

Persecution

Isaiah 45:24-25 They will say of me, ‘In the LORD alone are deliverance and strength.’”

All who have raged against him will come to him and be put to shame.

²⁵ But all the descendants of Israel will find deliverance in the LORD and will make their boast in him.

As Christians, we know that our deliverance, our salvation, our rescue, our confidence, our hope and our strength all come from the Lord. If you have been a Christian for any length of time, you have watched prayer work firsthand. But many of us have encountered people who think we are crazy. Some might say it nicer but basically, they do not have any faith and think it’s silly. Their belief is that when we die, we are just “gone”. No “afterlife”. No heaven, no hell. If there were no hell, this would not be such a dangerous train of thought, but since we know there is a hell, we do not want people to believe that. After all, that would mean they would go to hell, and we WANT as many people to go to heaven as possible. There is a bumper sticker that says: Make Heaven crowded. In fact, that is a primary job for us, to bring as many people with us to heaven as possible.

John 15:18-19. “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ¹⁹ If 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.

The Bible also talks about persecution of Christians in the end times. I heard a pastor say that last year there were more Christians killed for their Faith than in all the years combined since Christ died. Last year there were 72,000 worldwide according to him

Knowing that this is happening in other countries, we have to know there are enemies of Christ here as well. In 1999 for instance the school shooting at Columbine High School, the shooter asked the Cassie Bernal, while holding a gun to her head if she believed in Jesus. She said “yes” and he pulled the trigger. Churches have security teams now, because churches are targets these days.

Phil. 2:10-11 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The first time I heard this verse I was excited. To me it meant that the evil, sinful people who do not believe in God were going to “get theirs”. The worst of the sinners in jails would be front and center with God and although they denied Him all of their lives, they would meet Him one day and be held accountable. We all want to know these people are held accountable. We know that He is a “just” God. In 2 Peter 3:9not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. So, our job is to help others to come to Him.... And yes, it may be uncomfortable. It could even get you killed. Jesus’ command to love others as ourselves includes not letting them go to hell without trying to bring them to Him.

Lord, give us words, boldness and opportunities to speak to people on your behalf. To spread words of light and love instead of darkness and doom like the world.
Amen.

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