

# Persecuted For Believing



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The apostle wrote Acts 14:22 “*We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.*” If we are persecuted by the world, because of our trust on the Atonement of Christ, it shows that our faith is believing faith. After Stephen was martyred for his faith Acts 8:1 “*There was a great persecution against the church.*”

Any persecution is proof of true Christianity and genuine faith in God. Satan has convinced most, who proclaim to be followers of Christ, to think that *anyone* is a Christian—if they just *say* they are; if they attend a Christian church; and quote from the Bible.

The devil has convinced many that as long as a person looks pious and talks about religious beliefs, that *that* makes them righteous before God. But there is a *huge* difference from just *looking religious* and actually *being righteous*—through a believing, trusting, and living faith in the Atonement Blood of Jesus—a *huge* and very *important* difference!

Satan constantly tries to lower the standard of Christianity and to pull believers away from the Word of God until there is no real trust on God, and no genuine faith in Christ, for anything. If anyone thinks they can be a true child of God, but not walk in the light of His gospel Truth, and not follow New Testament teaching, Satan will quickly take them outside of God’s will in everything.

Satan will do anything to distort God’s Truth, which is why the apostle said 2 Corinthians 4:2 “*We practice no cunning tricks [have re-*

*nounced the hidden things of dishonesty], nor do we adulterate God’s Message. But by a full clear statement of the truth we strive to commend ourselves in the presence of God to every human conscience.*” The apostle gave the pure Truth of God’s Word, which is an uncompromising faith in God’s power.

We are required by God to give our life totally to Him, and to separate ourselves from sin, self, Satan, and the world. 2 Corinthians 6:17-18 “*Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.’ ‘I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.’”*

Our commitment to God’s Truth and keeping separate from those who do *not* trust Him for things in this life, may bring persecution, but we answer only to God. True Christianity is lacking in the lives of many who *say* they are believers.

The first mark of true discipleship is living in the *will of God*, by following what is written in Scripture. Matthew 7:21 “*Not everyone who says to me, ‘Master, Master,’ will enter the Kingdom of the Heavens, but only those who are obedient to [does the will of] my Father who is in Heaven.*”

There are many *professing faith*, but are *not possessing* real faith in Christ. 1 John 2:4 “*He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*” Bible Christians obeyed God’s Word—not in *their* strength, but in *God’s* strength, through His Holy Spirit—*after* confessing and forsaking their sins. True Christianity includes being healed and protected by the power of God—when a believing faith is on the Blood of His Son.

True Christians will be *tempted, tried, and persecuted*, but God promises to deliver us. Bi-

ble Christians received answers to prayer for healing and protection, but Satan tries to hide that. Matthew 7:13-14 “*Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*” Matthew 22:14 “*Many are called, but few are chosen.*”

Those who truly believe and trust God in faith would be as scarce in *this* day, as those who entered Noah’s Ark in *that* day. Jesus predicted Luke 17:26 “*As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man.*” Only eight persons met the conditions of believing faith on God—the rest of the world perished in the flood.

With another example only *three* persons escaped. Luke 17:28-29 “*Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.*” Trusting God in believing faith has always been the issue. Luke 18:8 “*When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?*”

We all need a spiritual *revival* and real *awakening* to God’s Truth. The Holy Spirit inspired the words Ephesians 5:14 “*Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light*” Isaiah 60:1. A spiritual renaissance is desperately needed in our hearts and in the world.

Divine protection was so perfect in the Bible that Moses said, no terror, no pestilence, or no plague could touch us. He said that a thousand could fall at our side, or ten-thousand at our right hand, but we would not be harmed Psalm 91.

The Christian church fell to the level of the world in the third century, so there has been

very little persecution of Christians since then. Any group, or individual, who truly believes and lives by the full Truth of God's Word, *will be persecuted*—just as they were persecuted in the first two centuries. Their lives were an offense to the world, so they were persecuted by tools of the devil, the world, and his agents.

If our faith in God does not bring the direct attacks of Satan; and if our faith does not result in persecution, hatred, anger, and opposition from those who belong to the world, then we do not have the first-century brand of Truth. When anyone follows the steps of Jesus and the disciples, they will encounter opposition from the devil.

*Persecution* means someone is acting against us; but the power in back of all opposition is the devil and his agents. When someone wants to live God's Truth, Satan begins to fight them. It is a spiritual battle Ephesians 6:12 *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers [principalities], against the authorities, against the [unseen] powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil [wickedness in high places].”*

Being a *friend* of the world makes us an *enemy* of God. If the world is friendly toward us and does not persecute us, something is missing spiritually—so we need to take inventory of our faith. We may have *lost* our salt—if we *had* any. Matthew 5:13 *“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?”* If we have the real Truth of God, we will face real persecution from the enemy.

A physical attack is *not* persecution—but it is an *oppression* from Satan—who wants to rob us of our Atonement right to health and healing. We are promised deliverance from sickness, trouble, and affliction—because these are charter rights of the Atonement of Christ Isaiah 53:4-6—

they are promises from God. There is, however, no promise to be exempted from persecution.

The apostle Paul said 2 Timothy 3:10-12 *“You have carefully followed my doctrine [teaching], manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering [patience], love, perseverance, 11 persecutions, afflictions”—etc. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. 12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”* Satan tried to bring harm to the apostle by unbelievers on the outside.

The devil wants us to accept fear and admit defeat, so he causes problems in the home; has unscriptural laws written; or tries to destroy our peace in some way. Even though our persecution seems to be far less than what first-century Christians faced, unbelievers are just as wicked, and Satan is just as evil today, as he was then.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 *“Mark this: There will be terrible [perilous, dangerous] times in the last days. 2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited [self-important], lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—5 having a form of godliness but denying [the] power. Have nothing to do with them.”*

Jesus said John 15:18-20 *“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.”* If they persecuted the Master of the house and nailed Him to the cross, how much more will they persecute those of His household!

The apostle Paul wrote—we 1 Thessalonians 2:13 *“thank God without ceasing, because when you*

*received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.”*

Anyone who *accepts, believes, and lives* by the Word of God, will be persecuted by those who *do not accept, do not believe, and do not live* by that Truth. 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16 *“For you, brothers, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches suffered from the Jews, who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also [persecute us].”*

*“They displease God and are hostile to all men in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last.”*

The most *spiritual* churches in the first century were the most *persecuted* churches. The Laodicean church was *not* persecuted because it was *not* zealous for God's Truth. Jesus said to them Revelation 3:17 *“You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.”*

Satan would not bother a wretched, pitiful, and spiritually blind church, but he would lull them to sleep, and convince them that their minister is teaching the way to heaven, when the truth *is* he is *not*.

When facing any persecution, the hope we keep alive is this: John 16:33 *“I have told you these things, [Jesus said] so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*



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