

The Persecuted Church John 15:18-25

John 15:18-25 – ¹⁸“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated Me first. ¹⁹If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. ²⁰Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed My teaching, they will obey yours also. ²¹They will treat you this way because of My name, for they do not know the One who sent Me. ²²If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³Whoever hates Me hates My Father as well. ²⁴If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both Me and My Father. ²⁵But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated Me without reason.’

1 Thess 3:3 – so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. For you know quite well that we are destined for them.

2 Tim 3:12 – In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

James 1:3 – because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

Hebrews 10:33-34 – ³³Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. ³⁴You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.

1 Peter 4:12 – Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

1) The reality of persecution in the Modern World:
Since Jesus laid down His life, 70 million Christians have become martyrs.

Todd Johnson, <https://www.360serve.org/help-the-persecuted>

Around the world, more than 340 million Christians live in places where they experience high levels of persecution, just for following Jesus. That’s 1 in 8 believers, worldwide.

Open Doors <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/2021-world-watch-list-report/>

Christians are the single most widely persecuted religious group in the world today. 75% of acts of religious intolerance are committed against Christians.

Paul Marshall <https://www.360serve.org/help-the-persecuted>

“Open Doors” is an organization that promotes awareness of the Persecuted Church. Here’s their definition of persecution against Christians. *While Christian persecution takes many forms, it is defined as any hostility experienced as a result of identification with Jesus Christ. From Sudan to Russia, from Nigeria to North Korea, from Colombia to India, followers of Christianity are targeted for their faith. They are attacked; they are discriminated against at work and at school; they risk sexual violence, torture, arrest and much more.*

2) The reality of persecution in the Biblical World

Persecution in the early Church did not happen in all places at all times. Persecution came in waves and varied in its intensity. In the New Testament, persecution seems to be present in every generation and in a wide variety of locations.

Jesus predicted persecution for these reasons:

1. Christians are _____.
2. Christians bear the _____ of Jesus.
3. Christians expose the _____ of the world.