

Persecution; A Promise of GOD

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We like to hear the promises in the Bible we like (health, wealth, joy, peace, salvation, etc...), but do you know that persecution is also on that list. We live in a world where satan unfortunately controls most people. So, God warned us to be wise as a serpent and yet gentle as a dove (Matt. 10:16). The Bible promises persecution along with God's Blessings.

“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 you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. “Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you as well; if they followed My word, they will follow yours also. “But all these things they will do to you on account of My name, because they do not know the One who sent Me. (John 15:18-21) NASB

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matt. 5:10-12) ESVS

In fact, **everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. (2 Tim. 3:12-15)**

Persecution is a Biblical pattern for all to experience. A Church or believer that does nothing for God will face no persecution. A believer or Church that does much for God will receive much persecution. Did you now that Revival and Persecution go hand in hand. Revival comes through Persecution. In History, every time the Church got persecuted it grew significantly, but when the Church got comfortable, fat, and lazy, it fell asleep and fell away from God and His Word.

Persecution Has a Purpose

God is All Powerful, He can snap His finger and end all evil and satan himself.

So why does God permit evil to continue? He has to permit it in order for the Church to wake up and do what it's supposed to do. God is All Good, so He uses that dumb crazy devil to persecute His Church. As crazy as it may seem, the Church needs the devil in order to grow. A muscle will not grow (get bigger) without resistance. The devil tries to stop the Church with persecution, but God uses persecution to ignite the Fire (Holy Ghost Fire) in His Church. Persecution will spread the fire.

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock (*not Peter*)
I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

(Matt. 16:18)

Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all. (Psa. 34:19)

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Cor. 4:16-18)

Who now **rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:**
(Col. 1:24)

And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, **having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.** (1 Th. 1:6,7)

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. (Heb. 10:35,36)

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. (Heb. 11:24-27)

Take, my brethren, **the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.** Behold, **we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.**

(Jam. 5:10,11)

The Most Common Question Asked by the Church in Persecution is!

“WHY LORD?” *(thank you Tony Evans)*

Because the problem we are dealing with simply does not make sense. Sometimes it seems unfair, and sometimes we even wonder; does God care? It is one thing to ask God a question, it is quite another to question God. The first is okay, the second God will not permit! But probably the biggest WHY as we are concerned is: Jesus on the Cross saying, “My God My God WHY has thou forsaken Me!” (Mark 15:34)

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. (Phil. 3:10,11)

Job the Biggest; Why LORD?

But as far as human trouble is concerned, Job wins the prize. Because the whole book is about why!

Have I sinned? What have I done to You, Watcher of mankind? **Why have You made me Your target,** So that I am a burden to myself? **“Why then do You not forgive my wrongdoing And take away my guilt?”** For now I will lie down in the dust; And You will search for me, but I will no longer exist.” (Job 7:20,21) NASB

Why Lord do the Righteous suffer? Is it worth being a Christian and do Right when I have to go through all this suffering? Job was a man who feared God and turned away from evil.

There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and **that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.**

(Job 1:1) ESVS

Job was a Man of Solid Faith and Solid Family (Job 1:4,5)

He would consecrate his family with offerings for their sins. Job covered his family with offerings of Faith.

And when the days of the feast had run their course, **Job would send and consecrate them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all.** For Job said, “**It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.**” **Thus Job did continually.**

(Job 1:5) ESVS

Job was the Greatest and Richest Man of the East

In spite of all of Job’s greatness and goodness, he was severely tested by God. God calls a meeting in Heaven with the sons of God (the angels) and satan is required to be there too (Job 1:6). All angels and demons were gathered before God. Daniels account of this scene!

“I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took His seat; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, Its wheels were a burning fire. “A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; **Thousands upon thousands were serving Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court convened, And the books were opened.** (Dan. 7:9,10) NASB:

God has a Courtroom in Heaven where Books are Going to be Opened

Everyone has a personal book in Heaven. This book records everything you’ve done for God since your birth. Even Jesus has a book because He became a man.

(Heb. 10:5-10)

My frame was not hidden from You When I was made in secret, And skillfully formed in the depths of the earth; Your eyes have seen my formless substance; **And in Your book were written All the days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.** (Psa. 139:15,16) NASB

Satan’s goal is to blind you (deceive you) as to what God has written in your book. In other words, he want’s to deny you your destiny. He wants to destroy God’s plan and purpose for your life that starts at conception and goes all the way through death. He does that by accusing you before God in the Court of Heaven.

Job’s Trial and Satan’s Accusations

God ask’s satan, have you considered my servant Job? He is blameless and upright. Although Job was blameless, satan accuses Job of wrong motives. Satan answers God, does Job serve you for nothing or does he serve you for his blessings? Just like many people in Church today. They serve Him for His blessings (new car, new house, plenty of money, etc... but not for who He Is!

Satan then challenges God based on Job's motivation. Satan charged Job with doing the right things with the wrong thoughts (motives). He tells God, remove his blessings and let me strike him and you'll see he will curse you to your face.

Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? **Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power;** only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD. (Job 1:9-12)

Notice something interesting here. The devil cannot do anything unless he gets permission from God! And we know God is perfect and all loving, so that could only mean one thing. God uses that dumb devil to do the dirty work while He works out everything for our good and His Glory.

God takes up Satan's Challenge

God lets satan touch all that Job has (wealth, family, and even his health). Notice God is in control all the time, He only allows the devil to go so far for the purpose of accomplishing His will and His Glory. The devil destroys all that Job has including his family.

And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. (Job 1:13-19)

There is no such thing as bad luck in a Christians life, everything is either caused by God or allowed by God to accomplish His purposes.

Job Never Sins or Blames God Through the Whole Ordeal

Then Job got up, tore his robe, and shaved his head; then **he fell to the ground and worshiped**. He said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. **Blessed be the name of the LORD.**” **Despite all this, Job did not sin, nor did he blame God.**

(Job 1:20-22) NASB

God even lets satan put nasty boils all over Job’s skin, and as if this weren’t enough his own wife tells him to curse God and die. Which proves the need for a man to marry a Godly woman (Prov. 31:10-31).

And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. **So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.** And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes. **Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.** But he said unto her, **Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh.** What? **shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.** (Job 2:4-10)

There are things going on in Heaven we know nothing about. That’s why God wants us to Trust Him and walk by faith not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). We need to hear from God in Heaven so we can handle the things happening on Earth.

Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: But **he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.**

(Job 23:8-12)

Do we really understand what Job is Testifying here! Job is saying Father God, I have kept the Faith through this horrible ordeal, and I will come forth as pure Gold when this trial is all over!

When you are suffering and God does not answer, this could only mean God is working something out in you that needs fixing or changing. God will use trouble for you to get a bigger picture of Him.

God Appears to Job and Job Repents in Dust and Ashes

Job's confession of Faith after he finally sees the Lord face to face and repents in dust and ashes!

“I know that You can do all things, And that no plan is impossible for You. ‘Who is this who conceals advice without knowledge?’ Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I do not know. ‘Please listen, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me.’ ‘I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You; Therefore I retract, And I repent, sitting on dust and ashes.” (Job 42:1-6) NASB

God was asking Job; who does man think he is? Can man out smart GOD? Job's view of God changed and what changed it was his trouble and trials. After Job learns his lesson God then restores all of Job's fortunes and doubles his blessing!

The LORD also restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the LORD increased double all that Job had. (Job 42:10) NASB

*Remember we have a clever horrible enemy (satan). He's goal is to rob you of the blessing God has written in your Book. Satan wants to trade you God's Blessings for his ungodly sinful shameful book; (riches, pride, power, popularity, etc...). One third of God's angels (now demons) made the mistake of trading with him and will be tormented in Hell forever and ever. If you made the mistake of trading your life to the devil, **the Good News is** God has an appeal process. Where you can repent and ask God for forgiveness (The BLOOD of Jesus) and God will place you right back in His Kingdom and erase all your sins. Angels don't have that right or privilege! But, remember, while on Earth you are still responsible for the consequences of Sin.*

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. **For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us,** who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (Rom. 8:1-4)