among those people. This is a prophecy. Does it mean that these leaders that we have today who are leading us astray will not be allowed to be in their communities, especially not as leaders in the future?

Secondly, they will be struck off the civil registry of full citizens, so losing one of the most cherished rights of any adult Israelite male. God is adamant that they would be eliminated from the citizenry of Israel. Does that mean that in the Millennium, if any of them live through that and on into God's Kingdom, they will not be able to part of Israel because of what they have done? I do not know it; is purely speculation.

And thirdly, they would never return to the land of Israel and so would be deprived of the one hopeful prospect which made exile endurable. They would not be allowed to re-enter the land of Israel when Israel would be restored from the Babylonian captivity.

Does this have a prophetic significance for our nation today as the descendants of the ancient Israelites?

Will the lying religious and political leaders: the Elitists, the Globalists, especially presidents such as Clinton and Bush, who have sold this nation out to foreign entities and foreign gods, be permanently ostracized and exiled from Israel forever because of their treachery in leading the people to destruction? I do not know. But, it looks like a strong possibility if this prophecy carries over to what is going to happen to this nation and the other Israelitish countries.

The purpose of this judgment was to cause the prophets to turn to the Lord and know that He existed as the only true God.

The wall mentioned in verse 10, which the people built, is a flimsy inferior partition. It stands for the empty hopes which they are erecting for themselves, and which the lying leaders and ministers are blandly endorsing. That reminds me of the stock market right now. You could say that it is one of the walls that is built, a flimsy inferior partition.

The untempered mortar is closely akin to a root meaning "to plaster over"; figuratively for example, smearing a person with lies. The peoples' futile hopes are encouraged by the prophets' lying lullabies of peace. It has always been a common failing for religious leaders to want to speak pleasing and appeasing words of tolerance to their people.

But a minister of God, who is true to his calling, must be sure to receive and impart nothing but God's clear word, irrespective of the consequences. When ministers encourage church members to have sub-Christian standards or unbiblical ways they make themselves doubly guilty. We are seeing that happen with the outcome-based purpose-driven churches that are leading people astray, and even denying Christ.

It is dangerous to confuse emotional sensations and doctrinal laxity and looseness for a spirit of love. The tone of the New Testament toward people's tolerance of false doctrine, their denial of the sovereignty of God and the immutability of God's law, and their rejection of the teachings of Jesus Christ is, in essence, that they are liars. This biblical disdain for lying inevitably causes a separation between Christians and unbelievers.

The initiation of this separation naturally results on both sides. First, let me illustrate this from the unconverted person's viewpoint. Al Gore announced at a 1991 communitarian (i.e. Communist) conference in Washington: "Seeing ourselves as separate is the central problem in our political thinking." They put a lot of emphasis on whether a person is trying to separate or not.

Gore's conclusion was quoted in the book, *Spiritual Politics*, co-authored by Corinne McLaughlin, a follower of the Dhjwal Khul, the spirit guide

channeled by occultist Alice Bailey. McLaughlin was the first Task Force Coordinator for President Clinton's Council for Sustainable Development. She taught her occult strategies at the Department of Education, the Pentagon, and the EPA. I might ask what cult beliefs and religion have to do with these departments.

She states the following in her book:

There really is only one sin—separateness. War is more likely to spring from rampant nationalism, ethnocentrism, and intolerant religious fundamentalism—all extreme and separate attitudes. . .

What is needed as a cure for separateness is a deep sense of community—that we're all in this together.

Some of that sounds good on the surface but the intents behind it are not so noble. This envisioned community is being designed from the top-down. The blueprint comes straight from the United Nations through countless UN affiliated governmental and non-governmental networks—all working together to turn our towns into 21st century sustainable communities.

This transition to communitarianism is being accomplished right now through the government schools, the government itself, media, business, environmentalists, health centers, daycare centers, Chambers of Commerce, and churches. Its goal is to rid the earth of any one who is "separate" from the world community.

In stark contrast, we are told by the apostle Paul,

II Corinthians 6:17 Therefore, "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you."

You can see where this is going. In the near future, the world will no longer tolerate Christians to live separately in belief. But it will continue to tolerate sin and all sorts of evil, it will happily tolerate immorality and injustice.

According to UNESCO's Declaration on Tolerance, "tolerance" is defined as "respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures . . . It is not only a moral duty, it is also a political and legal requirement."

There are some pretty awful cultural things going on in other countries, such as slavery, circumcision of women, mutilations, rape, and torture. This is what the "one world" has to offer. Since, in its own words, "intolerance. . . is a global threat," it calls for:

"the rejection of dogmatism and absolutism."

"analysis . . . of root causes and effective countermeasures, as well as . . . monitoring."

"tolerance teaching methods that will address the cultural . . . and religious sources of intolerance."

Addressing religious sources of tolerance involves everyone, because everyone has a religion, even the environmentalists are in a religion. Much of this is covertly handled through the government schools, classroom discussion groups that prompt children to criticize their parents help monitor resistance. So does a profusion of intrusive surveys that tell children to report family values, church attendance, and all kinds of other private matters. Much of this data has already become part of the student's personal computerized file.

When each child is linked to his or her individual computer program, the gathering of this private information can be accelerated and controlled. As Dustin Heuston, who works with the World Institute for Computer-assisted Teaching, said: "no one can get between that child and the curriculum."

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews (probably Paul) points out the superiority of Christ's priesthood to that of the priesthood of the Old Covenant in ancient Israel. In doing so He shows Christ's sinless character of excellence. In His perfection, we find the balance between tolerance and intolerance.

Hebrews 7:24-26 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens.

Even the most devout priests who served under the Old Covenant were transgressors, they were sinners. Even though their office required them to lead pure and sinless lives, they were, like others, sinners by nature.

The former priesthood stressed the importance of outward cleansing and ritual purity, but Christ's priesthood is effective because of His inward moral purity and His sinless perfection. His life among people and some of His godly attributes are described here in verse 26.

First, Christ lived a holy life; it was set apart completely for God's work and so was fully pleasing to the Father. This term "holy" always describes the person who faithfully does his duty to God. It is not a description as much about how he appears to other people, but how he is seen by God. This refers to goodness as it appears to God.

Remember the command to servants and employees:

Ephesians 6:6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

We see here that if we are doing the will of God from the heart, we will know when to be tolerant and when to be intolerant.

Holiness is attributed to Christians who are set apart for God's service, insofar as they are conformed in all things to the will of God. Holy people are inwardly dedicated genuinely from the heart.

Second, Christ lived a "harmless" (New King James), "blameless" (King James Version), and "innocent" (English Standard Version) life; it was completely guileless, never at any point disappointing as far as its moral perfection is concerned. Jesus never hurt anyone. In the original, this word

describes a man who is so cleansed of evil that there is nothing left in him but good. It describes how a person affects others.

Third, Christ lived an undefiled, unstained life; it is absolutely free from any of the blemishes or contaminations which might make it impossible for Him to draw near to God.

Fourth, Christ lived a "separate" life. Although He moved freely and lovingly among us, He was entirely given over to God's will and so was in no sense compromised by His constant contact with sinners. God's way of life was so deeply imbedded in Him that even when He was around sinners it did not affect Him, and He was not influenced by them.

That Christ was "separate from sinners" is true in several ways. His sinless character immediately sets Him apart from other human beings, all of whom are sinners. Also, His office equally sets Him apart, because only the high priest, even in the Levitical priesthood, was permitted into the Holy of Holies, and then only after purging his own sin.

He did not associate with sinners in a socially intimate way as such. He did not involve Himself in their feelings, plans, and pleasures. Though He mingled with them, yet it was merely to benefit them; and in all His life He maintained a complete separation from the feelings, principles, and views of a sinful world.

Fifth, Christ "has become higher than the heavens"; this describes His present position as God's High Priest and as seated at the right hand of the Father—the Majesty on High. That is where we have to look—to the Kingdom of God, and He who sits on that throne, God the Father, and at His right hand, Jesus Christ, and how They live their lives, and then we can emulate and internalize that.

These five attributes of Jesus Christ reveal the character and dedication needed to discern and judge righteously. To tolerate or not to tolerate, that is the question. Separation from sin and the world are mandatory requirements for our spiritual health. Most of us work in the world, but we are not to love the world or the things that are in it. It is a matter of doing the will of God, or our own will, or the world's will.

Here is another scripture that encourages separation:

II Corinthians 6:14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

Also, James strongly states that friendship with the world is enmity against God.

We have often had reason to see that a worldly-professing Christian is useless. He is of no value to the world and no good to God. No man can serve two masters. People that claim to worship and believe in God have to make a stand, and they have to make themselves separate from the world.

We all subconsciously make lists of do's and don'ts with regard to what we will or will not tolerate. Everyone carries on learned taboos from generation to generation. We all have a tendency to think that the things that we have been taught while we were growing up are true.

However, these things must be weighed according to righteous biblical principles as to whether they are really true or not. We sometimes, or maybe often, mistake our prejudices for convictions. It is a very easy thing to do because we do not realize we do it. We are just going along and doing what we have always been taught. Which can be good if it is linked to the church and to God's way of life, but it is bad if it is linked to the world.

What matters is what the Word of God says, always! And if what we are taught is not in accordance with the principles declared in the Bible, then we had better revise our standards and our thinking to be in accordance with those principles.

With this requirement to be separate comes the tendency to withdraw, to seek our own crowd, to create our own little separate world—a world that is as complete as we can make it. We create our own smug, airtight circle in which we live and which we have set up to run in competition to the "worldly" world outside.

The extreme of that kind of thinking produced the monasteries that appeared in the Middle Ages. Men decided that the way to avoid the temptations of the world was to completely seclude themselves from it, so they built high-walled monasteries and lived their lives inside—separate from the world. Or, so they thought!

Their thinking was based on human reasoning which seemed right to them. There was no Holy Spirit to guide them so their understanding was skewed. What they really accomplished was to seal the world in there with them. Their covetousness and envy of the flesh and eyes, and self-importance was produced in their hearts. Therefore sealing themselves up in those monasteries just sealed that world in there with them.

I John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Of course, we know that the will of God is to live His way of life and to teach it to others.

Today we do not build walls of brick and mortar in order to avoid these things, but we still have walls of thought and seclusion that are almost as effective as those monastery walls. In this way, we become 21st century monks, doing this very same thing that they did.

In their quest, their noble effort to protect their children, some parents isolate them to the point of making them socially backward. As parents we have to be careful not to be over protective to the point that we stifle their enthusiasm for life.

God's creation is a wonderfully magnificent overabundance of mind-boggling fields of study. God designed the human mind to be curious and

inquisitive about our environment. And if our children are going to be leaders in the Millennium and God's Kingdom, then we had better be preparing them to live in that setting.

If we are not constantly learning God's way and teaching it to our children, would God give us a city or country or world to run? That is very doubtful.

Instead of teaching them to overcome evil, we may be only teaching them to avoid it. It is good to teach our children to avoid evil, to avoid sin and things in the world that are wrong, but if that is the case, we may be shorting them by not teaching them how to fight the good fight of faith. We just cannot teach them to avoid it, but we have to teach them to internalize God's way of life. That comes with Bible study and prayer and living it.

The truth is that worldliness is not a matter of things, of doing this, or not doing that completely. But, worldliness is a matter of the attitude of the heart, the attitude of life in thinking and dealing with things.

Everything is worldly if your heart is concerned with the approval or disapproval of those around you, just as everything is spiritual when the eye is focused on God. This is a tremendously important point. Remember what John says, "All that is in the world: the lust of the flesh [that includes eating and drinking and sleeping and wearing clothes or whatever your body desires to do], the lust of the eyes [that includes the desire of anything you want to buy or possess, good, bad, or indifferent], the pride of life [the vainglory of life, the fighting for position, for promotion, for advancement], is not of your Father, but is of the world."

What makes a thing worldly? Listen to John again, "All that is in the world . . . is not of the Father." That is the thing! You exclude the Father from your thinking, and when you do that you are worldly, no matter what you do. You do some act or take some step or make some plans without the Father, without taking Him into consideration, or concerning yourself with His will. That is worldliness! It may be a perfectly innocent thing in and of itself, but when you exclude the Father, it is of the world. Of course, we are taking this to the utmost standard to shoot for. Without the Holy Spirit no one can even begin to climb that ladder.

This society does not like strong language and controversy; instead they pride themselves on having advanced beyond all that in every area. I call that intellectual vanity. This intellectually vain approach is one of getting together and understanding one another's point of view; we are told we should not denounce a point of view as John does here. John is very strong about denouncing a wrong point of view.

You have probably heard discussions on the radio or television between "professing Christians" and atheists congratulating themselves on being such nice people and being able to agree. They spend so much time in trying to understand one another's point of view that they finish blissfully confused.

Most people today view the Bible as a book authored by men and tell us that we should not hold its views too strongly. Their conclusion is that we should never call anyone who disagrees with it, and who denies Jesus as the Christ, a liar! But that is not according to Scripture.

This is the characteristic of the present mentality and viewpoint. The social engineers and leaders tell us it is a time for solidarity. Many mainstream Christian church leaders tell their followers that if people want to call themselves Christian, then welcome it and be glad that they do so, even though they deny Jesus' teachings, and that He did not come in the flesh according to their opinions.

Often progressive Christian leaders show their perverse tolerance by encouraging anyone who is even the slightest bit curious about Christ to come and worship; the invitation goes out even to those who are just theists and merely believe in the being of God.

James puts this in its proper perspective.

James 2:19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!

So if a person believes that there is a God, he is at that point all things equal to demons in his belief in that level. It is not enough to just believe that there is a God. The apostle John did not encourage tolerance of contrary religious beliefs. We find Paul using similar language to the Galatians:

Galatians 1:8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

That is very strong language, much too strong for the present religious viewpoint in this nation. The object of Paul is to express the greatest possible abhorrence of any other doctrine than that which he himself had preached from the inspiration of God the Father and Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

We learn a couple of things here:

- (1) That any other doctrine than what is proclaimed in the Bible is to be rejected and treated with revulsion, no matter what the rank, skill, or eloquence of the one promoting and defending it.
- (2) That we are not to patronize or tolerate such false teachers. No matter what their zeal or their apparent sincerity, or their apparent success, or their real boldness in rebuking sin, we are to withdraw from them.

This, of course, is speaking of false teachers who have an agenda they are pushing; not a minister of God who makes an honest mistake in humility. It is very important that we make that distinction. Paul similarly warns the Corinthians with the same forceful language.

I Corinthians 16:22 If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!

To love Jesus Christ means to follow Him, obey Him, and do what He does. This is very, very strong language when it comes to false doctrine and apostasy. The word "accursed" here in the original Greek is *anathema*. It means devoted to destruction; and the idea here is, that he who does not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and love Him, would be, and ought to be, devoted to destruction, or accursed of God.

It expresses what ought to be done; it expresses a truth with regard to the way God deals with rebellious and defiant people. No matter what anyone's

gifts might be, no matter what might be his wealth or his position, nevertheless if he does not have true love of Jesus Christ, he cannot be a true member of God's church.

Where is the tolerance in the attitudes of the apostles toward those who deny the truth? There should be no tolerance whatsoever for apostasy and false doctrine.

The preaching of John the Baptist toward the Pharisees and others was strong and intolerant of their perversion of God's truth.

Luke 3:7 Then he [John the Baptizer] said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

He did not have kind words for them at all because he knew what their heart was and what was motivating them. Some of the words of Jesus Christ Himself, in addressing the Pharisees, were quite pointed. He called them "whited sepulchers" or "whitewashed tombs," depending on the translation that you read.

Matthew 23:27 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

Jesus Christ and the apostles all had very powerful, strongly stated things to say about those who would lead God's people astray.

I John 2:21-22 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.

I have read this to you before, but I wanted to bring it out in this light of tolerance and intolerance. The language which John uses here is very strong; he does not hesitate to refer to these antichrists as liars. Since John often

appeals to us to love the brethren, it comes as a shock to some people that he would sound so intolerant of hypocrites who claim to be Christian while denying the absolute perfection and excellence of Christ's life, true value of His sacrifice, and His God-given authority. That is what these new trends in mainstream Christianity are doing.

John speaks of love very often in his letter; in fact, it is the central theme. Here is the man who appears as the great apostle of love and who talks so much about love in this particular epistle, yet how is it that he would describe these people who had gone out, and those who had seduced other members of God's church, as liars? That is more powerful and stronger a term than this world can bring themselves to use.

This comes across as something very strange to professing Christians, especially at this present time, because the catch word today is tolerance. We have been programmed as a society to be the most tolerant generation that the world has ever known.

Very few of today's purpose-driven churches take any stand on upholding the moral standards that are clearly stated in the inspired Word of God. The leaders have been successful in wielding their "tolerance" like a whip in countering and intimidating people who faithfully try to uphold the standards of biblical certainties and intolerant sounding truths. They are very critical of what they label "fundamental Christians."

In reality, what these false teachers fear and resent are those who have come out of the mindset of the world and therefore hinder today's communitarian (Communist) march toward the deceptive smoke-screen of the satanic "one world" kingdom of promised universal peace and solidarity.

There is a very real distinction drawn in the New Testament between what we are to endure for ourselves and our response when the truth is attacked. The Bible leaves no doubt on how we are to react. The Sermon on the Mount tells us to "turn the other cheek"; yes, we should! There is no inconsistency between what the apostle John says here with that teaching. With regard to ourselves and our own personal feelings, we are to endure anything and everything; we are not to stand up for ourselves; we are not to call people liars who attack us in person.

But where the truth is concerned, where doctrine is involved, where the whole essence of the gospel comes in, and especially with regard to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, and in the defense of God the Father and His sovereignty, we are to stand and be strong, and we are not to hesitate to use strong language like the apostles John, Paul, and James use.

In regards to ourselves, tolerance and love; let the world despise us and malign and persecute us and say what it will concerning us. Despite the world we have to continue forward with perseverance, expecting such criticisms. We have to have very thick skin.

When it becomes a question of truth which is absolutely vital to salvation and to the glory of God, there must be no compromise and there must be no attempt just to accommodate ourselves to the other person's point of view. We are obligated to take the position of John and to say, "Who is a liar but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ?" This denial involves the entirety of God's way of life. It is a denial of all that is good!

I am not saying that we should stand on the street corner and start lambasting people as they walk by. Of course not, and we are to use Christ's example. He was very diplomatic with people, but when it came to a person with a rebellious, destructive attitude, He put them in their place.

Now we have to be very careful when we make such dangerous statements, or when I make such dangerous statements as I stand here before you. It is very easy to persuade ourselves that we are just manifesting righteous indignation and "being angry and not sinning" when really we are just contending for some pet issue of our own. So it takes quite a bit of understanding of God's way of life.

We are only to stand like this about vital, central matters of doctrine. There are matters about which people have rarely agreed. We should not, for example, use this kind of language for odd points of prophecy, or if someone does not take our particular prophetic view. The New Testament does not make this stand on matters like that.

The New Testament makes a stand on central doctrinal matters. This is where we have to walk carefully and circumspectly. So we are not only to draw the distinction between ourselves and the truth, but also between truth, which is central and of which we have to be certain, and matters about which there may be what we can describe as a legitimate difference of opinion.

The point here is that John does regard this particular matter clearly as of central and vital importance. That is why he not only uses this language, but makes such a strong appeal to defend it. John is so concerned about this idea of tolerance and love and its perversion by what he calls antichrist liars for a number of reasons.

First, what the antichrists are saying is a lie. We just read John's elaboration in verses 21 and 22 of I John 2:

I John 2:21-22 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.

John is speaking to converted members of God's church. He is speaking to people who have an understanding of God's truth and His way of life, and so John is advising this to people who have a background upon which they can build and know in a balanced and Christian way how to deal with the person who denies the Father and the Son. This is the first reason that what these people were teaching does not correspond to the facts.

At the beginning of his letter John said that the essence of his preaching is based upon what he has seen with his eyes.

I John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life.

John, in effect, says, "These people are denying certain facts of which I am witness and about which I can testify. I was there. These deniers are liars."

Peter, James, and John were there, and they saw and heard the conversation and the testimony; they even heard the voice from heaven which said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear Him." John tells us that what these people teach is a contradiction of what the voice of God has said; therefore, what these people teach is a lie.

I want to emphasize this idea of a lie. I speak about it in general terms that the world's way of life is the lie, and our way of life, if it is in accordance with God, is the truth. The two can never come together. More often everyday we are hearing criticisms of Christianity that attack concrete facts of the inspired written Word of God. These criticisms are often the same ones that the apostles had to deal with during their time.

It is a blatant lie to say that Christ left the man Jesus on the cross and that it was only the man Jesus who died. Nevertheless, this lie was being thrown around then as it still is to this day. To this absurdity John counters, "I was there—I saw the Son of God die. I was in the upper room when He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and behold My hands." and when He said to all of us, "A spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see me have; a spirit cannot eat as you see Me eating."

John says, "I am a witness of these things. I am here to testify that it was the Son of God who died, and we saw Him ascending into heaven after His resurrection." With what we know to be true there reaches a point where there is nothing else that can be said about such false teaching except to brand it as a lie. There is no discussing it; there is no talking anyone into a different opinion once they have reached the denial that they have.

If we put this in its modern form, we find that there have been many attempts during the last century to reconstruct "the history of Jesus." There have been attempts to get rid of the miracles and the supernatural element. It seems that there is only one thing to say about all of this—it is not true, it is a lie! There is no convincing anyone in the world of this mindset that it is not true.

This false doctrine survives on and on because of this false spirit of tolerance which is such an obvious departure from that which we see characterized in the apostles, and Jesus Christ in His teaching. That is the first thing John emphasizes—that what the antichrists are saying is a lie.

Second, John warns these people against this subtle danger and urges them to avoid it because of certain consequences which follow from believing it. It is not only untrue in and of itself, but consider these consequences in this quote from John:

I John 2:22-23 He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son, does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

The consequences of tolerating this false teaching involve a denial of the Son. In other words, it denies the very doctrine of the resurrection. And it not only denies that Christ came in the flesh; it also denies the work of Jesus Christ. John words it this way, "Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?"

What or who is "the Christ?" He is the Anointed One who has been set apart by God to do a certain work. The New Testament teaches that Jesus, the Son of God, was set apart by His Father and anointed with the Holy Spirit without measure in order to do that work.

What was that work? It was the work of building a family. It was the work of taking the sins of the world upon Him, of suffering and bearing our punishment to make reconciliation for us, and then rising again to be our Advocate.

This denial of the Son, that is, if the Son of God was separate from Jesus and left the man Jesus at the crucifixion, would mean that there was no atonement for us. No man could do it; it is only the Son of God who could bear the sins of the whole world.

If the Christ had left the man Jesus on the cross, there is no atonement. This would mean that we would still have to pay the penalty of death for our own sins; and that there is no forgiveness of sins. And I repeat this again, for the fourth or fifth time in a sermon, because it is foundationally important—mainstream Christianity denies this very thing more and more.

So is it any surprise that John called these false teachers liars? Is it surprising that he branded that teaching as a lie? Anything that robs us of our salvation and our standing with God is a lie, and we must strongly denounce it. It is a denial of the person and work of Jesus Christ. But John does not stop at that; he goes on to say that anyone who denies the doctrine concerning God the Father is a liar.

I John 2:23-25 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also. Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life.

He draws the direct contrast and the comparison to what the world and these false teachers are offering, which is absolutely nothing, to what God is offering to us for acknowledging and living the way of the Father and the Son. What it really amounts to is this: there is no real doctrine of the Father, and of God, except in terms of Jesus Christ.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

Without this truth we would be living with some vague belief in God as a power or force, or someone who could intervene for us in a moment of need, but the teaching of Jesus Christ and the apostles is that there is no such thing as a true knowledge of God apart from Jesus Christ.

Tolerance of such false beliefs causes confusion and a wrong view and understanding of God. I am expressing, restating, and repeating this because I fully believe that each and every one of us will face a time when we are going to have to answer for these things that we believe. We will have to make our stand, and we are going to have to be steadfast, diligent, and firm in what we believe because we are going to be sorely tried as to how dedicated we are to this way of life.

We can believe in a Creator, we can believe in some unseen influence, but we will never know the Father except through the Son. "He that has seen Me, has seen the Father," Christ said. That is why John calls this strange teaching a lie, and that is why he brands these people as liars.

Tolerance leads us to ourselves with our human reasoning and philosophy and our own vain efforts and endeavors to try to find God. This leads to confusing and false consequences.

Today, we are seeing mass confusion in mainstream Christianity. We have just been looking at the consequences of believing the lie, but John does not stop at that. He shows us the consequences of believing the truth. "And this is the promise that He has promised us, even eternal life." John tells us not to believe the lie. It not only robs us of true doctrine, it robs us of eternal life.

I John 2:26-27 These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

The last thing John emphasizes regarding not tolerating this false teaching is in verse 28.

I John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

None of us wants to be ashamed to stand before Christ because we have not stood firm, or we had been swindled out of our salvation because of the lies that are perpetrated by other people.

If we believe the lie, we will find ourselves face to face with believing it as fact. Very much like the outcome-based purpose-driven movement, they have denied the truth; they think they are wisely clever. They have this mixture of philosophy and mysticism, and they have been trying to make us

believe in a kind of phantom Christ body. They want us to believe that an eternal God came upon the man Jesus and then left Him.

John says these deceptions are unreal and intolerable—do not believe them! The day is coming when we will face the fact that Jesus Christ is coming back to this world. He will come again, and then we will see Him; but if we believe the lie, we will be ashamed when we see Him. Why am I telling you to avoid this lie? It tells us right here:

Matthew 24:21-25 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. Then if anyone says to you, "Look, here is the Christ!" or "There!" do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand.

Here I say, beware of worldly tolerance. Beware of these seductions, of these liars who deny that Jesus is the Christ. Hold on to the truth. These same false teachers are promoting tolerance, but tolerance is the device being used to turn servants of God into slaves of Satan, sin, and the world. We saw this very thing happen in the Worldwide Church of God in the late 80s. Tolerance of sin gradually makes sin acceptable in our own lives as a way of life.

Truth must abide in us, for if it does, that great day of His coming will not come to us as a surprise. It will not come as a shock or as a condemnation. We will not be offended or ashamed, and we will rejoice and glory in it. Worldly tolerance is not of the truth, but it flourishes in the quagmire of lies put forth to the people.

This is the message that the apostle John is sending. The false teaching is a lie, and it leads to terrible consequences. It also robs us of the wonderful consequences of believing the truth of the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It steals from us the breathtaking consequence of Christ's return to set up the Kingdom of God on earth and the quality of eternal life.

When a person stares into a snow-covered landscape for a long time without eye protection, he will go snow-blind. This has happened to this nation and the world is following suit. One of the tools being used is this attitude of tolerance.

The barren landscape of television, radio, magazines, and other media devices, as well as government education, will do a similar thing to the human mind. And, when the mind has only rare glimpses of the Bible and prayer, whether it wants it or not, it will have left upon it an indelible imprint, and it will suffer from a distortion of its vulnerable retina.

As a result of media-blindness and government education, methods of brainwashing, our view of things becomes blurred and distorted. This is especially true for children, and even children of members of God's church. When we become reprogrammed in this way, we harmonize with the world's color of truth and morality. Not surprisingly, we do not even realize that it is happening.

Many pride themselves on objectivity, believing that no one can fool them. This trap is the work of a deceived mind. There is a biblical truth and warning, "Let him who thinks he stands, take heed, lest he fall."

It is impossible to be unaffected by a continual repetitive message infused into the subconscious. Paul warned the Galatians, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."

Brace yourselves as the world's tolerance is about to explode into very harsh intolerance. Satan takes every opportunity to spoon-feed humans with conscience-numbing enticements, especially through the media and government education. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. What I am trying to do today is to imprint this upon your minds.

Rebellious human nature, duped by dark influences, drives these social and spiritual transformations that we are seeing happen today. But God and His Word enable us to stand firm in the midst of this raging spiritual battle.

We find encouragement in knowing that God's timeless truth and His omnipotent strength never changes, it never weakens, and it never gives up on our behalf.

I Corinthians 15:57-58 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.