

“NO MAN SPAKE OPENLY OF HIM”

The hatred of Jesus at the hands of the religious leaders of his day led the common people to discuss the words and actions of the Messiah in secret, fearing the wrath of the scribes and Pharisees should their opinions about Jesus be made known. It is sad to read, “No man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews” (John 7:13). Many today refuse to speak openly concerning the Christ for fear of what may think or say.

We live in a society where many intelligent, God-fearing individuals refuse to acknowledge their belief in God and in His Son, the Christ, because they fear the scorn and ridicule of those who refuse these beliefs. The ignorant and unlearned (based upon societal standards, not Biblical ones) in our society are made to believe that all intellectuals are atheists or agnostics. Society would have us believe that only a fool would manifest a faith in something or someone that can neither be seen nor heard. The Bible contradicts this popular train of thought (Ps.14:1). In man’s attempts to feel more intelligent, in an attempt to escape the stigma society attaches to those who believe in God and His Son Jesus Christ, many have abandoned those things they know to be true, and have instead chosen to embrace the ideals of the “intellectual elite.”

Many in our land refuse to speak openly of Jesus Christ for fear of violating government mandates. With every passing day, the government places more restrictions upon those who are trying to pattern their lives after God’s word. Many refrain from mentioning the name of God or Jesus in public, knowing that the government or the ACLU is lurking in the shadows. When government regulations interfere with our duty to God, then we must “obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

Many in the Lord’s church are unwilling to speak openly of Jesus Christ for fear of upsetting their friends and family members who are entangled in the deceitful and devilish doctrines of denominationalism. Many teachers, preachers, elders, deacons, and members of the Lord’s army have laid down their armor to embrace the forces of Satan. Many congregations of the Lord’s church are hesitant to speak the truth about Jesus Christ and his church. They refuse to wear the biblical name church of Christ (Romans 16:16). Instead, they desire to separate themselves from the Lord’s church by adopting denominational nomenclature, such as “Community Church,” or “Family of God.” Many in the Lord’s church refuse to speak openly of the truth regarding baptism. No longer do many congregations of the Lord’s church teach that baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), or that upon being baptized one is added by the Lord to the church (Acts 2:47), the one and

only church of Christ. Instead, many now teach that baptism is necessary (for what they will not elaborate), and any reason for one's being baptized is to be considered compliance with the will of God.

May we as God's children resolve today to speak openly of Jesus wherever we go (Acts 4:13). Rather than fearing the ridicule of man, or even physical harm from those who seek to destroy the faith, we should fear God if we refuse to speak openly about Jesus. *Patrick Morrison*