

Grace and Jay Ministry

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Persecution

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“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” (II Timothy 3:12).

Christian persecution, as predicted in the Bible, is quite rampant today. An example of the Christian persecution happening right now would be the quick rise of ISIL or the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant, also known simply as IS or the Islamic State. Since the Islamic State’s rise, Christians in their captured territory have been tortured and killed by IS militants, which include many public beheadings and executions of the Christians. IS threatened to attack many countries with France and Russia being recent subjects of its attacks. Many IS militants believe that they are doing the service of their god, by waging a war of jihad and persecution. This sort of persecution was predicted in the Bible, as seen in the following scriptures.

“Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.” (Matthew 24:9).

“These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. (John 16:1-2).

The persecution of Christians in the Middle East does not stop there. With 80% of all religious discrimination acts aimed against Christians (International Society for Human Rights 2012 report), it is apparent that Christians are also persecuted worldwide for their beliefs. Christians are persecuted by either their neighbors or government in more than 60 countries around the world (U.S Department of State).

“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:33-39).

With some of the events that have occurred in America, such as the legalization of gay marriage, a sudden rise of resentment towards Christians have grown. Such cases include Christian bakeries that were sued or threatened because of their refusal to serve gay couples along with military chaplains who have been put under investigation or fired due to giving Bible based advice and holding Christian beliefs. The growing resentment towards Christians have caused many to hate Christians, calling them names along the lines of “homophobic”

and “bigoted” for their beliefs. Despite their treatment, many of these Christians still hold strong to their beliefs.

“If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.” (1 Peter 4:14).

“If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.” (John 15:19-20).

As Christians, we should not be discouraged from our beliefs because of the persecution, but instead we should be glad that we have kept our faith. While the persecution that Christians face around the world is terrible, God will reward them for their love and faith in Him and in His word.

“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.” (1 Corinthians 16:13).

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.” (Matthew 5:10-12).

The time for Christ to come is nearing, and so we need to keep our faith strong in God and His word. Near the end times, rampant persecution of Christians will greatly intensify, but, as Christians, we should not fear for our own lives when keeping our faith. While the enemies of Christ may kill our bodies, they cannot kill our souls. Our souls are protected by God, so we do not need to be afraid if the enemy kills us.

“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matthew 10:28).

“The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.” (Psalm 121:7-8).

We do not know the day or the hour, so all we can do is to prepare for the Lord's arrival. By reading and obeying the word of God, avoiding evil, and keeping faith in the face of persecution, we can be ready for the end of days. Our concerns should be not if we will be persecuted, but whether or not we have salvation in God.

“Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.” (Luke 21:33-36).

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