



**How Real is Persecution Today?
The Last Days Increase in Christian Persecution
Matthew 24:8-14**

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The only problem with doing a prophecy update each week is after praying, you head off in one direction preparing what you believe the Lord wants to tell His people. And then the morning news takes place and while you are praying and preparing for a new today, the Lord does a redirect based on very current events.



I intended to talk about Israel and how they are the mega sign of the soon coming of Jesus Christ for His church. Lord willing, that will now be next week.

Instead, I want to talk about one of the more ignored signs Jesus warned of in Matthew 24.

Jesus, in Matthew 24, is answering three questions posed to Him by His disciples. One of those questions was in regard to signs of His coming with the add on question and of the end of the age. What we will be discussing today is a sign of the second coming of Jesus Christ. Recall Jesus compared them to birth pangs that increase in frequency and severity as time goes by. He also said this while promising a blessing for those who follow His word in Revelation.

Revelation 22:7

“And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.” (NASB 2020)

Matthew 24:8–14

“But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pains. Then they will hand you over to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. And at that time many will fall away, and they will betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will rise up and mislead many people. And because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will become cold. But the one who endures to the end is the one who will be saved. This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.” (NASB 2020)

And one more thing which is promised for those who follow Him.

2 Timothy 3:12

“Indeed, **all who want to live in a godly way in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.**” (NASB 2020)

Ken, what is the deal? Why all the talk about persecution? Because no less an authority than the US Department of Justice has just confirmed that it has been real and has been imposed by the US Government during the last presidential administration.

There really is a basis for our paranoia as Christians these days, they have really been out to get us.

On Thursday the US Department of Justice published a report by the Task Force to Eradicate Anti-Christian Bias. The report is entitled Eradicating Anti-Christian Bias within the Federal Government.

Was that really a thing? Under the prior administration, yes, it was.

Before I go further, again, we were warned by Jesus about this as a sign of His soon second coming. In the past, this level of persecution was hard to define and there are many who accused us of madness when we discussed it. No, it is indeed real.

This is why, while Nero was Emperor, Paul wrote this.

1 Timothy 2:1–6

“First of all, then, **I urge that requests, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made in behalf of all people, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.** For there is one God, and one



mediator also between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.” (NASB 2020)

When Paul says that he urges us to do this, the verb form is telling.

It is not to be a once and done prayer, but an active ongoing lifestyle type of prayer where we are always interceding on behalf of those who are in authority over us, to include good leaders and yes, bad ones, like Nero, too.

The reason why we do so is simple. So that we have the bandwidth to continue sharing the word of God with a lost and dying world.

Jesus told us that would become more and more of a problem as we approached His soon return in the second coming. And if we see that today growing in frequency and severity. Look up.

There are three phases or basic degrees of opposition and discrimination for us as believers. And the report tells us the last administration took the final step towards criminalization. All in apparent violation of the US Constitution.

“Under the Free Exercise Clause, Congress may pass no law “prohibiting the free exercise of religion.” This prohibition has been applied to the Executive Branch and to state and local governments. When a statute, regulation, or governmental action burdens a fundamental right or involves a suspect classification, such as race or religion, courts impose a rigorous analysis called the “strict scrutiny” test to determine if it violates constitutional equal protection principles. To avoid strict scrutiny, any law that burdens religious exercise must be both neutral and generally applicable. Under the strict scrutiny standard, the government must show that “a law restrictive of religious practice must advance ‘interests of the highest order’ and must be narrowly tailored in pursuit of those interests.”

The Free Exercise Clause protects more than just “the right to harbor religious beliefs inwardly and secretly”; rather, “[i]t does perhaps its most important work by protecting the ability of those who hold religious beliefs of all kinds to live out their faiths in daily life through ‘the performance of (or abstention from) physical acts.’” (Task Force to Eradicate Anti-Christian Bias 2026, 19)

First we have the marginalizing of Christians and their faith—silencing, dismissing, and criticizing them. The next stage is demonization, which involves more overt forms of rejection: stigmatizing, denouncing, and vilifying believers. Then comes criminalization—when being a Christian or exercising one’s faith leads to legal consequences ranging from fines and imprisonment all the way to being sentenced to a labor camp, torture, and death. (Miller 2022, 205)

From the published report we see this.

“But, when Christian beliefs about morality and human nature conflicted with the Biden Administration’s views, religious rights often suffered. The Biden Administration generally tolerated religious beliefs that were privately held but zealously pursued actions to limit Christians’ ability to act in accordance with their faith. This affected matters of deep personal importance to nearly every American: life, family, marriage, and self-identity.

Key Finding 1: The Biden DOJ pursued aggressive prosecutions against non-violent, pro-life, Christian demonstrators under the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act but responded less aggressively to violent attacks against pregnancy resource centers. (Task Force to Eradicate Anti-Christian Bias 2026, Executive Summary)



George Yancey expresses what led to this final out of the closet move by the Federal Government.

If individuals believe themselves to be in a war against forces that seek to rob them of their rights, they naturally support measures that eliminate the influence of their opponents. It is these fears that motivate those with anti-Christian hatred to do all they can to silence Christians. **Christians are allowed to have a voice if they conform to the general ideas already accepted by those with Christianophobia. Feminists with Christianophobia do not oppose feminist interpretations of Scripture. The same could be said of supporters of other humanistic philosophies and ideologies.** This respondent's comment is interesting: "They should be silenced until their voice is based on truth, history and science" (male, age 46-55). It is logical to assume that his notion of "truth, history and science" will correspond to his presuppositions of what is right and wrong. **To such individuals Christianity is relegated to supporting their preferred ideologies and should not be allowed to generate distinct perspectives of its own—particularly if those perspectives challenge the, usually progressive, ideologies found among those with Christianophobia. Otherwise, they seek to stigmatize those who disagree with their vision for society, and conservative Christians are near, or at, the top of the list of those who must be marginalized.** (Yancey 2015, 45-46)

Again, let's look at the report so we can see just how far we have now gone down the path of frequency and severity. I am only hitting highlights from the report.

Key Finding 2: The Biden Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) investigated, monitored, tracked, and scrutinized traditional Catholics who had engaged in no criminal misconduct.

Key Finding 3: The Biden Internal Revenue Service (IRS) investigated churches because of what their pastors preached and Christian organizations because they applied biblical teachings to daily life.

Key Finding 4: The Biden Department of Education (ED) focused its enforcement actions against Christian universities, levying enormous fines ... The Biden ED fined Grand Canyon University \$37.7 million over tuition cost reporting. Then-Secretary of Education, Miguel Cardona, stated ED is "cracking down" on the university "not only to shut them down, but [also] to send a message not to prey on students." Federal courts and Arizona regulators found no such issues.

Key Finding 6: The Biden Administration was one of the loudest supporters of a congressional proposal that would eliminate religious protections for Christians and other religions that hold traditional social values. Although it was not enacted, the Biden Administration's sustained advocacy revealed how willing the Biden Administration was to eradicate religious rights to promote other policy goals.

Key Finding 8: Because it viewed traditional Christian values as harmful to children with gender dysphoria or same-sex attraction, the Biden HHS took multiple steps to prevent Christian families from living out their religious beliefs.

Key Finding 14: The Biden Administration regulated and suppressed religious speech that it did not like and curtailed Christians' ability to jointly worship and study the Bible. (Task Force to Eradicate Anti-Christian Bias 2026, Executive Summary)

This is only from the executive summary of a 200+ page report. Will there be any actions as a result of this? Who knows. What it does tell us is that as followers of Jesus Christ, we are seriously in the last days. When do we turn from Romans 13?

Romans 13:1-7

"Every person is to be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has



opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for it is a servant of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a servant of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for the sake of conscience. For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. Pay to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; respect to whom respect; honor to whom honor.” (NASB 2020)

Simple, “when a government becomes morally bankrupt and endorses and protects evil, it departs from its God-designed role and will persecute what is good. We see this confirmed all through history: Governments that have abandoned God’s divine design for them have always been the greatest proponents of legally sanctioned persecution against Christianity. (Miller 2022, 212)

Here in the west we are currently living in a decadent pre-totalitarian environment. In some nations, the worm has turned so to speak and there is an embracing of a Satanic false religion that wants to kill Jews and Christians.

The embracing of critical theory, which is Marxist in origin, is alarming as well. We are being perceived as a group as extremists.

Many historic Christian beliefs and practices are considered to be extreme by large proportions of Americans—especially among non-Christians. For example, two out of five adults believe it is extremist to try to convert others to their faith; 60 percent of all adults in America and 83 percent of atheists and agnostics believe evangelism—one of the central actions of Christian conviction—is extremist. A slim majority says that holding the belief that same-sex relationships are morally wrong is extremist. Two out of five adults believe it’s extreme to quit a good-paying job to pursue mission work in another country. Even at the bottom of the list, many essential Christian practices are now perceived to be extremist. While not majority opinions, millions of adults contend that behaviors such as donating money to religious causes, reading the Bible silently in public, and even attending church or volunteering are examples of religious extremism. (Kinnaman and Lyons 2016, 41)

So, why the issue with critical theory.

“According to Critical Theory, your status as good or evil depends not on your character or actions, but on which identity group you belong to. As it turns out, secular leftists, who are the self-appointed guardians of all things politically correct and woke, are the ones who get to decide what is good and what isn’t. They control the rules of engagement and pronounce which identity groups are good and which are evil. This makes it virtually impossible for anyone who is deemed politically incorrect or evil to get a fair hearing.” (Miller 2022, 209)

What we are seeing take place, and this report shows, is that when you begin to equate, just as deceptively as the prior administration did, religious liberty and religious freedom with discrimination and intolerance, then you get the attempt to create laws such as those seen recently in Canada where it will soon be illegal to teach the Bible. Again, from Steve Miller.

“This kind of blatant misrepresentation opens the door to the creation of laws that prohibit any faith-based ideas, beliefs, or speech that the government concludes are bad for society. In such an environment, freedom of speech—and by extension, freedom of religion—are diminished and are on a one-way street to being eradicated. (Miller 2022, 215)



And yes, this is happening in our nation. A recent example involved a group of students who came to DC in March 2023 for the March for Life and they all wore hats that said their school name and the words, Pro Life. After the march, they became tourists and went to the Air and Space Museum.

They were instructed to remove the hats or leave. “The guard stated that the museum was a “neutral zone” and that the First Amendment “does not apply here,” telling them to remove their hats. Most of the students left the museum quickly. After realizing a few students were missing, a chaperone went back through security to look for them. The same security guards approached him and directed him to remove his hat, stating: “We are a museum that promotes equality, and your hats do not promote equality.”” (Task Force to Eradicate Anti-Christian Bias 2026, 136)

Unfortunately, in these last days, we may be seeing a short respite from persecution before it takes off again in earnest. We have already seen a willingness in our culture to turn to violence to resolve differences. The martyrdom of Charlie Kirk seems to be a one off, but it isn't really when you begin to add in the attacks on churches and synagogues. Add in the attempted assassinations we have seen and the attitude of many who are actually elected officials, basically providing a pass for it, then we know we must pray for revival for the church in this nation and for an outpouring of God's spirit to see people turn to Christ.

But Jesus did indeed say, expect it, expect it to get worse and increase in frequency and severity. And when He said He is coming quickly in Revelation 22:7, He used the word ταχύ (tachú) referencing speed and “pertaining to a point of time subsequent to another point of time (either an event in the discourse or the time of the discourse itself), with emphasis upon the relatively brief interval between the two points of time—‘soon, very soon.’” (Louw and Nida 1996, 635)

All of this points to one thing, Jesus is standing at the door and knocking right now. We can almost hear Him calling out to the Laodicean church all around us. Seeing this, we find ourselves agreeing with John in Revelation 22:20, “Come Lord Jesus.”

Let's pray.

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