

Bible Readings

Basic biblical teaching about persecution:

- Christians are to expect persecution. (John 15:18-21; 17:14; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 John 3:13)
- God blesses right suffering. (Matthew 5:10-12; Luke 6:22-23)
- We should not be ashamed or embarrassed about persecution. (1 Peter 4:16; Hebrews 13:12-13)
- We must follow the example of Christ. (Philippians 2: 1-11; 1 Peter 2:19-25)
- We must react under persecution as the Lord did. (Matthew 5:38-48; Romans 12:14,17-21; 1 Peter 2:21-23)
- We are called to stand with those who are persecuted. (Matthew 25:31-46; Hebrews 10:32-38; 13:3)
- We can have the victory. (John 16:33)

Persecution foretold:

- Matthew 18:21; 28:34; Mark 10:30; Luke 11:49; John 15:20; 1 Corinthians 4:9; 2 Timothy 3: 12

Jesus warns and teaches about persecution:

- Matthew 10:16-42; Luke 14:25-35; John 15:18-16:4

The apostles and first missionaries are persecuted:

- Acts 4:1-22 – Christ's supremacy threatens the supremacy of the totalitarian and theocratic leadership. (v. 2,17)
- Acts 5:12-41 – Power and attraction of the gospel arouses jealousy. (v17)
- Acts 6:7-15 – Success of ministry arouses competition.
- Acts 7:54-8:4 – Stephen becomes the Christian Church's first martyr; persecution breaks out.
- Acts 12:1-4 – Herod persecutes apostles for political gain.
- Acts 12:1-18 – While Peter is in prison, the church prays.
- Acts 13:49-14:7 – Opposition to the gospel forces missionaries to flee.
- Acts 16:16-34 – The gospel threatens trade, economic prosperity and the fortune-telling industry (v19); false accusations lead to missionaries being severely beaten.
- Acts 17:1-15 – Missionary success arouses jealousy; missionaries forced to flee. (v5)
- Acts 19:23-32 – The gospel threatens trade, economic prosperity and the idol industry; idol-makers incite riot that goes out of control.
- Acts 21:27-36 – Enemies of the gospel incite hatred and violence; Paul beaten and arrested.

Prepare for persecution:

- Understand it to be normal. (1 Peter 4:12; Philippians 1:29)
- Know the teaching of the Word of God. (Philemon 3:10; Romans 6:3-5; John 8:31-32)

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- Abide in Christ. (John 15:4)
- Submit daily to the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18; 4:30)
- Rest in the will of God. (Ephesians 5:17; Hebrews 4:1,9-11)

Conduct under persecution:

- Matthew 5:44; 10:22; Acts 5:41; Romans 12:14; Philippians 1:28; Hebrews 10:34; 1 Peter 3:13-19

Results of persecution:

- Matthew 5:10; Luke 6:22; 9:24; James 1:2; 1 Peter 4:14; Revelation 6:9; 7:13

Rewards for suffering persecution:

- Glory in heaven. (2 Corinthians 4:17-18; 1 Peter 5:1,10,11)
- Eternal consolation. (2 Corinthians 1:7; Romans 8:17)
- Christ is made known. (2 Corinthians 4:11)
- Life is being given to others. (2 Corinthians 4:12)
- Grace of God is being made manifest. (2 Corinthians 4:15)
- A guarantee that God will judge righteously. (2 Thessalonians 1:4-5)
- Will reign with him. (2 Timothy 2:12a)
- Spirit of glory rests upon. (1 Peter 4:14)
- Glory is brought to God. (1 Peter 4:16)
- Reason for joy. (1 Peter 4:13-14)

Place and power of prayer:

- 2 Thessalonians 3:1-3 – Prayer is desired and required for persecuted believers.
- Romans 15:30-33 – Our prayers help struggling believers.
- 2 Corinthians 1:10-11 – God works as we pray.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4; Ephesians 6:10-18 – Spiritual battle requires spiritual weapons.
- James 5:16b-18 – The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

Some possible forms that persecution may take:

- By slander (evil report). (Psalm 31:13; Job 19:18; 55:12-14; Luke 6:22)
- Shame. Open embarrassment, dishonor or disgrace. Manner in which our Lord was accused of being conceived (born out-of-wedlock); also, manner in which His nakedness was openly displayed on the cross. (Hebrews 13:13; 11:26)
- Falsely accused. (Psalm 35:11; 27:12; Matthew 5:11; Luke 23:2,5,10; Mark 14:55-60; Acts 6:13; 16:19-23; 26:2,7)
- Ensnare through deceit, trapping, tricks. (Daniel 6:4-5; Luke 11:54; Matthew 10:16-18)
- Object of conspiracy. (2 Samuel 15:12; Genesis 37:18; 2 Corinthians 11:32; Acts 9:23)
- Mocked, scorned, scoffed and sneered at. (Psalm 42:3; Job 12:4; Matthew 27:29,31,41; Acts 2:13; 17:18,32; Hebrews 11:36)

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- Betrayed, treated treacherously. (Matthew 24:10; Luke 21:16; Psalm 41:9)
- Despised, to have contempt for, to loathe, to think nothing of, to consider without honour. (1 Corinthians 1:28; 4:10c)
- Hated by family. (Matthew 10:21, 34-36; Micah 7:6; Luke 21:16)
- Hated by men. (Luke 21:17; Matthew 10:22; Job 19:19)
- Defamation of character, libel, slander, evil report. (Psalm 31:13; Job 19:19; 1 Peter 2:12; 1 Corinthians 4:13)
- Feared by own people. (Acts 9:26)
- Subject to special trials. (1 Corinthians 4:9-14; 2 Corinthians 11:23-28)
- Imprisoned. (Luke 21:12; Acts 4:3; 5:18; 12:4; 16:24; 2 Corinthians 6:5; 11:23c; Hebrews 11:36b)
- Beaten. (Acts 5:40; 16:23; 2 Corinthians 6:5; 11:24; Matthew 10:17)
- Contradicting. (Acts 13:45)
- Stir against. (Acts 6:12; 13:50; 14: 2,19; 19:23,25-26,29; 21:27)
- Charges pressed. (Acts 18:12; Matthew 10:17-18)
- Threatened. (Acts 4:18,21; 5:40)
- Stoned. (Acts 7:58-59; 14:19; 2 Corinthians 11:25; Hebrews 11:37)
- Afflictions. (2 Timothy 3; 11; Psalm 34:19)
- Expulsion. (Acts 13:50; John 16:2a)
- Exhaustion, extreme fatigue. (2 Corinthians 11:27)
- Hunger and thirst. (2 Corinthians 11:27; 1 Corinthians 4:11)
- Spectacle. (1 Corinthians 4:9; Acts 9:16; 20:23; 21:11; Hebrews 10:33a)
- Suffer physical need. (1 Corinthians 4:11; 2 Corinthians 6:4; Philippians 4:12; Hebrews 11:37)
- Martyrdom. (Luke 21:16; Acts 7:59; 12:2; John 16:2)
- Afflictions. (2 Timothy 1:8; 4:5; Matthew 24:9; Psalm 34:19; 2 Corinthians 4:17; 6:4; Hebrews 10:32-33; 11:25,37; Colossians 1:24; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; James 5:10)
- Poverty. (2 Corinthians 6:10; Philippians 4:12)
- Loss of property and material goods. (Hebrews 10:34b)