

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.

Let's Examine the True Biblical Church

First, let's define; “What is a Church?”

For **where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.**”

(Matt. 18:20) ESVS

When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus. (1 Cor. 5:4) ESVS

*A study of the current Church shows that **11%** of the Church is found in the United States of America, and **89%** of the Church is found in the rest of the World. The **89%** is what we would call the third world Church or the persecuted Church. The study also found out that the Church in America is fat (rich), comfortable, lazy, and losing members; while the persecuted Church (poor third world) is growing tremendously. Why is that, asked the experts in the study? The answer was; the persecuted Church (poor third world) had to seek the Lord continuously on a daily bases or else they would not survive. They have to pray and worship God continually just to put food on the table for their families, and the persecuted Church has to pray through on a daily bases so that evil satanic muslim religions (Isis, etc...) would not find out who they are and cut their heads off. God will use the same standard in judging America as He does the Persecuted Church (poor third world). America (because of her riches) does not take God seriously (money, sports, fishing, idols, etc...). There are going to be many surprises in Heaven. I think the American Church will be greatly shocked at the Judgment seat of Christ.*

Persecution Has a Purpose

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

But **what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.** Yea doubtless, and **I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things,** and **do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,** And **be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law,** but **that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 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. 3:7-11)

Persecution Will Grow the Church and Pour Out God's Holy Spirit

Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and **preached Christ unto them.** And **the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.** For **unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them:** and **many taken with palsies,** and **that were lame, were healed.** And **there was great joy in that city.** (Acts 8:5-8)

But when they believed Philip as he was preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were being baptized. Now even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and **as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was repeatedly amazed.** Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, **who came down and prayed for them that they would receive the Holy Spirit.** (For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) **Then they began laying their hands on them,** and **they were receiving the Holy Spirit.** (Acts 8:12-17) NASB

But **ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:** and **ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem,** and **in all Judaea,** and **in Samaria,** and **unto the uttermost part of the earth.** (Acts 1:8)

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)

How to Overcome the Coming Persecution

Persecution is coming to the World, especially America. God's people must prepare for the great storm that's coming. The time will soon come when it will cost you a great price to say you are a Christian. You will have to stand up and say; marriage is only between one man and one woman, two men living together is an abomination, two women living together is an abomination, only Jesus Christ is the way to heaven, the Bible is the only Absolute Truth there is (etc...). At this time many believers will say to God; "I don't want to pay the price to follow Christ." They will become offended by His Word and the name of Jesus.

We Need to Sink our Roots Deep Into Christ (so we can weather the storm)

He replied, **“Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots.** (Matt. 15:13)

Therefore, **as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him**, having been **firmly rooted and now being built up in Him** and **established in your faith**, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude. **See to it that there is no one who takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception in accordance with human tradition**, in accordance with the elementary principles of the world, rather than in accordance with Christ. For **in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form.** (Col. 2:6-9) NASB

Lastly, Lets Examine the Parable of the Sower (notice, only one in four got saved)

And He told them many things in parables, saying, “Behold, the sower went out to sow; and as he sowed, **some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up.** “Others **fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and they sprang up immediately, because they had no depth of soil.** “**But after the sun rose, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.** “Others **fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out.** “But **others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirty times as much.** (Matt. 13:3-8) NASB

Explanation of the Sower

“When **anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one sown with seed beside the road.** “**The one sown with seed on the rocky places, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution occurs because of the word, immediately he falls away.** “And **the one sown with seed among the thorns, this is the one who hears the word, and the anxiety of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.** “But **the one sown with seed on the good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces, some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirty times as much.**”

(Matt. 13:19-23) NASB

This Brings Us to Our Next Lesson; (Lesson # 8)

“A Victorious Church in a Dark World”

When Jesus Died on the Cross His Blood gave the Church the Victory over Death, Hell, the Grave, the Flesh, the World, and the Devil. The only weapon Satan can use against the Church is Deception and Fear: