

Biblical Reflections from the Scripture on Persecution

Jesus warns and teaches about persecution

Matthew 10:16-42; John 15:18-16:4; Jesus teaches you must be prepared for the cost in Luke 14:25-35.

Jesus is persecuted

Matthew 27:27-31 (mocked); John 18:19-24 (struck in the face for speaking the truth); John 19 (crucified); Psalm 22; Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Hebrews 13:11-13 (bearing shame).

The apostles and first missionaries are persecuted

- Acts 4:1-22, Christ's supremacy threatens the supremacy of the totalitarian and theocratic leadership. (vv2,17)
- 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.

Words to the Church on persecution

- 2 Corinthians 1:3-11, comfort, purpose, sharing, the place and power of prayer (vv10,11)
- 2 Corinthians 6:3-10, the character of the servant of Christ.
- Philippians 1:12-30, persecution may advance the gospel.
- 1 Thessalonians 1, persecuted believers as a model for others.
- Hebrews 10:32-39, do not grow weak, but persevere.
- Hebrews 11:32-40, persecution widespread and severe; those who persevere are heroes of faith; *therefore* Hebrews 12:1-3, be encouraged, motivated, convicted, committed, with eyes on Jesus to run the race God has set for us.
- Revelation 2:8-11, poor yet rich – suffering on earth, crown of life in heaven.
- Revelation 6:9-11, God is sovereign in suffering, Rev 7:9-17, and in salvation.

Place and power of prayer

- Romans 15:30-33, our prayers help struggling believers.
- 2 Corinthians 1:10,11, God works as we pray.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3,4, spiritual battle requires spiritual weapons.
- Ephesians 6:10-18, spiritual battle requires spiritual defense and offense – stay alert and pray.
- James 5:16b-18, the prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

Brief words of encouragement for closing a meeting

- Ephesians 3:20,21
- 2 Timothy 1:6-12
- Hebrews 10:19-23