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HOW WILL PERSECUTION AFFECT YOU?



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A short time after God the Son, Jesus the Messiah, rose from the grave, fulfillment of a painful prophecy began. Jesus had said,

“Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.” (John 15:20)

Stephen, a man “full of faith and power” became an early target of the persecution prophesied by Jesus. Saul of Tarsus witnessed and approved the actions of his fellow religious leaders as they arrested and stoned Stephen for his faith (Acts 6:1-8:1). As do many today, Saul hated and continued viciously persecuting Christians after Stephen’s death.

“As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.” (Acts 8:3-5)

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The result was that there were many that came to trust Christ as Lord and Savior in that city.

Did you notice the irony? Though the persecution was evil, God used it to bring salvation to many in Samaria who responded to Philip’s preaching. The Christians that scattered didn’t renounce Christ to save their lives. Instead, they redoubled their efforts to preach the gospel.

What do you think will happen in your church when persecution comes? Some churches may escape persecution because they aren’t really preaching a clear gospel. Some may lose many participants who are unwilling to accept the consequences of proclaiming Christ’s gospel. They were only associating with the church for the social and business opportunities it made available. If these opportunities disappear, so will those attendees. Some churches may end up with most of their congregations cast into prison. They will refuse to renounce Christ’s gospel of love which persecutors venomously portray as a message of hate.

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