



## Living in the End Times Session 4 – The Sign “Persecution Ahead”

### I. Introduction

**Matthew 24:3-14 (NKJV)** – <sup>3</sup>Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” <sup>4</sup>And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. <sup>5</sup>For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. <sup>6</sup>And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. <sup>7</sup>For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup>All these are the beginning of sorrows. <sup>9</sup>“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. <sup>10</sup>And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. <sup>11</sup>Many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. <sup>12</sup>And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. <sup>13</sup>But he who endures to the end shall be saved. <sup>14</sup>And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

### Review

- A. The signs tell us that we are approaching our destination.
- B. Signs warn us of impending danger.
- C. Signs keep us on course so that we will arrive at our destination.
- D. The signs of the times keep us mindful that we are nearing the coming of the Lord.
- E. The signs of the Lord warn us of the dangerous times we are in so we may guard ourselves and our family.



## F. Previous Sessions

1. Deception/Delusion
2. The love of many will grow cold/The great falling away  
*A falling away from truth – A falling away from God.*
3. Because the falling away will affect the masses, the remnant, those who stand for truth will be minority. They will face strong persecution for their faith.

## II. The Sign “Persecution Ahead”

**A. Matthew 24:9-10 (NKJV)** – <sup>9</sup>*“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake.*  
<sup>10</sup>*And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.*

**Matthew 24:9-10 (NLT)** – <sup>9</sup>*“Then you will be arrested, persecuted, and killed. You will be hated all over the world because you are my followers.*  
<sup>10</sup>*And many will turn away from me and betray and hate each other.*

1. If you are expecting to be loved and accepted by everyone you are going to be greatly disappointed.
2. **Jesus is warning his followers.**
  - a. One of the signs that you will see increasingly as my coming approaches will be PERSECUTION.
  - b. The more people FALL AWAY from me, truth, my word, the more they will hate those who stand for me.
  - c. True believers will not be loved by the world in the last days.
  - d. True believers will not be celebrated by the inhabitants of this planet prior to the coming of Jesus.
  - e. True Believers will be PERSECUTED and Hated.



3. **They will Deliver you up to TRIBULATION.**

a. KJV = Afflicted

*A pressing – pressure – It describes pressure.*

*Metaphorically – oppression, affliction, tribulation or distress*

*It depicts bullying, harassment and intimidation.*

b. The early believers experienced this type of affliction/persecution.

*They were harassed, intimidated and in many cases killed for their faith.*

c. Christians have always been persecuted around the world

*In some places this PERSECUTION and even death is a cloud that hands over their head daily as they choose to follow Christ.*

d. In our world, we have a difficult time imagining this.

*We have primarily lived in a culture that has not only been tolerant of the Gospel, but in many cases, it has been celebratory of it.*

e. Our nation was founded upon Christian principles.

*The Church was always in the forefront.*

f. Time has shifted our society away from spiritual truths and God himself. *The Rapid Shift is on!*

g. A Society that once desired to hold the Bible as a standard NOW desires to totally obliterate is.

*The Bible was in the home.*

*The Bible was in the classroom.*

*The Bible was in the court room.*

*The Bible was in the White house.*

*The Bible was at the center of everything.*

h. If you dare to be one of those who are so behind the times that you still place the Bible at the center of your life – YOU ARE GOING TO BE PERSECUTED.

i. There will be pressure working against you in the end times.

4. **Hated** = describes utter disgust and repulsion. It is more than dislike; it is pure hatred.

*Jesus declared that His followers would experience pure, undiluted hatred for His name's sake from the unbelieving world around them.*



5. **Many will be offended.**

*This pressure and persecution increases because many are offended.*

a. **Offended – Scandalized**

*People will be offended, stumble, disapprove, judge unfavorably – because of those who live by a solid biblical foundation.*

b. **Perry Stone** – *states that there will be a rapid increase of offense as we approach the coming of the Lord.*

c. This present offense over everything is leading to the greatest offense of all – the offense of the gospel.

d. The world’s way of dealing with offensive things is to remove them.

*Cartoons*

*Statues*

*Books*

*History*

e. The most offensive book in the last days will not be a Dr. Seuss book, it will be THE BIBLE.

*The remedy to this offense will be to remove the Bible just as everything else has been removed.*

6. **Hunt** – *Another meaning of the world persecution is to hunt or to pursue.*

a. The hunt began in Jerusalem.

*Paul was a leader in the hunt.*

b. Believers scattered and fled.

*They lost it all, family, friends, homes, jobs, businesses.*

c. They stood beneath the pressure of this persecution for decades.

7. **Hebrews 10:23-25 (KJV)** – <sup>23</sup>*Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)* <sup>24</sup>*and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:* <sup>25</sup>*not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*



**Hebrews 10:23-25 (NLT)** – <sup>23</sup>Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. <sup>24</sup>Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. <sup>25</sup>And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

- a. You must hold on to your faith!
- b. **Hold Fast** – denotes to wrap your arms around something and hold it down so it cannot slip away.
- c. Because of the persecution against believers in the last days, faith will try to slip away. Wrap your arms around your faith and hold on as tight as you can to see to it that it doesn't slip away.
- d. Do not neglect to meet together!  
*This was Paul's strategy for holding on to faith!*

*One of the greatest things we can do in these last day is to come together!*

*Online church has served a great place in the pandemic. HOWEVER, it will never replace the COMING TOGETHER that Paul spoke about.*

*There is a strength released in the lives of believers that only comes by assembling together.*

*The early church was being so intimidated that many were deciding to follow Christ from home in private. Paul says, don't forsake assembling together! WE must stay together!*

### III. **We must be prepared to withstand the persecution that will precede the coming of the Lord.**

#### A. **Scriptures on Persecution**

**1 Peter 2:21 (NLT)** – *For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you*



*must follow in his steps.*

**2 Timothy 3:12 (NLT)** – *Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*

**Matthew 5:10 – 12 (NKJV)** – <sup>10</sup>*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>11</sup>Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. <sup>12</sup>Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

## **B. Persecution comes with a Reward.**

**Hebrews 10:35-36 (NKJV)** – <sup>35</sup>*Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. <sup>36</sup>For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:*

*NOTE: Whatever comes your way, NEVER cast away your confidence*

### **1. Cast Away – Throw off**

- a. In this case it means to throw off your faith in order to be free to move on.
- b. These early church believers had dealt with decades of persecution. The temptation was now to CAST OFF their faith so they would be free to move on with life in a normal way.
- c. It would be easier to relinquish their faith in Christ and just live like everyone else. *Just live like the world wants them to live. Leave the pressure behind.*
- d. WATCH OUT, it will be easier to live like the world wants you to live in the last days. Just COMPLY with what the majority wants to do. Just fit in! Just blend in! It's ok! God understands! NO! God never tells his people to blend in!
- e. Your confidence/Faith to stand when persecuted comes with great reward.



2. **Recompense** = reward moving in your direction – money moving in your direction
  - a. In this passage, Paul reminds believers that are being persecuted, Don't cast off your faith. Your REWARD is rapidly moving in your direction.
  - b. Jesus said it like this.  
**Luke 21:28 (KJV)** – *And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.*

**REDEMPTION = Full liberation from the penalty of sin**

*Your leaving is drawing near*

*Your former lives of any suffering is drawing to a close*

*The Fullness of your new live in Christ is just beginning*

- c. Jesus and Paul leave us with a strong reminder  
**NO MATTER HOW INTENSE THE PERSECUTION WILL BE, THE REWARD IS WORTH IT!**