

# Persevere with Patience!



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Revelation 2:6-10

Jesus gives a positive report Revelation 2:3 *“You have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary.”* We persevere through trials with the help of the Holy Spirit—patience is a fruit of the Spirit Galatians 5:22.

No matter what we are going through; no matter how severe the trial may be; or how serious the persecution is, we must always persevere through by the power God will give us. John 14:21 *“He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”*

If we truly loved God and His Son Jesus, we would keep His Word in our heart and would obey His commands to love others—because 1 John 4:20 *“If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?”* God will help us show divine love toward all people. John 15:17 *“These things I command you, that ye love one another.”*

Being persecuted is a given; but persevering is a choice. Jesus said to the Ephesians Revelation 2:3 *“You have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary.”* Then He added 4 *“Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.”* They did not love the Lord nor

keep His Word as they had. John 14:21 *“He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me.”*

If we have fallen away from our faithful walk with the Lord, we must repent and get back to our first commitment and position Revelation 2:5 *“Or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.”* We have to repent and re-commit ourselves to follow His Word of Truth again.

The lampstand is the church that is obligated and bound by duty to give God’s full Truth in church services. As the apostle did—we do Acts 20:27 *“For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.”* Regardless of the persecution of the church, God will keep the door open, as we persevere in speaking His Truth. Jesus said Matthew 16:18 *“Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”*

Jesus told the church in Ephesus to return to their first love; He reminded them how far they drifted from His Truth; He said they needed to repent and be as committed as they once were; and He urged them to return to a position of trust on Him and the sacrifice He made for them regardless the persecution. John 15:18 *“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. 20 If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.”*

Smyrna was next—Revelation 2:8-9 *“Unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; 9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.”*

This is the shortest of the seven letters. Jesus does not warn them but commends them. Smyrna and Ephesus were both surrounded by paganism and idolatry. The people of Smyrna were known

for their loyalty to Rome and the worship of Caesar. True apostles of Jesus met with much persecution in Thessalonica Acts 17.

The apostle Paul Acts 17:2 *“Reasoned with them out of the scriptures, 3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.”* Jewish leaders were jealous of the apostles and started a riot to persecute them. The mob shouted Acts 17:7 *“They are all guilty of treason against Caesar, for they profess allegiance to another king, Jesus.”*

Although the persecution was serious, they persisted in their loyalty to the King of all kings, the Lord Jesus Christ—who says Revelation 2:10 *“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation [suffer persecution NIV] ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. 11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.”*

Being a Christian in Smyrna was difficult. If you were faithful to Jesus, you would be persecuted. The Romans would consider you an enemy; they would warn people to stay away from you; and they would advise others not to have anything to do with you.

The Christian church was not only under persecution from unbelieving Romans who insisted on Caesar worship, but they were also harassed by Jews who would not accept Jesus as the Messiah. The Lord referred to them as Revelation 2:9 *“The synagogue of Satan,”* and encourages true believers *“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life 10.”*

The believers were often reminded by Jesus to remain faithful to the true Gospel, because He knew that more persecution would be coming

their way. The believers in Smyrna and many Christians in Rome, suffered serious hardships for their faith—millions even lost their lives because they refused to worship Caesar.

Visiting Rome today—all that is left of their empire are ruins; a column here; a viaduct there; or a small part of the Roman road still visible. God's Truth and church has continued all these centuries. Instead of destroying the church, the Roman emperors strengthened it, as God used the persecution of His people to advance His kingdom.

It was difficult to live in those times, but even today Christians are persecuted in various parts of the world because of their loyalty and faith in Christ. Persecution is a given, but persevering is a choice! 2 Timothy 3:12 *"All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."*

No one asks for persecution and Smyrna did not want it, but if anyone then, or anyone now, desires to live a godly life, persecution will be met. We just have to persist in our trust on God to avenge any wrong because Romans 12:19 *"Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."*

Believers are persecuted because *righteousness* is offensive to *unrighteousness*. Matthew 5:10 *"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."*

When Jesus was on earth, He was Matthew 11:19 *"A friend of tax collectors and sinners!"* That might sound like a compliment *now*, but it was not *then*. The Jews were shocked that Jesus would fellowship closely with those who did not strictly follow the Law concerning outward actions and appearance.

Jesus was a friend of sinners—and *still* is today. Jesus loved the unloved and they *knew* He loved them—they were drawn to Him because of the compassion He had for them. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, Jesus said the father—Luke 15:20 *"Had compassion"* on the repentant son and accepted him back again—like God does for us when we turn back to Him and repent.

We often wonder why we have trials or what benefit they could be to us—but God knows what lessons we need—our duty is the persevere with patience. When we feel oppressed beyond measure—that is when we lean on Jesus and fully depend on God for the grace and strength we need to persevere with patience as we trust Him in faith.

If we are discouraged, Jesus encourages—Revelation 2:8 *"These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: 9 I know your works, tribulation, and poverty."* He said Revelation 1:17 *"Fear not; I am the first and the last: 18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore."*

Jesus has been and always will be eternal—whatever is happening in our life today is only temporary, but if we persevere with patience, and trust on the Atonement Blood of Christ, our new home with Him is eternal also. We will abide forever in the presence of God and His Son. Trials today are temporary 2 Corinthians 4:17 *"For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all."*

Whatever we are facing at the moment, Jesus knows about it, and He sympathizes with us—he has been through far worse. He says Revelation 2:9 *"I know your works, tribulation, and poverty."* Jesus has experienced the worst of persecution, opposition, and hatred. If we are going through a serious trial, He went through worse trials and troubles—even from His own people.

If we are going through a serious attack or pain, He has felt worse pain and worse suffering. Hebrews 4:15 *"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin."* Luke 22:28 *"You are those who have continued with Me in My trials."*

When someone has been through the same trials, temptations, or losses we have, they can sympathize with us—we know; *they* know. Jesus was Isaiah 53:3 *"Despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."* He truly says Revelation 2:9 *"I know your afflictions and your poverty"*—we know *He* knows.

Jesus does not give the believers in Smyrna a long sermon or speech, but He had a few words of encouragement for them—letting them know that He *knew* what they were going through, and He is able to *help* them get through it.

1 Corinthians 10:13 *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer [allow] you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."* He will help us persevere with patience when we ask Him!

God is *eternal*; He is *faithful*; and He helps us get *through* whatever we are *going* through—we need to ask Him and trust Him. We may be *persecuted*, but we must persevere with patience—Hebrews 4:16 *"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."* ***Persevere with Patience! That is our choice!***

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