

## Revelation — Lesson 14

Our handout this week is a summary of what we discussed near the end of class last week. As you recall, the mighty angel who opens Chapter 10, stands on sea and land, raises his right hand, and swears a solemn oath that that “there should be no more delay, but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God, as he announced to his servants the prophets, should be fulfilled.” We discussed the meaning of “mystery” in that statement, and I proposed a broad understanding of the term that includes the entire scheme of redemption from A to Z, where A started before creation and Z ends with the fulfillment of the prophecies about Rome.

Why choose that particular Z as our ending point? Because that event (whenever we date it) marks the final fulfillment of every prophecy that had to be fulfilled before Jesus could return again. Paul told us as much in 2 Thessalonians 2:2-4 when he wrote, “for that day shall not come, **except** there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.”

A question left open on the handout is whether that dividing line occurred with the death of the evil emperor Domitian in A.D. 96 or with the sacking of Rome and the later fall of Rome in the fifth century (or perhaps some other event regarding Rome). If you had asked me that question when I first taught this class back in 1991, I would have told you it was fall of Rome in A.D. 476. Today, I am leaning more toward the fall of Domitian in A.D. 96. Here is how that latter event was described by the prophet Daniel in Daniel 7:23-27 —

Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great

words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. **But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.**

We will consider this question much more closely as we proceed through the remainder of the book.

10:8 Then the voice which I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, “Go, take the scroll which is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land.” 9 So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll; and he said to me, “Take it and eat; it will be bitter to your stomach, but sweet as honey in your mouth.” 10 And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it; it was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter. 11 And I was told, “You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.”

John is not given the book, but instead he is told to take it. This distinction emphasizes his commitment to undertake the responsibility of recording and presenting God’s message. This part of the vision reminds us of Jeremiah 15:16 (“Your words were found, and I ate them”) and of Ezekiel 2:8 - 3:3 —

“But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious

house; open your mouth and eat what I give you." Now when I looked, there was a hand stretched out to me; and behold, a scroll of a book was in it. Then He spread it before me; and there was writing on the inside and on the outside, and written on it were lamentations and mourning and woe. Moreover He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll. And He said to me, "Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you." So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness.

As did Jeremiah and Ezekiel, John eats the book to signify his acceptance of this responsibility. He makes the message a part of himself.

The scroll was bitter. Why? Because it contained some bad news — the church would suffer great persecution. It was also bitter for John to prophesy of the destruction that would befall the wicked world.

But, the scroll was also sweet. The church would ultimately triumph over Rome, and, just as Daniel had foretold, the eternal kingdom of God would sweep away all the kingdoms of this world.

Verse 11 tells us that John would prophesy about many peoples and nations and tongues and kings. Except for "kings" in place of "tribes," these are the same categories from which the saints were purchased in 5:9. How does the language in verse 11 of *peoples* and *nations* fit with the notion that this book is largely about a *single* nation, Rome?

The Roman empire was composed of many peoples and nations and tongues and kings. Rome at various times in its history conquered and thus included the Sabines, the Etruscans, the Sicilians, the Berber tribes of North Africa, the Illirians, Carthage, Macedonia, Syria, Judea, Spain, Gaul, Egypt, much of what is now Great Britain, the Dacians, Lybia, and the Parthians. That list is made up of many peoples and nations and tongues and kings!

At the end of class last week, a question was asked about whether the little book eaten by John could have been the book of Revelation itself, or rather a symbolic depiction of the book since John is seeing it in a vision. It is possible. What little we know about the little book fits well — both are revelations given by God to John, both were “eaten” by John in the sense that John was given the responsibility to convey their contents, both contained things that were bitter and things that were sweet. Another possibility is that the little scroll is a summary of the vision. This view fits well with the description of the book as “little,” and it fits well with the following chapter, which many see as a summary of the remainder of the book.



## Chapter Eleven

1 Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told: “Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, 2 but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample over the holy city for

forty-two months. 3 And I will grant my two witnesses power to prophesy for one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.” 4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands which stand before the Lord of the earth.

Barclay: “It has been said that [Chapter 11] is at one and the same time the most difficult and the most important chapter in Revelation.” (I’m not certain I agree with either assessment.)

Chapter 11 begins by considering the question of what was to become of the faithful servants of God during these great trials and judgments. And we see yet another description of this group — this time as a measured temple of worshipers, separated from the world and under God’s protection.

What is the purpose of the measuring rod? In Ezekiel’s vision of the restored temple, a measuring rod was used to make a separation between what is holy and what is common. Recall Ezekiel 42:19–20 —

Then he turned to the west side and measured, five hundred cubits by the **measuring reed**. He measured it on the four sides. It had a wall around it, five hundred cubits long and five hundred cubits broad, **to make a separation between the holy and the common**.

We are also reminded of Zechariah 2:1-5 —

I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand. Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, **To measure Jerusalem**, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof. And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein: For I, saith the LORD, will be unto

her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.

The separation between the holy and the profane also reminds us of 2 Corinthians 6:17-18 —

Wherefore **come out from among them, and be ye separate**, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

What is John told to measure? The temple, the altar, and those who worship there. The word for temple here indicates the inner sanctuary where only priests were allowed. It is not the Greek word denoting the entire temple with all of its buildings, courts, and porches.

Which temple is John to measure? Is it the Jewish temple in Jerusalem? Some commentators consider this verse evidence that the book was written before the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. But we must remember that John is seeing a vision, and objects can exist in a vision whether or not they exist on earth. Because so much of John's imagery has come from the Old Testament, it is very possible that the temple he sees here is the sanctuary of the Old Testament tabernacle. That sanctuary had only one court, and, as Hebrews tells us, was a type of the church.

This temple is the church. Recall Paul's description of the church in Ephesians 2:18-22 —

For through him we both have **access by one Spirit unto the Father**. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto **an holy temple** in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an **habitation of God** through the Spirit.

All Christians are now priests (Revelation 1:6). We all have access to the inner sanctuary. As we just read in Ephesians, God's place of habitation is now among men. Recall 1 Peter 2: 5 — "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

The church was sealed in 7:3, the church was numbered in 7:4, and now the church is measured in Chapter 11. Does God care what happens to the church? Absolutely! These images show God taking great interest in and care of his church. He marks them, he numbers them, he measures them. And God's measurement is the only one that matters. It does not matter how the world measures us, and it does not matter how we measure ourselves. What matters is how God measures us. If we fall short on his scale, it matters not how we fall on the scales of men.

What is the court in verse 2? The ancient tabernacle had one court (Exodus 27:9). Solomon's temple had an inner court (1 Kings 6:36), an outer court (1 Kings 7:12), a court for the priests (2 Chronicles 4:9), and an upper court (Jeremiah 36:10). Herod's temple also had multiple courts, with the great court eventually being called the court of the Gentiles because it was open to everyone.

The temple in John's vision has only one court as far as we are told, and John is told *not* to measure that court — that is, not to protect it or separate it from what was common. The Greek word translated "leave that out" in verse 2 can literally mean to cast out by force.

What is represented by this outer court? One popular view is that the measured temple denotes the faithful in the church, and the outer court denotes those who prove unfaithful and who compromise with the world by following the doctrines of Balaam, Jezebel, and the Nicolaitans. That is possible, but it is also possible that the measured temple denotes that spiritual part of a Christian's life that is hidden with God in Christ and that in this book is viewed as already residing in Heaven, and the outer court denotes the physical life of the Christian under Roman persecution, something that would be temporary both from the standpoint of Rome and from the standpoint of our limited time here on earth. I favor this second view because it seems

to me that Revelation has already made the division between the faithful and the faithless in the church, with the latter already being placed firmly in Rome's camp as those who dwell upon the earth.

God is telling the church that it will soon undergo a period of intense persecution but that it will be sustained. Rome will be allowed to trample the church for awhile but it will not be allowed to destroy its heart; that is, its inner sanctuary.

God is telling the church that he will not permit it to be annihilated, and that must have been a real fear for Christians at this time. How could the church withstand mighty Rome? It must have appeared to many as if the church would soon be completely wiped out.

Do we have similar fears today? It is easy to become discouraged when we look at the state of the Lord's church today in a world that seems to be in free fall, and sometimes seems to be carrying the church down with it. "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8) Yes — but only if we are faithful and only if we pass that faith on to others through our faithful proclamation of the gospel. We should not be discouraged because we are in the minority because God's people have *always* been a minority on this earth except for two times — just after creation and just after the flood. But if we ever stop proclaiming the word of God to a lost and hostile world, then we have good cause to be discouraged, and the answer to Jesus' question in Luke 18:8 may be "no."

Why was the trampling to last 42 months? This period of time is the same as 1260 days (42 months of 30 days each) and is also found in Revelation 12:6 where it is also called "time, times and half a time" (Revelation 12:14); that is, three and one half years (12 months times 3 years plus 6 additional months).

As elsewhere in Revelation, this time period should not be interpreted literally but instead is used to symbolize a state of affairs. To determine what state of affairs is depicted, we should first consider what all that symbol is used to describe:



- It is the period during which the holy city will be trampled in 11:2.
- It is the period during which the witnesses will prophecy in 11:3.
- It is the period during which the woman will be nourished in the wilderness in 12:6, 14.
- It is the duration of the beast's authority in 13:5.
- In Daniel 7:25 and 12:7 it is the period of time during which the little horn will persecute God's people.

We haven't studied all of those texts yet, but in each of them the symbol  $3\frac{1}{2}$  depicts a period of time during which God's people will be persecuted yet sustained. That is, the symbol depicts a temporary persecution.

Why is 42 months used to depict a temporary persecution? We could ask the same question about 1260 days. The solution appears when we note that 42 months and 1260 days are each equal to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years, which is a broken 7.

Why not always use  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years? Why are 42 *months* used sometimes, and 1260 *days* used at other times? It may be that going from years to months and even to days makes the same time period look even more temporary. Others say that days are used here to denote the day to day activities of the two servants as they prophesy about God.

We have seen the number 7 used many times in this book to denote something that is perfect and total. In fact, this book is constructed around the number 7 — the letters to the 7 churches, the 7 seals, the 7 trumpets, the 7 thunders, the 7 bowls of the God's wrath. So it is not surprising to discover that some of the most important symbols in this book are keyed to the number 7. Later we will see 666, which is one such symbol. Here we see another such symbol,  $3\frac{1}{2}$ .

If God's judgment of Rome is a 7, then Rome's persecution of the church is just a  $3\frac{1}{2}$ . Isn't that a beautiful symbol? Rome can't pour 7

bowls of wrath on the church! Rome doesn't have 7 of anything to use as a weapon against the church!

By saying that the persecution will last 3½ years, God is saying that the persecution is temporary. He is not giving them a specific date 3½ years later when it will end. (Although we should pause to note that at least once God used the symbolic 3½ for the duration of a literal event — the 3½ year drought brought about by the prayer of Elijah discussed in James 5:17.)

Who are the two witnesses? Many different answers have been proposed to that question, including Moses and Elijah or Enoch and Elijah. Some say they denote the Old and New Testaments, while others say they denote the prophets and the apostles. Others say that the two witnesses are the apostles and the Holy Spirit, and they point to John 15:26 for support —

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

In my opinion, the two witnesses once again describe the church. But you sound like a broken record! Can this symbol really be yet another symbol for the church? It is starting to seem like nearly every symbol we come to somehow describes the church! Exactly! And that is how it seemed to its first century audience as well. They were left with precisely the impression that God wanted them to have — the church is so important to God and so loved by God that he is constantly looking at it and caring for it and thinking about it! Jesus is in love with his church! If you ever doubt that, read Revelation!

But on what basis can say that the two witnesses denote the church? In verse 4, they are called two olive trees and two lampstands. In Zechariah 4 two olive trees are used to denote two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth. They are Zerubbabel of the royal line and Joshua, a priest. What is it that combines both the priesthood and royalty? The church is a royal priesthood. (1 Peter 2:9)

The church is a kingdom of priests. (Revelation 1:6) And as for the lampstands, remember that the seven churches in Chapters 2 and 3 were depicted as golden lampstands.

But why are there *two* witnesses? Although there are many different symbols for the church in this book, each shows us the church from a different perspective. Here the focus is on the testimony of the church. These two witnesses testify, and two is the number of confirmed testimony.

- **John 8:17** It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.
- **Deuteronomy 17:6** At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.
- **John 5:31–32** If I bear witness to myself, my testimony is not true; there is another who bears witness to me, and I know that the testimony which he bears to me is true.
- **Matthew 18:16** But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses.
- **Luke 10:1** After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.
- **1 Timothy 5:19** Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

Why do the two witnesses prophecy in sackcloth? Sackcloth was a coarse fabric woven from goat or camel hair, and it was worn at times of mourning or penitence. It was also the characteristic attire of the Old Testament prophets.

What is very clear in this depiction is that the church continued to operate even while being persecuted. Rome may have trampled the church, but Rome was not able to stop the church. The proclamation of the gospel continued despite Rome's best efforts to stamp it out.

Once again, we have a lesson for the church today. God is depending on his church to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. He has given us that great commission, and he expects us to do it. If we do not do it, then it will not be done. Even in the darkest hours of persecution, God expected the church to continue its mission — and it did. What excuse will we have if we are ever found to have failed in that mission? If they preached Christ in the face of death, then how will God respond if we fail to preach Christ in the face of ridicule?

To sum up, so far in Chapter 11, John has been told to measure the temple of God, and two witnesses have been sent out to prophecy for 3½ years. The message in a nutshell is that the church is going to be persecuted but that persecution will be temporary. Although Rome will trample the church for a short time, the spiritual strength of the church will not be harmed.

5 And if any one would harm them, fire pours out from their mouth and consumes their foes; if any one would harm them, thus he is doomed to be killed. 6 They have power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they desire. 7 And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that ascends from the bottomless pit will make war upon them and conquer them and kill them, 8 and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which is allegorically called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.

The two witnesses are at first pictured as unstoppable. Anyone who harms them is doomed to be killed. They, like Elijah and Elisha, have the power to shut the sky that no rain may fall. They, like Moses and Aaron, have the power to smite the earth with plagues.

But in verses 7 and 8 it seems that this pair was not unstoppable after all. The beast from the bottomless pit makes war on the witnesses and conquers and kills them.

Is this defeat a permanent defeat? No. The beast (which we will later see is Rome) does not have a final victory over the church. We know this, if for no other reason, because Daniel told us so 600 years before these events occurred. Daniel 7:23–27 tells us about the church’s victory over Rome, and verse 27 concludes:

And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey them.

We also know from verse 2 that this apparent victory will not last. Rome was to trample the holy city for only 3½ years.

Rome may have believed it would be victorious. Rome may have appeared to all the world to be victorious. The church may have even thought that Rome was going to be victorious. And so, for now, Rome is pictured as being victorious. But, as we will soon see, that victory is only an illusion. As terrible as the beast was, it could not stop the church. It could kill the witnesses and seek to destroy their work, but there would be only one *permanent* defeat, and it would be the defeat of Rome.

Why show their defeat at all if it’s not a real defeat? One word — drama! This is the part of the show where it looks like the hero is dead for sure! How will he ever get out of this one? Those who think we need to add drama to the worship assembly with dramatic music or dramatic performances need to take a look at Revelation! The Bible is dramatic without any help from us!

What is the great city in verse 8? It is “allegorically called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.” Thus, allegorically, it is called three cities or nations — Sodom, Egypt, and Jerusalem (the city where the Lord was crucified).

What is the allegory for each of these locales? Rome, like Sodom, was a center of iniquity. Rome, like Egypt, oppressed and persecuted God's people. Rome, like Jerusalem, promoted a false religion.

I say the allegory extends to *three* locales, but it most likely actually extends to a fourth — Babylon. The city here is called great, and Babylon is called “great” 10 times in Revelation. For example, in 14:8, we read, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” Rome, like Babylon, persecuted God's people and promoted a false religion.

But shouldn't we take verse 8 as a *literal* identification of the great city? How can we? The most immediate problem is that *three* and possible *four* locales are given. Which one is the great city? A second problem is that one of the locales, Egypt, is not a city. And if we take this symbol literally, why stop there? Why not then take all of the others symbols in this chapter literally? The descriptions of the great city are symbolic, just like the other descriptions in this book.

Lenski wrote:

Here Jerusalem is to be taken ideally, as the headquarters of all anti-Christianity. The actual city became such a symbol when it crucified Christ and never repented and was then razed to the ground.

Hailey wrote:

John sees this great city as a spiritual Sodom in its moral depravity, as an Egypt holding all people in bondage to lust and sin, and as a Jerusalem that rejected truth and put to death the author of truth.

The message to the church in all of this was that the church was going to suffer just as Christ himself suffered. Rome was, in effect, trying to cast Jesus outside of the city gates just as Jerusalem had done.

Are we surprised by that message? We shouldn't be. Our own country is doing the same thing. We are throwing Jesus out of our schools, out of our government, and out of our public and social discourse.

The courts have turned freedom *of* religion into freedom *from* religion. Those who lead public prayers are often told not to mention the name of Jesus in their prayer. He is no more welcome in our society than he was in Jerusalem or in Rome — and his followers should expect no better. “In this world ye have tribulation.” (John 16:33) If we do not have tribulation by the world, it may be because we are *of* the world rather than merely *in* the world.

There are many who identify the great city with Jerusalem, but in my opinion that identification just doesn't fit with the context of this book. If the villain in this book is Rome (which seems indisputable to me), then why would God include a discourse about the judgment of Jerusalem at the hands of that great villain? And why would those seven churches in Asia be all that concerned about the judgment of Jerusalem at the hands of Rome, the very power who was persecuting them? How would Rome's destruction of Jerusalem provide any comfort to Christians being persecuted by Rome? It might even have the opposite effect — “You're worried about Rome? You should be. Look at what it did to Jerusalem! You're worried that you've been forgotten by God? You should be. He may be punishing you at the hands of Rome just like he's punishing Jerusalem at the hands of Rome.”

Yes, when you focus on a verse here and a verse there, some of them could fit the destruction of Jerusalem. (Luke 21:24, for example, looks a lot like Revelation 11:2.) But when you step back and look at those verses in their context, I think you will discover that from that perspective they fit Rome much better.

Every description of the villain in this book fits Rome perfectly, and this description is no exception. The great city pictured here is Rome.

9 For three days and a half men from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, 10 and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had

been a torment to those who dwell on the earth.

Verses 9 and 10 paint a vivid portrait of the wicked world celebrating the death of the two witnesses. Evil men had once celebrated the death of Jesus, no doubt thinking they had at last overcome him and had the last word — and yet look at what happened just a few days later. The evil celebrants in these verses are about to relive that history. Things are not what they seem!

How long do they gloat? Verse 9 tells us — 3½ days. We know what that means! It means the world's celebration is premature and temporary. It means their celebration will not last long. Why? Because this apparent defeat is not really a defeat at all, just as Jesus' apparent defeat on that cross was no defeat of Jesus at all, but rather was the defeat of the world and of Satan, the prince of this world.

Those who hate the church celebrate and rejoice at its apparent demise. Verse 10 tells us that the church had been “a torment” to those who dwell on the earth. Why? Because those who dwell on the earth were evil, and they did not like to be reminded of that fact.

Are we a torment to those living in sin? Do we set before them an example of righteous living that would create such torment in them? Why would we want to do that? Because while some of those in torment are likely to strike back at us, others may be led to repentance. The church is not only the light of the world, it is the salt of the world — and salt sometimes causes torment. Jesus often caused people to gnash their teeth! When was the last time we did that? (And I'm not including when we do that to each other!)

How can we *avoid* ever causing someone torment? By living the same way they do. In fact, if we proclaim righteousness but live unrighteously, our hypocrisy will cause them great happiness rather than great torment. Those who compromise with the world will never cause the world to experience any torment — at least not in this life. If you want to avoid experiencing what these two witnesses experienced, then just blend in with the world.



Those who dwell upon the earth thought the church had been defeated, and they were very glad to be rid of it. As you recall from our introductory classes, the Roman historian Tacitus referred to Christianity as a disease, which is how many people see it today.

What about us? Are we friends with the world, or would the world like to be rid of us? We know what the Bible has to say about friendship with this evil world — “know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” (James 4:4)

This country’s view of Christ is changing, or perhaps I should say *has* changed. The Hollywood that produced *Ben Hur* in 1959 and honored it with 11 Academy Awards is the same Hollywood that in the late 80’s produced *The Last Temptation of Christ*, which portrays Jesus as a lustful sinner, Paul as a lying fraud, and Judas as a selfless hero. Why the change? Why the attack? Could it be because they are in torment and are striking out at the source of that torment?

And please note that this is *not* an attack against religion — it is a very focused attack against Christianity. The media establishment that released *The Last Temptation* is the same media establishment that passed on a movie version of *The Satanic Verses* and balked at publishing cartoons showing Mohammed with a bomb in his keffiyeh. As one critic noted, “When it came to the prospect of enraging the Islamic faithful, the instinct for self-preservation took precedence over the commitment to controversial religious explorations.”

But self-preservation cannot be the sole reason that Christianity is the focus of their attack. Why? Because they have backed away from other controversies when self-preservation was never an issue. In 1990 when Disney was about to release the movie *White Fang*, the Humane Society complained that the movie was making “an anti-wolf statement.” Disney caved immediately, agreeing to remove a dramatic scene in which a wolf attacks a man and to adding a pro-wolf disclaimer to the end of the film. When the Hopi Indians complained to Robert Redford about what they called the sacrilegious treatment of their ancient rites in his film *Dark Wind*, he caved immediately and made the changes they requested. It seems that the prospect of being

labeled anti-wolf produced greater worry in Hollywood than the prospect of being labeled anti-Christ!

The next time you are tempted to befriend this world just remember what this world thinks about and says about your Savior! “Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” (James 4:4) And this world is filled with enemies of God. “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” (Philippians 3:18-19) You tell me if a better description of Hollywood was ever penned!