

# Get ready for Persecution

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[ 0 : 00 ] To be continued...

Persecution is one of the marks of the end days of planet earth, of the end days of the world as we know it.

Persecution, it's a mark of discipleship. I came across an article from the Berean Call, and this was just in the last few days. People might know the Berean Call, Dave Hunt.

He puts out some good material, including a book that he once wrote, Seduction of Christianity. And I'm just going to quote somewhat from him to start with, and then the message proper.

This is what he says, that he sees coming. A clash between the professing and even true Christians who will conform to the world by compromising biblical teachings and those who will remain steadfast in the faith.

[ 1 : 30 ] Matthew 24, verse 4, Jesus warns that the last days before his return will be a time of religious deception. He says, take heed that no man deceive you.

And in verse 24 of Matthew 24, he says that the deception will be so great that if it were possible, the very elect could be deceived. Paul instructs the Roman believers to identify those who teach things contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them.

Romans 16, 17. It's clear that believers who desire to stand firm for the teachings of God's Word will be at odds with Christians who beliefs and lies are not conformed to the Scriptures.

Could division over doctrine result in persecution? We see in the book of Acts, Acts 8, verse 1, there was great persecution in the church. There was violent assaults, imprisonments, deaths.

The issues were doctrinal. There was a pitting of those fiercely defending the religious traditions of men against those who follow the teachings of the Lord. Could it be that the same scenario could happen again between Bible-believing Christians being persecuted by other Christians or liberal Christians who will not endure sound doctrine?

[ 2 : 56 ] Is that likely? Only the Lord knows how extreme the oppression will be before the coming of the Lord in His return for His bride.

Increasing numbers of professing and true Christians have accepted the ideals of the world, including moral, social and religious tolerance.

He goes on, intolerance is something that the world describes a person as antisocial, bigoted, prejudiced, or a practitioner of hate crimes.

He writes here, what if a social gospel that is based upon good works becomes widely accepted as a better form of salvation?

So rally everyone together. Could join everyone together, couldn't it? The liberal Christians, governments, world religions, the cults, everyone that is except biblical Christians who might object to such a doctrine.

[ 4 : 03 ] Peter writes that the time is going to come, that judgment must begin at the house of God. 1 Peter 4.17 When Promise Keepers was popular, one of its goals was to break down the walls, break down the walls between Catholics and evangelicals.

And part of that process involved turning churches against ministries that evangelised Roman Catholics. When Rick Warren's 40 Days of Purpose began to influence hundreds of thousands of churches through the US and worldwide, long-time members who protested on doctrinal grounds were either disfellowship or threatened with disfellowship, unless they submitted to Warren's program in their own churches.

To question a pastor or the elder support for introducing yoga, for example, or Christianised yoga in a church, was grounds for disfellowship. What if even without your preaching or protesting, it simply became known that you are one of them?

You're one of those biblical Christians who is intolerant who is intolerant towards other religions, who rejects evolution, who won't go along with psychology, who is anti-abortion, anti-euthanasia,

that you view homosexuality as a sin rather than an alternative lifestyle, and that you're against gay rights and gay marriage.

Furthermore, you seem to be out of touch with the acceptable morality of the day, when marriage is statistically a minority practice in the US, by having a problem with cohabitation, sex before marriage, in other words, and it's been said that you believe sexual abstinence should be practiced outside of marriage.

[ 5 : 52 ] How will such a person be dealt with in Christendom? The dark clouds of persecution are gathering. You know, I believe that there's a lot of truth in what this man is saying here.

He writes further, the seduction of Christianity has created a condition in which biblical discernment and steadfastness in the faith are the exception rather than the rule.

Standing for the truth and righteousness of the word of God, while the opposition increases within and without the church, can only result in some form of persecution.

The Lord declared that there would be division, that he would bring division. In Luke 12, 51, it's not always bad. God's kind of division is a good thing. Christ caused division everywhere he went.

In Romans 16, 17, some misquote the passage, mark them which cause divisions and avoid them. What Paul said, mark and avoid those who cause divisions and offences contrary to the sound doctrine.

[ 6 : 55 ] It's good to be divisive when it's sound doctrine that causes the division. We're not to mark and avoid those, but it's where the division is contrary to sound doctrine.

That is where the danger lies. And we know the word tells us in 2 Timothy 4, verse 3, that the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine. They won't want teaching that is sound and strong.

It's one of the signs of the apostasy of the end days. Friends, we're turning to 2 Timothy 3. That's just a bit of a prelude. This is something that stirred me to think of this subject.

Persecution in the end days. Persecution in the last days of the church. We read in 2 Timothy 3, verse 10, Paul writes to Timothy, But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra, what persecutions I endured, but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

[ 8 : 18 ] But continue thou in the things thou hast learned and hast been assured of knowing of whom thou hast learned them. And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word. It's truth to us. Lord, we thank you that it's truth that does not bend or get altered by man, but it is truth that stands the test of time.

Help us, Lord, to put it into our hearts and minds that it might work in every life that is here today. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Persecution. It's one of the marks of the end days of planet Earth, of the end days of the world as we know it.

Persecution, it's a mark of discipleship. And the context here in 2 Timothy 3 is of men deceiving and being deceived and of the need to hold fast the word of God, to hold it fast.

[ 9 : 43 ] In verse 11, Paul says of the persecutions that he endured, of persecutions of Antioch, Iconium and Lystra.

It refers to Acts 14. Where further we read, Acts 14, 22, Paul says, is preaching to the folk there and it says that Paul was confirming the souls of the disciples and exhorting them to continue in the faith and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

We must, it's a necessity that we must go through much tribulation. It's been said that over the last 10 years or so, an average of 100,000 Christians have been killed every year.

I know there's some people who really pray earnestly for the persecuted church and there's materials at the back here. The persecuted church worldwide, 100,000 every year have been killed on average of recent days and we read in Mark 4 verse 17 of persecution that it comes because of the word, because of the word, persecution comes.

Persecution strengthens and revives the church. It can be a positive sign, a healthy thing, a good thing, can do us good because it's a purifying effect.

[ 11 : 11 ] We see that in 1 Peter 1 verse 7 where Peter says 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.

The trial of your faith, it's a good thing for your faith to be tried, for it to go through trials. It's not always pleasant as not all of us can attest, but the trial of your faith will do you good.

In Psalm 34 verse 19 it says, Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. The afflictions of the righteous, many.

You might be going through some bachelors at home, at work or at school, in your day by day life, many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.

Notice here that it is not the nominal Christian that is talked about here. It's not just someone who claims they're a Christian. It is all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, the righteous.

[ 12 : 21 ] These are the ones that deliverance is promised to and that God will bless and aid through these times. How often do we hear that today where people are suffering loss pain for his name?

It says that they were rejoicing that they suffered shame for the name of Jesus in the book of Acts. The early Christians stood for the exclusive claims of Christ and they obeyed and they obeyed him. In the days of the early Christians, even then, they were technically free to worship just about any god they could choose at the time, so long as they also acknowledged Caesar.

You know, you could have Jesus as long as you had Caesar as well. The Romans were very tolerant, I'm told, but the Christians who denied that allegiance to Caesar as God effectively in that time, they were to be executed.

What is the condition of Christianity today? Couldn't really call it churchianity today. Satan is the father of lies and the author of confusion.

[ 13 : 32 ] Now, Julie and I were watching an expose of Hollywood and it was shocking that behind Hollywood, Satan's fingerprints are all over it.

The lurking forces of evil in the worldly media, in the Hollywood film directors and actors, numbers of them were saying how they were possessed as they enacted the drama of the film that they were in.

And this is a commonplace thing you could see from this expose. And there's a warfare going on people. The prince of the power of the air, he's waging this warfare against all that is godly and wholesome to indoctrinate the next generation against the Bible.

There's a propaganda war, a brain washing, as parental rights are being given away to a global control that will be like a tyranny that is going on.

But what's more than that, than all that that we've said, I honestly believe that the attack is within the church. It's within the church.

[ 14 : 45 ] Biblical truth is under attack as apostasy is rife in popular Christianity today as we're seeing this inclusivity, this merging, this interfaith, this emergent church.

A one world church is ultimately in view and we see that as there's false gospels, there's idolatry, there's deceiving spirits. And some churches, they make a lot of claims about having the anointing. The anointing. Come on, hear this. Anointed speaker. And that's not to say there aren't anointed speakers. I trust that there are godly anointed speakers and anointed meetings too.

But we need to be watchful and careful because the word tells us about someone who was anointed. In Ezekiel 28 verse 14, the anointed cherub.

Guess who that is? The enemy, the devil, Satan. He was anointed too. So we've got to be careful, don't we? We've got to be discerning. That is the call tonight for every one of us to earnestly seek God for discernment.

[ 15 : 59 ] We vitally need discernment in these days because the end days were foretold to us to be days where there will be false prophets who will mislead God's people.

We're seeing that today. There's some popular figures and I don't want to dwell on these so much but there's some who deny hell. They preach universalism. They're quite popular in Christianity today.

Down at the Kermont you can buy books by these authors. Some who preach no hell effectively, no gospel, no only saviour. Friends, we've got to be alerted and alarmed at such things.

We're witnessing a spiritual departure, an arrogance, a blindness, a folly, a worldwide deception, a perversion of the gospel. As they cry out new methods, new worship expressions, they want new foundations upon new apostles and new prophets and the old foundations are not good enough for them.

The old foundations are no longer relevant to contemporary society, they think. But yet, more than ever before, we need a continuing contending earnestly for the faith, the faith, once delivered to the saints.

[17:10] And solid, scriptural, faithful men and women are called for in these perilous days where counterfeit Christianity is ever more prominent. And I believe, honestly, brothers and sisters tonight, that counterfeit Christianity will become ever more so our avowed enemy.

Because they're an enemy of the gospel, an enemy of the gospel. And faithful men and women of God will be accused of being old fashioned, legalistic, living in the past.

But we cannot be friends of the world. We cannot be. Why? Because the whole world lieth in wickedness, it says, in 1 John 5, 19, Revelation 12, 9, it says, Satan, he deceives the whole world. The rulers of this world are enemies of the gospel and of God. And moves are happening, friends, I believe, honestly, tonight, that trends are happening towards a global governance and there is a conspiracy.

It's happening. There is a communist police state that is ultimately in their minds. As much as some might scoff and mock and laugh at such things, I believe we are seeing the move in that direction very plainly.

[18:26] And there's an unequal yoking together on the church front. Whatever happens to biblical separation, God demands it. It's not optional. And I believe, just as the world hates, true Christianity, persecution will come from a worldly church.

Persecution is going to come from the worldly church. You know, I've been, and I haven't been of recent times, I confess, but down at the mall where there's men and folk witnessing for Christ, down at the mall, there's people soundly declaring the word of God in the public arena of the public place in Adelaide.

And where does the criticism come from? Where does the persecution come from? I know, I'm sure folk who do such witnessing can attest to this, and I've seen it myself, it's often the Christians, it's often the Christians, the liberal Christians who come up and say, oh, that's quite condemnatory language.

You know, you're talking about people going to hell. I mean, that's the, we want to preach love, a lovey-dovey gospel, God loves everybody, and everybody's cool with God, you know, let's just tone it down a bit, make it a little bit more palatable, a little bit more friendly, seeker friendly, and it's the liberal Christians who are criticising, but would that be the case?

I know I've seen some of that, where it's the liberal Christians who are actually enemies of the gospel, they're enemies of the truth, and the persecution is coming from the worldly church.

[20:07] In John 15, 19 it says, the Lord says, 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 hated you.

Don't be surprised, Christian men and women here today, don't be surprised if the world will hate you, because Christ said, it will, if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.

And in John 17, 14 it says, I have given them thy word, the Lord Jesus praying to the Father, and the world have hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Godly Christians are scorned, mocked, derided, hated. There's a growing hostility towards Bible preaching and believing churches. The Babylonians are setting the agenda and it's in the church. It's in the church. Godly heritage that was true Bible, faithful Bible preaching and teaching is under attack today because the enemy wants to wipe it out.

[21:22] He wants to wipe it out. And that's why some of you are called bigots and hate mongers. Churches that faithfully preach the gospel are derided as hate groups where iniquity is abounding.

Friends, it's happening. I believe it's happening. A political correctness that no one dare speak out. Where sin is celebrated in our hell-bound society.

It's celebrated. It's advertised. It's promoted. It's sold to our young people. Where tolerance and acceptance are the values, values of our godless culture.

A culture hostile to Christ and his cross. What a mixture when the new age spirituality is combined together. And Rick Warren said of fundamentalism of all its varieties and he's including people like some of you people here tonight, Christian fundamentalists.

People who actually believe in the Christian fundamentals, in the fundamentals of the Bible, the Word of God, there's some fundamentals here. It says the fundamentalists are one of the biggest enemies of the 21st century.

[ 22 : 33 ] This is one of the leading lights of Christianity today, so-called. Bible believers. Friends, we ought to be in their number. We ought to be Bible believers, unbending, dogmatic, extremists.

People who actually believe this book, believe it, believe it is infallible, it's without error, it's absolute, it's literally to be taken, it's unchanging and it's true.

A court in Canada has ruled the Bible is hate literature. Quote, this court said this, the Bible is hate literature if it is quoted verbatim and in context when it is used to condemn homosexuality as sin.

Hate literature, we ought to love this hate literature, amen, because it's truth, it's truth, it's truth, it's soul-saving truth, it's truth that sets people free.

We need this truth. The world might say it's got hate in it, but the hate is directed against man's sin. But the answer is the loving God who sent his son to die in our place, to bear that cruel cross, those nails, that pain, for you, for me, for our salvation.

[ 23 : 48 ] The God of the greatest love, the God who is love, wrote this book so we could be urged to seek his face. And friends, we need a literal interpretation of the word of God.

Christians are being labelled today homophobes, harsh, puritanical. The world is bringing in hate crime laws, hate crime. And someone said this about these so-called hate crime laws, the real danger of hate crime laws is that they criminalise thoughts and beliefs.

You know, actually, it's attacking your faith, your belief. And yet, this quote goes on, practitioners of homosexual, cross-dressing, transvestism, and transsexualism become federally protected minority groups.

Now, this kind of message could get me into trouble. It could get this church into trouble. Because there's hate crime, laws, and they're coming into our own country. The secular humanist worldview is one in which morality is entirely relative.

Any reference to traditional notions of natural human sexuality, the natural family, of fixed lines of demarcation between right and wrong, are hateful, discriminatory, and to be strictly forbidden by force of law.

[ 25 : 10 ] And meantime, the education system is bringing up the next generation to believe this. They're given this mantra in the schools. Their minds are being twisted, purging off traditional values, poisoned, captured.

And it's not just in the school system, too. There's lifelong learning now. In the workplace, we've got lifelong learning. It's from cradle to grave. Lifelong learning.

The indoctrination continues through your whole life. And absolute truth is being torn to shreds.

Here's a quote of what happened in an American school in Seattle.

A fifth grade teacher set some work for the students to do. A fifth grade teacher, she told her class to complete the sentence, if I could wish for three things I would wish for, and a Christian student called Matt wrote, if I could wish for three things I would wish for, infinitely more wishes to meet God and for all my friends to be Christians.

There's a lot of truth in that, isn't there? We want to meet God, we want all our friends to be Christians. And because every student's wishes was going to be plastered on the wall of the classroom, it had to be just right.

[ 26 : 29 ] So the teacher had a look at what Matt wrote, and she told him that his last wish could hurt people who didn't share his beliefs. Matt didn't want to hurt anyone, so he had if they want to be.

So Matt had to change what he wrote, and for all my friends to be Christians, if they want to be. The teacher had to doctor that and add that. He had to complete another sentence.

It said, if I could meet anyone I would like to meet, Matt wrote God, because he is the one who made us. The teacher made him add, in my opinion.

I would like to meet God, because he is the one who made us, in my opinion. It's indoctrination, isn't it? It's not absolute truth anymore. Matt's parents visited the school and heard about this and asked the teacher, why did you add this?

The teacher said she didn't want to hurt other people's feelings. And Matt said, sorry, the parents said to Matt, but these are just your wishes.

[ 27 : 38 ] I thought so, Matt looked confused. Later, the teacher explained to Matt's parents that she wanted diversity in her class and was looking out for her other students.

But why couldn't Matt share his views? I tried to instill God's truths in my son, said Matt, Matt's father, rather, but it seems like the school wants to remove them.

Now, this is what's going on in the school. from a little child's age. Absolutely true. If it doesn't measure up with what the global system that is anti-Christ wants people to believe, it's got to be twisted and changed.

So it matches up with what they want us to believe, what they want us to be trained to think and believe. I read a reference to a book that described how brainwashing works.

How brainwashing works. And it said that one of the key protective factors for mental survival for people who are barraged with brainwashing are faith and convictions.

[ 28 : 54 ] Faith and convictions. And, friends, we need that more than ever before. Biblical faith and Biblical convictions. That will help you when the brainwashing happens.

The brainwashing is happening. It's happening through Hollywood, it's happening through the education system, through many forces at work in our world today. We're being barraged with brainwashing.

We need faith and convictions that are Biblical, that need to be instilled and upheld and reinforced.

1 John 4 1 it says, Believe not every spirit, beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God.

Because many false prophets have gone out into the world. The trend is for a watering down of a compromising of a plain church and of a Christianity that's shrinking back from speaking out.

Where evangelism is being constrained. Evangelism is being constrained on every hand. Where sound Bible doctrine is being restrained. It's not preached.

[ 29 : 58 ] It's time more than ever for God's people to be zealous for the truth. I was reading reports of America today and reports that are saying that militant gay groups are gloating over churches being marred by graffiti, swastikas on lawns and walls, bricks thrown through windows and doors, adhesive poured into locks, suspicious packages of white powder sin in the mail, all for nothing more than supporting traditional marriage.

It's happening in America. We tend to follow America, don't we? Persecution is coming. Persecution is coming. Get ready. Get ready for it, people, because persecution is coming.

I earnestly believe that. And I believe that the persecution will come, at least in part, from liberal churches, liberal Christians who don't want the exclusive claims of Christ.

They would rather have some wishy-washy gospel. We must be prayerful, spirit-led people in these days, friends. Take courage, take heart. Our Lord Jesus says in John 16, 33, These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace, in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer.

I have overcome the world. Be of good cheer. The trial of your faith is going to be much more precious than a goal that is going to perish.

[ 31 : 33 ] But your faith may face some purifying time. And that's a good thing. It's a good thing. Where are the Christians strongest?

In countries where it's hard yakka being a Christian. In countries where it's a tough call. It's tough. You know, some of you have been overseas to different places where Christians don't have all the affluence and the materialism and the comforts of the western world and of the ease and prosperity that we often enjoy.

Friends, take heed. Take heed. In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.

And friends, just one closing reference. And someone exhorted me, just a young boy actually, exhorted me to get into the book of Revelation.

Because we're in those days. We're in those days. And just a closing reference from Revelation 17. And I believe this speaks about some of the forces that are at work even now on planet earth.

[ 32 : 43 ] behind the curtain is the whore of Babylon. The whore of Babylon and her fellow harlot churches. It's interesting, it's not just the Roman Catholic church, which you could see pictured here, but she's the mother of harlots.

So she's the mother of apostasy and of apostate churches, you could say. Revelation 17, that's my personal conclusion that it is speaking of Rome as the harlot church.

But other Christians might have different views on the subject. But Revelation 17, verse 4, And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.

And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

And when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. Interesting, isn't it? Mystery Babylon the Great, the mother of hearts and abominations of the earth. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

[ 34 : 09 ] Could it be that amongst the greatest enemies of the gospel are preachers and churches? We need to be alerted.

Friends, we need to. And look, this is not to deride Christians of different persuasions. This is just to alert the body of Christ to the dangers that are at work in the world today.

And it is on the church scene today, I believe, that we're seeing this gearing, this hatred of the true gospel, of the exclusive claims of Christ.

As I've said last week, I talked about the movement of Chris Lamb, which is promoted by Rick Warren, amongst others, of a melding together of Islam and Christianity.

It's shocking stuff. It's disgusting. You know, if you're messing with a church that believes in the 40 days of purpose and the purpose-driven life, wake up to yourself.

[ 35 : 16 ] Don't follow such a thing. Rick Warren is bad news for the church of God. Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you that your word is truth and we can take it and read it.

Lord, help us to not just take it and read it, but to let it live in our hearts. We pray that there's any here tonight that know you're not a saviour, a Lord. as master of their lives that they might cry out while there's still opportunity to be saved.

Lord, help us, we pray, that are saved tonight to wake up and see what is going on around us. Lord, we can't join forces with such things that are apostate and godless.

Lord, help us to see the truth, to hold it fast. Lord, not to get proud with it, but to be humble with it, to be humbled by it, to humbly read your word, to humbly, to reverently quake and tremble at your word, fearfully hold it and fearfully obey it.

Lord, that we might be a people that you are pleased with when you come again and receive your true church unto yourself. Lord, help us to be amongst that number that truly follow you and not to shy away when persecution may come because of the word and yet it should make us stronger.

[ 36 : 34 ] Strengthen each one, Lord. It could be that maybe persecution arise from family, from friends, from colleagues, from workmates, from the government itself. Lord, as we faithfully follow you, we know that we can be assured that persecution shall come to them that live godly in Christ Jesus.

Lord, we thank you for your promise that you are with us and we can be of good cheer. We can take courage in that promise in Jesus' name.