

PERSECUTION

The word persecution in the Greek is translated to be mistreated, to make one run or flee, or to drive away. In the book of Acts, we see that persecution is what drove the disciples from Jerusalem to the rest of the world with the Gospel.

Acts 8:1

“And Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.”

Acts 11:19

“So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone.”

It is logical to expect the devil to resist all efforts to exalt the name of Jesus in any way, especially when it threatens to turn the lost from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of our Lord (Colossians 1:13). Persecution is not necessarily something someone seeks after, but it is something that should be expected and experienced if we look, like, or sound anything like Jesus.

Matthew 5:10-11

“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when {men} cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me.”

Notice, also, that persecution is more narrowly defined here as occurring because of a stand for righteousness or anything associated directly associated with His Name. This is not only a good thing, but something that makes us blessed. However, this can only happen when we put Him and His kingdom first - that is truly becoming a disciple of His.

John 15:20

“Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.”

We are also enjoined to accept persecution as a fact and not wrestle (Ephesians 6:12) with those through whom the persecution comes.

Matthew 5:44

“But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.”