

***Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matt.5:10-12)***

I. The War against the saints

- A. *Satanic hostility (Rev.12:10-12; 20:7-8)*
- B. *The kingdom given to those who suffer for it (Matt.5:10/Dan.7:21-22, 25, 27/ 11:32-35/Acts 14:22)*
- C. *Old Testament Examples:*
 - 1. Cain and Abel; Joseph; David; Jeremiah (Hebrews 11:35-39)
 - 2. Messiah (Isa.53:3, 7-8, 12/Luke 24:25-26)
- D. *It is inevitable (John 15:20/ Mark 10:30/ Phil.1:29/ 2 Timothy 3:12)*

II. Reasons for the world's animosity toward those who have escaped from it (John 15:19)

- A. *Human rebellion against God and His anointed (Psalm 2:1-3/ "for Jesus' Name sake" Matt.5:11)*
- B. *Resentment against righteousness (1 John 3:11-13/1 Pet.4:1-4/ "for righteousness' sake")*
- C. *No blessing for being persecuted for bad behavior (1 Pet.4:15-16/2:19-20)*

III. The Christian's proper response

- A. *Do not think it strange (1 Peter 4:12-14/ Matt.16:21-26)*
- B. *Flight is permitted (Matt.10:23/Acts 9:23-25), but not hurtful resistance (Matt.5:39/James 5:6/ Romans 13:10)*
- C. *Remember Jesus (Heb.12:1-4)*
- D. *Rejoice (Matt.5:12)*
 - 1. You are being tested (Mark 4:17)
 - 2. Their hostility can be taken as a compliment (Matt.5:12/ Acts 5:41)
 - 3. You are given an opportunity to glorify God (1 Pet.4:13-14)

E. Bless them, Do good to them, pray for them (Matt.5:44/Rom.12:17-21)

F. Pray for ultimate vindication of God's people (Ps.119:84/Rev.6:9-11)

*G. Increase you own resolve to press on into the Kingdom
(Matt.11:12/Acts 14:2-3/19-20)*

"Our wretched species is so made that those who walk on the well-trodden path always throw stones at those who are showing a new road."
— Voltaire

"Let us not forget: we are a pilgrim church, subject to misunderstanding, to persecution, but a church that walks serene, because it bears the force of love."
— Oscar A. Romero, *The Violence of Love*

"When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."
— Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*

"It was strictly forbidden to preach to other prisoners. It was understood that whoever was caught doing this received a severe beating. A number of us decided to pay the price for the privilege of preaching, so we accepted their [the communists'] terms. It was a deal; we preached and they beat us. We were happy preaching. They were happy beating us, so everyone was happy."
— Richard Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*

"In a country where Christians were looked upon with suspicion and disfavor, a government leader said to me with a twinkle in his eye, "Christians seem to thrive under persecution. Perhaps we should prosper them, and then they would disappear."
— Billy Graham

"What we are seeing happening in the Middle East is bringing us all together. We churches do not have the luxury of staying separate any more. We have realised that what we have in common far exceeds what separates us."

- Egyptian Church Leader (<https://www.opendoors.org.au/persecuted-christians/blog/5-quotes-from-persecuted-christians/>)