

THE COMING PERSECUTION



“Righteous art thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins. But thou, O LORD, knowest me: thou hast seen me, and tried mine heart toward thee: pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter. How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? the beasts are consumed, and the birds; because they said, He shall not see our last end. If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?” -Jeremiah 12:1-5

Here, in our text, we read the *Prophet Jeremiah* was grieved at the apparent prosperity of the wicked. He wondered how *vice* and *sin* seemed to progress and prosper without hindrance, while the righteous suffered hardship. He acknowledged that God is righteous, that everything is done well; *but he simply wanted to understand how these apparently unequal conditions take place.* In *verse 5*, we have God's response to *Jeremiah's* complaint. Through His eternal wisdom and foresight, He simply exhorts *Jeremiah* to prepare himself for even greater persecution. Basically, God says, and I paraphrase...

“If the smallest evils to which you are exposed inspire such bitter complaints, what will happen when, in the course of your prophetic ministry, you'll be exposed to much greater hardships than these?”

Now, I believe there is an application for you and me. As we know, the *Prophet Jeremiah* was a lone, solitary figure who, in his generation, stood against corruption and apostasy. Thus, I believe, the unique trials he faced are universal to those living in cultures that utterly reject God and His Word. In this short article, gleaned from our text, I have *a warning, a question, and an exhortation* that can be applied to us:

A WARNING: WIDESPREAD PERSECUTION IS COMING

Jeremiah 12:5c ...how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?

The 'Swelling Of The Jordan', or, intense *persecution* is inevitable in *America*. I believe *Christians* will be discriminated against in every imaginable way, imprisoned, and even killed for the gospel. I don't know *when*, though it could be just over the horizon, but if God doesn't intervene, persecution is inevitable.

1 Peter 5:8 *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*

We know the Bible tells us...

2 Timothy 3:12 *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*

Moreover, *Jesus* warns us...

John 15:19 *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.*

Now, these two verses represent *general persecution* that all *Christians* experience *as we come in contact with sinners*. However, the kind of persecution I'm talking about is on a different level. Throughout history, whenever corrupt governments, with their deceived masses, align themselves with false religion, wholesale persecution is just ahead. We have just such a situation in *America*. The church, for the most part, has been rendered blind, dull, and silent through sin and compromise. Amazingly, the church in *America*, so enamored with relevance, is perhaps the most irrelevant institution in our culture. Our national leaders, both spiritual and political, have all but crossed the line of no return. Recently, we elected the most liberal *President* in history: *pro-death, pro-sodomite, anti-family, anti-christ*. *Little or no outrage* proves the collective mind in *America* is reprobate. Draconian laws, namely *hate crimes* legislation, are being presented on the state and federal levels almost daily to silence the church. In the legal arena, our rights have so eroded, there's only a thin line that protects us from prosecution for simply practicing the Bible. For the past four decades *American children*, through public school and television, have been fed a steady diet of anti-Christ propaganda. Sexual immorality, including *fornication, adultery, and sodomy*, is universally winked at, and even encouraged. Violence, even among the young, is at an all time high.

"Through television, by the age of 16, the typical child has witnessed an estimated 200,000 acts of violence, including over 30,000 murders."

Popular entertainment, including *television, movies, and music* is typically base and insidious, exalting *sin* and lampooning *holiness*. Sadly, most of the church-going masses have been indoctrinated with *humanism, pragmatism, and Darwinian ideology*. In reality, the national religion of *America* has evolved into a new age/anti-Christ philosophy, tolerant of everything but *Jesus*. Recently, I've seen a very disturbing pattern: the *doorman at the local strip club, the pastor of the big, seeker-sensitive church, and Dear Abby* are saying/promoting the same things: *a pseudo-Christian mix of self-help principles, syrupy-humanistic tolerance, and man-centered ethics*. Every day, it seems, the seething hatred for the Biblical *Jesus, His Word, and those that follow Him* is becoming more universal.

2 Timothy 3:3 ... *despisers of those that are good*

There is nowhere else for us to go as a *culture*, but further away from God. No doubt, we must believe for revival, we must intercede for souls, but we should not ignore the obvious. When the philosophical, political, and cultural trends of any society all coincide *against God*, the climate is ripe for severe persecution. The prevailing new-age thought process will continue to develop and progress until true believers can no longer be suffered.

"People will either change or die, that is the choice...this act is as horrible as killing a cancer cell. It must be done for the sake of the future of the whole. So be it; be prepared for the selection process which is now beginning. We, the elders, have been patiently waiting until the very last moment before the quantum transformation, to take action to cut out this corrupted and corrupting element in the body of humanity. It is like watching a cancer grow; something must be done before the whole body is destroyed....the destructive one fourth must be eliminated from the social body."

-Barbara Marx Hubbard (New Ager)

In my opinion, it is not a question of *if* we will suffer this type of persecution, but *when*. Therefore, I believe we are very unwise to shut our eyes to this great spiritual challenge that is just ahead.

1 Thessalonians 5:6 *Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.*

A QUESTION: ARE YOU PREPARED TO STAND?

Jeremiah 12:5a *If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses?*

If the light affliction we suffer today moves us, what will we do when real, widespread persecution breaks out? This is a valid question that we must each honestly answer. First, I believe we must come to realize, without *Jesus* none can stand. Secondly, perhaps we should value, rather than despise, our current tests and trials: *this would be consistent with Scripture...*

James 1:3-4 *Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

1 Peter 1:6-7 *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ...*

Moreover, we would do well to remember we live in a *post-Christian* society. In other words, our culture, as a whole, has examined Christianity and has rejected it; *America* is under judgment. As I said earlier, we should continue to believe *for souls*, even *for revival*, nevertheless, we must not underestimate the call *to stand*. Survey the testimony of the patriarchs in *Hebrews 11*. Those included are not there because they converted multitudes, but because they refused to compromise in the midst of severe testing.

Hebrews 11:13 *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

AND FINALLY, AN EXHORTATION: ***DON'T TRUST IN A LAND OF PEACE***

Jeremiah 12:5b *...and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?*

We need to realize, our circumstances could change overnight. The freedoms we enjoy could disappear: *worship, openly evangelizing, homeschooling, etc.* For example...

“President Obama has vowed to sign the Freedom of Choice Act. The Freedom of Choice Act, in essence, will overrule all of the restrictions that states have passed limiting abortions. It would be the most pro-abortion piece of legislation that Congress has ever passed, finally putting to rest the argument that legal abortion is a Supreme Court usurpation of Constitutional limitations. With FOCA, Congress would finally transcend the absurdity of the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision to make abortion a fundamental right – like freedom of speech.”

“Hate crime legislation is at the fore-front of the agenda for the radical left. Sodomite activists are constantly lobbying congress to establish laws that would forbid the condemning of sodomy, and even make it illegal to suggest that men without Christ are hell-bound. Under such laws, Biblical evangelism will be considered illegal.”

“There are soon to be full-scale efforts to ratify of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The strength of these efforts have been greatly increased with the addition of Hillary Clinton as the nominee for Secretary of State. She will have direct control over the submission of this treaty to the Senate and will acquire the authority

under international law to sign any other treaty on any subject. Hillary Clinton was the person who made the announcement for the Convention on the Rights of the Child when her husband's administration signed the treaty. Seeking its ratification is a lifelong dream for her. Under international law, the treaty overrides even our Constitution. In effect, this treaty would constitute the most massive shift of governmental power in American history. If the treaty is ratified, among other things, parents would no longer be able to administer reasonable spankings to their children. Children would have the ability to choose their own religion while parents would only have the authority to give their children advice about religion. The best interest of the child principle would give the government the ability to override every decision made by every parent if a government worker disagreed with the parent's decision. A child's "right to be heard" would allow him (or her) to seek governmental review of every parental decision with which the child disagreed. Teaching children about Christianity in school would be considered illegal. Children would have the right to reproductive health information and services, including abortions, without parental knowledge or consent."

We have enjoyed rights so long, it's difficult to imagine it any other way. Because of our history, we tend to think that something will happen, our rights will be preserved, we will be protected. In such an environment, we tend to feel like we will always have tomorrow. In reality, that's not true, but persecution, the kind we're addressing in this post, will force us to forsake a lackadaisical spirituality. May God use this to compel us to seek God.

Psalms 9:12-14 *When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble. Have mercy upon me, O LORD; consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death: That I may shew forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation.*

—B.W.

