

- Persecution -

*"In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."
(John 16:33b)*



The Berean Lamp
For the Body of Christ.

Vol. 18
Sept/Oct 2013



TABLE OF CONTENTS

In the Master's Service
by Scott Moller - Page 3

Down-to-Earth Persecution
by Nathan Warner - Page 4

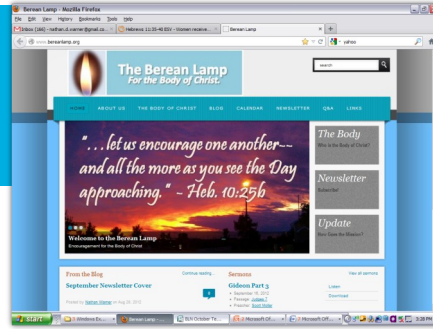
The Persecutors and the Persecuted
by Jesse Larsen - Page 6

An Excerpt from *Martyr's Mirror*
by Steven Hiebert - Page 10

Pervasive Persecution
by Lynn Warner - Page 11

The Baptism of Christ
by Ginny Larsen - Page 13

The Colors of God's Handiwork
by Beth Moller - Page 17



The Berean Lamp Newsletter is a monthly publication of the Berean Lamp Ministry. Visit our website at www.bereanlamp.org. The Berean Lamp Ministry is a service of the Berean Christian Fellowship of Zimmerman, MN.

The Berean Lamp Ministry seeks to:

1. Encourage and strengthen the Body of Christ by providing the means for each of its members to share their spiritual gifts with one another, rooted in the Word of God, thereby growing into deeper union with one another and with Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).
2. Minister to non-believers; be a witness for Christ and a testimony to His Body in the world.

We would appreciate your help in contributing to the content and in spreading the work of this ministry. Thank you, and God bless.

- Pastor Scott Moller

Editor-in-Chief: Nathan Warner
Oversight Committee: Pastor Scott Moller, Deacon Bob Larsen, Nathan Warner
Editors: Natalie Warner, Lynn Warner, Julie Moller





In the Master's Service

By Scott Moller

*"A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master."
(Matthew 10:24)*

Growing up in America, I used to think how fortunate it was that I was protected from outright persecution as a Christian, especially given the protections granted in the constitution of freedom of speech and freedom of religion. As the years have gone by, however, we have seen those protections and freedoms encroached upon more and more - so much so that now there is an open war being waged against biblical teachings and Christian beliefs.

In Matthew chapter 10, Jesus sent His disciples out to witness to the nation of Israel. Before He sent them, He gave them instructions and warnings about persecution that still apply for Believers today. In verse 22, He warns that *"all men will hate you because of Me."* This warning is hard to take for those of us who are trying to love our neighbors and be at peace with those around us. But Jesus warned that we would be hated because of Him. It is not a hatred for our actions but because of Who we follow.

In verse 24 (cited above), Jesus explains that a servant is not above his master. Jesus warned His disciples that they would be treated in the same way He was. Jesus only did good and loved people, but the world chose to hate Him for it. The world still hates Jesus today. Since our Master is hated by the world, we should not be surprised when we are hated also. We need to be prepared for it.

In verse 28, Jesus states: *"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell."* The natural result of persecution is fear. It is a normal instinct to avoid harm if possible. But Jesus

wants us to know that there is a greater danger, even worse than being killed. He warns us that our souls are at risk.

In verses 32 and 33, Jesus says, *"Whoever acknowledges Me before men, I will also acknowledge him before My Father in heaven. But whoever disowns Me before men, I will disown him before My Father in heaven."* Jesus could not have put it any clearer: to acknowledge Him before men means salvation, to deny Him before men means eternal death.

Persecution will bring these warnings of Jesus into sharp focus. American Christians have been able to comfortably sit on the fence, not rocking the proverbial boat. But the world will not let us be lukewarm any longer. Beliefs will be challenged and faith will be tested. Are you preparing yourself? Be in prayer, be in the Word, and be part of the Body.

*"But he who stands firm to the end will be saved."
(Matthew 10:24b)*

*"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first."
(John 15:18)*



Down-to-Earth Persecution

By Nathan Warner

"You also will bear witness because you have been with Me from the beginning."

(John 15:27)

For the Church, persecution is always on the mind. What exactly persecution means to our minds, however, has perhaps become a bit limited. We in the West have had a tendency to think of persecution as something that persists primarily beyond the shores of America in the beatings, imprisonments, and killings of Believers in dark alleyways and mob-filled squares of third-world countries. Recently, Believers have increasingly felt this form of persecution coming to America on the tidal wave of these End Days. Indeed, in the traditional sense, it is most certainly on the rise with increased anger and violence towards Believers.

Persecution of Christians, however, is far more commonplace and monotonous than we might otherwise think. We wade through it every day of our existence here in the world. Part of our difficulty in recognizing it is because we define it as a sort of opposition purely to discipleship and outreach activities. In this way, we think of preachers and missionaries being ridiculed, harassed, attacked, arrested, beaten, or killed. Indeed, we see similar stories in the Acts of the Apostles.

As Believers, we have a tendency to idolize Believers who have faced this sort of persecution. These are the "great men" and "giants" of the Faith who did great works and endured great trials "worthy" of some mention. Unfortunately, one might get the impression from these discussions that greatness in the Kingdom of God only relates to our efforts in spreading the Gospel, measured by how much persecution we overcome in doing so. And so we collect stories of missionaries and preachers who became famous for their efforts to spread the Gospel in the world.

I projected a lot of judgment on myself

growing up, because I wasn't sure I was "good enough" or that I measured up in my daily life. After all, who was I compared to Eric Liddell or Amy Carmichael? Are we second-rate Christians in the Kingdom of Heaven if we lead "ordinary" lives? The truth is there is nothing ordinary about life as a Christian. To live a Christian life is to be persecuted by the world and its ruler (John 14:30) no matter where you are or what you are doing.

We can see this clearly if we define Persecution more broadly as anything in our lives that challenges, harasses, and oppresses the reality of who God is. Now we may see that we are surrounded by persecution. Persecution is not simply the mockers and haters of God doing violence to us but it is also in the pain, sorrow, and loss in our lives that may question our understanding of God's character or make us feel neglected, judged, or rejected by God. In this way, persecution is not only a physical crackdown on what we can say and do in our testimony about Jesus but also spiritual distress born from the death, pain, struggle, frustration, oppression, and loss we experience in life. This shouldn't be surprising because as Believers our very lives are testimonies for Christ.

The very nature and presence of sin in this world persecutes belief in God. The things we see and hear and feel from the world persecute and harass our spirits, grieving the Holy Spirit in us: *"Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption"* (Ephesians 4:29-30). Persecution is anything that tries to oppress, harass, or silence our testimony – anything that challenges the reality of WHO GOD IS. Have you ever been in pain or been with someone else in pain? Have you ever suffered a terrible loss or something terrible happened in your life, and it made you ask, "God, where are you? Why me? I don't understand!" Have you ever had something challenge your understanding of who God is? Has anything troubled your faith in God's character? This is persecution of the most acute kind.

If you have ever wondered why we are persecuted, we see why in John 15:18-27. **We testify about God's nature, therefore even our understanding of His nature is always under attack.** We see here that it is because Jesus witnessed to God's true nature, contrasting the world's ways to God's Holiness that they hated Him for it. He bore witness to God's character. The Holy Spirit bears witness to the world and to us about Jesus. If we are true Believers and followers in Jesus, we bear witness about Jesus, too. If we are Believers, our very lives are testimonies to God's character; therefore, the world hates everything we say, everything we do, and everything we are. The Enemy hates the very essence of our lives and seeks to persecute our understanding of God in our pain, discouragement, frustration, sorrow, and loss. Truly, there is much persecution in our lives as Christians. We should take heart, however, for our sorrow will be turned to Joy.

As an illustration of persecution, Jesus compared our lives on earth to childbirth: *"Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you"* (John 16:20-22). We must understand that if we are true Believers, this is a picture of how life will be. There will be great sorrow on account of our witness about Jesus – great pain and anguish – great persecution. Not just in our testifying to people but in our testimony through physical and emotional pain, our struggles with discouragement and depression, how we are ravished with loss and our struggles with weakness and shame – all persecution in a depraved world because God's Holy presence does not fill this place. Jesus said we would be wracked with the pains of childbirth while living here.

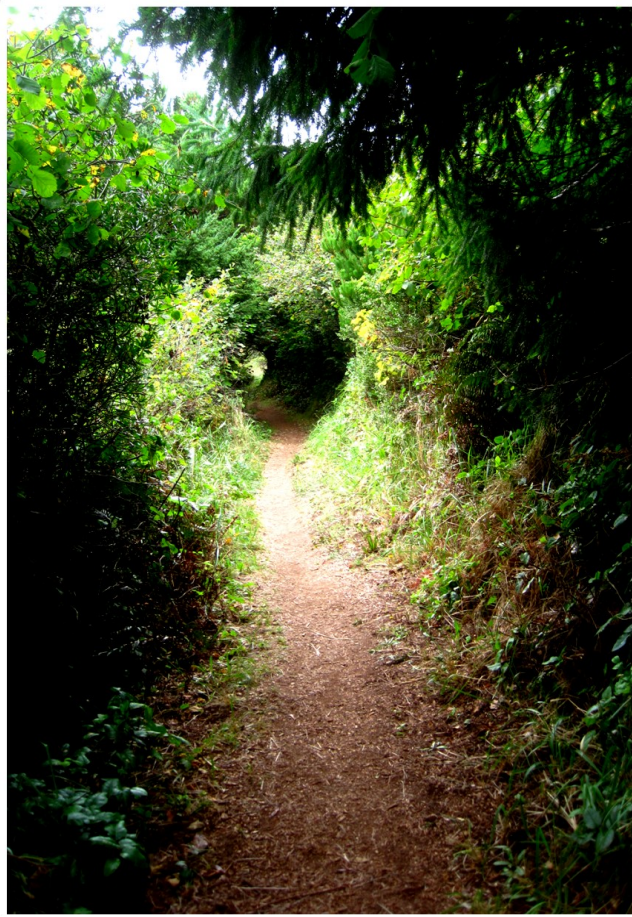
Childbirth is not something you can control.

You have to go through it - every discomfort, every twinge, leading step by step towards the intense pain and anguish in the final stages. So it is with us as Believers in this life. As we struggle helplessly, cry without comfort, and scream in agony through a world ravished by sin, we are nearing the hour, every hour that passes, to the moment when we will be delivered of the agony – **We WILL BE DELIVERED!** Jesus will see us again! Jesus said, *"Unless one is **born again**, he cannot see the Kingdom of Heaven"* (John 3:3b). We who are Believers are said to be Born Again, yet the physical manifestation of that transformation in our bodies (eternal life) remains ahead of us; but from the perspective of a timeless God, we have already been Born Again if we are His. If we are His, then it simply IS the reality of what we are, because we will be with Him in eternity – it is the end and everlasting result of this birthing called "life" here in the world. The eternal life that fills our hearts by the testimony of Jesus through the Holy Spirit will birth us into the Kingdom of Heaven. We will be born into eternity, whether by death or by the Rapture. We will not remember or know the anguish for Joy that we are with the Lord at that moment. We will ask Him nothing in that day, because we will not think of the anguish for the Joy at being in His presence! And no one will take our joy from us.

Our persecution in this life is a sure thing, but it works step by step towards eternal Life born in us by the power of God, and no one will take our joy from us.

"I have said these things to you, that in Me you might have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but take heart, I have overcome the World."

(John 16:33)



*"Behold, I am SENDING
you out as SHEEP in the
midst of WOLVES, so be
WISE as serpents and
INNOCENT as doves."
(Matthew 10:16)*

The Persecutors and the Persecuted

By Jesse Larsen

While most of the persecution against Christians in America has been mild compared to what Christians are enduring in other countries, I believe that could change very quickly as I see hostility towards Christians quickly increasing in America - and much of it is coming from within the professing church. Others who recognize this should not consider the words to the following Bible passage to be far-fetched: *"The time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service"* (John 16:2).

One of the things I have noticed over the years is that many of the persecutors of true Christians often consider themselves to be under persecution. For that reason, I have decided to write this article to show some of the biblical distinctions between the persecutors and the persecuted. The following words that Jesus spoke clearly reveals some of the characteristics of both the persecutors and the persecuted:

*"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. **If you were of the world, the world would love its own.** Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, **because they do not know Him who sent Me**"* (John 15:18-21).

This passage reveals that the persecutors are "of the world," and they love others who are also of the world - but they hate and persecute those who are not. The end of the passage also reveals why they persecute: they do not know God. And if you talk about knowing God to people like this, it is likely that you will get a blank stare or be accused of being legalistic and a "Pharisee," simply for sharing your testimony of how God delivered you from the carnal life that you once lived.



Much of the music that I used to listen to before my Christian life was hateful, and I was respected by like-minded people who were into the same music during that time. Yet now that I desire for people to be delivered from the bondage that I was under, I am considered to be a hater or a trouble-maker by some of the same types of people who once respected me.

A song by the band *Stuck Mojo* titled "Hate Breed" includes the lyrics, "This hate makes me a better man, my hate helps me to take a stand."

The *Nine Inch Nails* song titled "Wish" includes the lyrics, "Don't think you're having all the fun, you know me, I hate everyone." The *Nine Inch Nails* song titled "Somewhat Damaged" includes the lyrics, "Lick around divine debris, taste the wealth of hate in me."

The *Korn* song titled "Trash" includes the

lyrics, "My heart inside is constantly hating." In case anyone thinks that the singer for this band is bluffing, I will also point out that the *Korn* songs titled "Need To," "Daddy," "Mr. Rogers," "My Gift To You," and "Right Now" all include the lyrics "I hate you." The *Korn* song titled "Kill You" includes hateful lyrics which are so perverse that I will not quote them in this article. I could go on and on about some of the hateful lyrics that I have heard, but I just wanted to give some of the most obvious examples that I could recall.

So why is it that those who are "of the world" (John 15:19) are the most respected (even though some of them whom I have quoted here have admitted to being hateful) while true Christians are regarded as being hateful simply because they disagree with certain groups of individuals? While Christians



**We See in a Mirror
But Darkly**
By Lynn Warner

are regarded as being hateful simply for disagreeing with the world's way of thinking, many who **frankly admit** to being hateful are respected by some of the same people who accuse Christians of being hateful! That seems to indicate that hateful people are not really what much of the world is taking issue with. In many cases, the accusation that Christians are hateful often appears to be an attempt to obscure real issues, which brings me to my next point.

One more characteristic of the persecutors is that they will often attack a person **RATHER** than that person's argument. This

would seem to indicate that they really have no honest defense against the argument. Whether they are atheists or religious people, it is common for those who have no honest defense for their position to demonize or marginalize those who disagree with them. I see that continually today, but it is not new. Here is a clear example of an attempt to demonize a wise Believer in the time of the Apostles: *"Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. Then they secretly induced men to say, 'We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God'"* (Acts 6:9-11).

The mindset that is revealed in this passage is one that I see throughout much of the world today. We have reached a time when people are called "hateful" for disagreeing with anything that is based on false teaching (teachings that are not scriptural). (unless it is "another Jesus" - 2 Corinthians 11:4). Not only are Christians today demonized as being hateful for disagreeing with the world's way of thinking, but there is also an attempt to silence Christians as well. I see that attempt not only through some of the legislation that has passed but also through the fact that I have witnessed many of the Christian web-sites that I visit getting hacked since 2008, including "Voice of The Martyrs" – a ministry that serves persecuted Christians around the world. I have also seen it through the fact that my posts are continually deleted on a message board called "Internet Movie Data Base" whenever I post something there challenging atheism or evolution or when I post something challenging unbiblical theology in a certain religious movie.

None of this surprises me since John 15:18-21 makes it clear that true Christians would be hated and persecuted, but I am pointing it out simply because I find this common response to be very informative. When someone has the truth on their side, they are not afraid of opposing views being expressed, and they therefore do not feel the need to silence those who dis-



"And THEY have no ROOT in themselves, but ENDURE for a while; then, when tribulation or PERSECUTION arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away."

(Mark 4:17)

agree with them. So the very fact that anyone would silence those who disagree with them only reveals that they have no honest defense for their position. That is one of the main differences between the persecutors and the persecuted.

Colossians 3:2 says, *“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”* Yet one of the characteristics of the persecutors is that they are worldly-minded, which is why Jesus made it clear that they are *“of the world”* (John 15:19). So don't be surprised if they view you as an oddball for not being as worldly-minded as they are. Such worldly-mindedness is certainly seen in those who mock Christians for believing in a pre-tribulation rapture (which is a mockery that has come from both the world and the professing church), but their mocking of this just proves the words of the following passage to be true: *“Scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of His coming?”* (2 Peter 3:3-4)

That verse even reveals that lust is their motivation. This reminds me of a verse which refers to worldly-minded as *“grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage”* (Jude 1:16). So their motivation is commonly self-centered personal gain, because their minds are set on the things of earth rather than the things above. The motivation of true Believers should be compassion for the lost, as it was with Paul in the following passage: *“I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites”* (Romans 9:1-4).

Sadly, many who show such a compassion today are often hated by those who are *“walking according to their own lusts”* (Jude 1:16). This was also the case with Paul when he stated, *“I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abun-*

dantly I love you, the less I am loved” (2 Corinthians 12:15). We are seeing an increase of what the Bible describes in 2 Timothy 3:1-5, and it is for that reason that I will conclude this article with the following words of comfort for true believers.

“Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.”

(Galatians 6:9)

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

(2 Corinthians 4:17)

That last verse shows one more difference between the persecutors and the persecuted. Any affliction that the persecutors may face is working against them, but the affliction of the persecuted is working **for them**. Like Paul, the true believer should *“consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us”* (Romans 8:18).



An Excerpt...

MARTIN THE PAINTER; WOLFGANG ESLINGER, PAIN, MELCHIOR,
AND THREE OTHERS, A. D. 1531

In this year, Martin the painter, a minister of the Word of God, and six others from the Swabian church, were apprehended for the faith and the divine truth. After long proceedings, they were promised, that if they would renounce, they might go home unmolested to their wives and children. But they answered frankly: "No," but that they would willingly die, and not renounce. Afterwards, having been imprisoned almost a year, all seven were sentenced to death. They were led under the town hall, and several articles of their doctrine were read to them. When the first article was read Brother Wolfgang Eslinger said: "As you judge today so shall God judge you when you come before His face; God shall well know you." Matt. 7:23.

When the third article was read, Brother Pain said: "You stain your hands with our blood (Jer. 7:6); God shall certainly not remit it to you, but require it at your hands."

When the fourth article was read, Brother Melchior said: "Today we will testify with our blood, that that wherein we stand is the truth."

When the fifth article was read, Brothel Wolfgang Eslinger said: "Forsake your sins and unrighteousness, and repent, and God shall never remember it to you." Jer. 26:13. All seven were then led under a guard, to the place of execution. There Brother Martin, and all the others commended themselves unto God their Lord, praying that He would grant them a happy end, and care for His sheep. When they were brought to the field, the miller's servant, who was about sixteen years old, said to the people present, that they should forsake their sins, and turn to God, since there was no other way to heaven, than through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died on the cross and redeemed us. Ps. 34:14; Isa. 45:24; John 14:6; Matt. 27:50.

When they were brought into the ring, a nobleman rode up to said servant, admonished and entreated him, saying: "My son, desist from your error, and renounce it. Why do you allow yourself to be thus persuaded? spare your young life. I will take you home with me, and always keep you; you shall enjoy good things with me all your life, if you obey me." But the servant said: "God forbid that this should ever come to pass; if I should keep this temporal life (Jno. 12:25), and lose the eternal, I would act foolishly. I will not do it; your wealth can help neither you nor me; I expect one that is far better, if I persevere to the end. Matt. 10:22. I will surrender my spirit to God, and commend it to Christ (Luke 23:46), that His bitter suffering, which He endured on the cross, may in my case not be in vain." This servant was inspired by God in his purpose; for though he was younger in years than his brethren, they were nevertheless, as far as the purpose is concerned, of like age.

Thus all seven valiantly and joyfully confessed God and His truth, even unto death and the shedding of their blood. The above-mentioned Martin, when he was led out over the bridge, said: "This once yet the pious are led over this bridge, but no more hereafter." This came true; for a short time afterwards, such a violent storm and flood came that the bridge was demolished and carried away.

Martyrs Mirror: The story of fifteen centuries of Christian Martyrdom from the time of Christ to A.D. 1620 by Thieleman J. van Braght, pg. 439-440

Pervasive Persecution

By Lynn Warner

After studying the definition of “persecution” over the years, I realized it has been occurring here in America all my life. Persecution is to pursue in a manner to injure, vex, or afflict; to harass or destroy, to perplex or twist (my paraphrase of Noah Webster’s 1828 American Dictionary of the English language definition of persecution).


My mind has always glossed over the Bible’s references to sorcery and witchcraft, because I get a picture of the “Sorcerer’s Apprentice” or a Halloween costume witch in my mind. Properly defined, however, sorcery and witchcraft are interpretations of reality that deny, suppress, minimize, and exclude God. The effect this has on Believers is persecution. How these techniques have been employed systematically in my lifetime would be a study in itself. In my lifetime, I have seen a steady progression through Romans chapter one – especially Romans 1:28: *“And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God and longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things that are not proper.”* Verse 29 lists how those who do not acknowledge God are filled with all unrighteousness.

When I look back at my life, I see how I have acknowledged God at times in my conduct to friends, family, and strangers. Other times, however, I have been silenced by the persecution of sorcery and witchcraft. I have learned that sorcery, witchcraft, and persecution can be much more subtle than I ever imagined. People I knew never came outright and said, “I hate you because you are talking about Jesus; if you would stop talking about Jesus, we can be ‘friends.’” Instead, they perverted our relationship through criticism and accusation – condemning me through sarcasm and contempt, a defensive, self-righteous attitude, and finally silent withdrawal and rejection - all the while blaming me for what was happening.

I have found that identifying and confronting persecution can be very difficult and con-

fusing, but 2 Timothy 3 has helped me understand that persecution and the deception of false doctrine (sorcery and witchcraft) go hand-in-hand: *“But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of Godliness (or, religion – NASB sidebar) although they have denied its power”* (2 Timothy 3:1-2;4-5). Paul then describes certain men who oppose truth, men of depraved minds who captivate people who are *“always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth”* (2 Timothy 3:17). But Paul commends Timothy for following his teachings and conduct, and sharing in his persecution and suffering, stating, *“Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But evil men and imposters will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived”* (2 Timothy 3:12-13).


So, in summary, the deceptions of sorcery and witchcraft go hand-in-hand with persecution. I have seen deception increase exponentially over my lifetime. Particularly in the last ten years, when it seems God has turned our nation over to the consequences of Romans chapter one. Many techniques are used to silence Believers. Not all of them are as visible and open as we have a tendency to think persecution should be. Oftentimes, persecution’s goal of suppressing and denying God’s sovereignty, providence, and salvation in our lives actually comes through personal, seemingly unrelated acts of criticism, condemnation, self-righteousness, rejection, and withdrawal if we continue to practice Godly lives in Christ Jesus and stand for the Truth. However, like Timothy, we can be encouraged by Scripture to continue in the things we have learned and are assured of, because *“all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be adequately equipped for every good work”* (2 Timothy 3:16-17).



*"For the sake of
CHRIST,
then, I am
CONTENT..."*

*with weaknesses, insults,
hardships,
PERSECUTIONS, and
calamities...*

By Nathan Warner



*For
WHEN
I am
weak...*

*then I am
STRONG."
(2 Corinthians
12:10)*

The Baptism of Christ

By Ginny Larsen

"But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"
(Luke 12:50)

Straitened: "what a pressure of spirit is upon Me."

– Jamieson, Faucett, & Brown Commentary
"These words express both the trouble and distress Christ was in, at the apprehension of His sufferings as man; which were like to the distress of persons, closely besieged by an enemy; or rather of a woman, whose time of travail draws nigh, when she dreads it, and yet longs to have it over: and likewise they signify, His restless desire to have them accomplished"
– John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible

"God reaches the soul: man can only touch the body."
– John Darby's Synopsis

"But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said unto Him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized."
(Mark 10:38-39)

"Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts: all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me. Yet the LORD will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life."
(Psalm 42:7-8)

"The psalmist seems to represent himself as cast away at sea; and by wave impelling wave, is carried to a rock, around which the surges dash in all directions, forming hollow sounds

in the creeks and caverns. At last, several waves breaking over him, tear him away from that rock to which he clung, and where he had a little before found a resting-place, and, apparently, an escape from danger. "All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me;" he is then whelmed in the deep, and God alone can save him."

– Adam Clarke's Commentary

To share in our Lord's baptism, to drink the cup He drank, means to take on His sorrows as well. For the love of His Father towards the world, Jesus walked in a sinful world that He knew was going to reject Him, in order that those who would come to Him should be saved. As His Body here on earth, we walk in a godless world that is increasingly embracing evil and rejecting His love and His salvation, turning more and more hateful and vindictive toward us day by day. They are "gnashing their teeth" at us, if you will. Jesus was pressed in spirit, full of sorrow and grief (Isaiah 53:3), and yet, He would endure it and drink the cup His Father gave Him (John 18:11). He completely gave Himself to the baptism that the Father sent Him to accomplish. He sends us to the same baptism. Can we accept it?

In our flesh we cannot. Even though the two disciples quickly said, "Yes, we are able" in response to the Lord's question, **they had no idea (Mark 10:38-39)**. We can be so quick to say yes to the Lord, but have we weighed the cost? James and John did eventually accept and endure that same baptism, but only after they were baptized with the Holy Spirit and empowered by Him to do so. We've been baptized by that same Spirit into His death when we came to Him by faith and were born again. We were also baptized into His resurrection and His baptism became ours. We were crucified with Him, dead to sin and this world, raised up together with Him to newness of life. As Paul states: *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me"* (Galatians

2:20).

If we are not feeling constrained, pressed, or greatly distressed by life in this world which closes in on us as the Body of Christ, perhaps we have not accepted His baptism as our own. Perhaps we have not identified with Him, if we are not feeling the tremendous grief that He Himself felt as the world was closing in on Him to reject and crucify Him, as they are again today, seeking to crucify and rid themselves of Him. Perhaps we have taken the side of the world. Even many who call themselves His, professing to follow Him, are those who are at the forefront of taking sides against those who love Him – those who cherish His Word and will not compromise it. They behave just as did the religious leaders of Jesus' day, who were the ones to crucify Him.

The effect of being hard-pressed on every side (as Paul stated it in Philippians 1:23) is a more focused desire to finish the work God has called us to, a greater love for what He loves, a desire to see His glory in our lives whether we live or die, and a greater love for those we are sent to minister to. Each one of us in Christ have been sent to minister. We are called to testify to family, friends, co-workers, acquaintances, and people we meet every day. In all of these situations, we are called to be His representatives in the way we live, talk, and act, so that Christ is seen in us and will minister through us. Again, Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians chapter four of this calling:

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but

life in you. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you" (2 Corinthians 4:6-14).

Our human nature desires to escape this baptism. We want to share in the joys of Christ but also find acceptance and love from this world. We want to be seen as "good" and "fun" in the world's eyes, because we want to please people and be liked. Who doesn't? The more we find ourselves pressed, the clearer the choice is. Will we take the side of Christ, standing with Him, and the cup He drank? Will we be baptized with the baptism He was baptized with? Or will we think to skip that and join the world's baptism. The world will also have a baptism they don't know about. It will be a baptism of wrath, eventually, when God's patience with evil has come to an end (2 Peter 3:9-10). Now is their time of jubilation as they revel in their power over all that is good, progressing in all their plans, yet the Bible says even as they dig their pit for the godly, they will eventually fall into it themselves (Proverbs 26:27; 28:10). Wrath is not the baptism for God's children. There's no middle ground. Our path as Believers is becoming more and more clear in this world, and contrary to what the world says, there is only one path to Life, a straight and narrow one, which God alone has made, for all who would come to Him. That path is Jesus Christ alone, Who is the truth, the life, and the way.

All who He has called out are to be at last conquerors in all (Romans 8:28-39). Just as we are baptized in the likeness of His death, so are we in the likeness of His resurrection. He promises that He will give us all things, nothing will separate us from Him, no one can snatch us out of His hands, and we are more than conquerors in Him. What blessed promise we have in Him! As we share in His sufferings, we will also share in His glory (Romans 8:17-18). Even now, His glory fills our hearts as we walk by faith in Him. His joy of anticipation fills our hearts, knowing He is



By Natalie Warner

*"If the WORLD hates you,
know that it has HATED
Me before it hated you.*

*If you were of the
WORLD, the world would
love you as its OWN but
because you are not of the
world, but I CHOSE you
out of the world,
therefore the world HATES
you."*

(John 15:18-19)

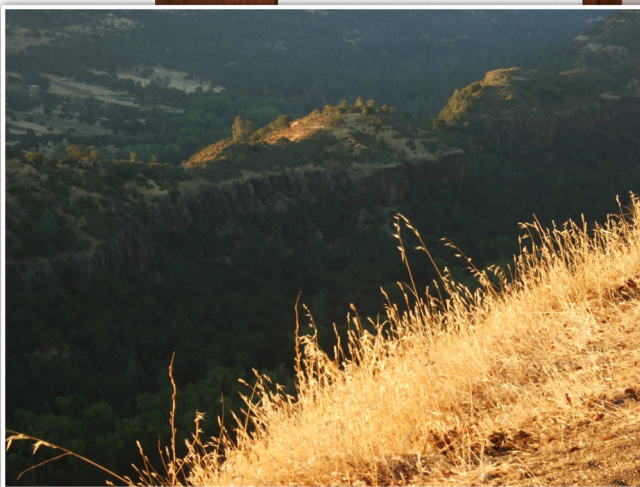


soon coming for us, even while the sorrowful anticipation of evil in this world fills our hearts as well. We are not without hope, as the world is, and we are not without purpose, even while waiting. We are not without His sustaining presence and grace continually. For the child of God, *"to live is Christ, to die is gain"* (Philippians 1:20). It is far better to be with the Lord, yet to live on here means much fruit for His glory (Philippians 1:23).

Abba, enable us to have courage in our hearts, to accept the cup You have given us, to accept the baptism You have been baptized with, and to walk in faith sustained by Your grace more and more each day, always looking toward that blessed hope which You have promised those who love You! Amen.



By Lynn Warner



"Who shall SEPARATE us from the love of CHRIST? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

*As it is WRITTEN,
For YOUR sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as SHEEP to be slaughtered.'*

No, in all these things we are more than CONQUERERS through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither DEATH nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor POWERS, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all CREATION, will be able to separate us from the love of GOD in Christ JESUS our Lord."

(Romans 8:35-39)

The Colors of God's Handiwork

*Orange, yellow, purple, pink.
God's painting in the sky.
His majesty revealed, the Creator of the universe
There for all to see
God's glory is great!*

*Green leaves, blue sky, golden sun.
God's glory is in full view.
Great is His love towards us and
His mercy for all sinners!*

*Pure white snowflakes
Glittering silver ice.
The wonder of winter all around us.
God's strength shining through the cold, dark days to bring us light.*

*Red blood shed,
A brown wood cross.
God's solution to our sinful state.
A brilliant sunrise, a gray stone
Rolled away.
The sunlight of the morning proclaiming,
"He is risen! Praise the Lord!"*

By Beth Moller

November/December Newsletter Theme—Mercy

Submission Deadline: November 17

Publish Date: November 24

Verses on Mercy: *“Then David said to Gad, ‘I am in great distress. Let us fall into the hand of the Lord, for his **mercy** is great; but let me not fall into the hand of man.’” (2 Samuel 24:14)*

*“Surely goodness and **mercy** shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” (Psalm 23:6)*

*“The Lord is good to all, and his **mercy** is over all that he has made.” (Psalm 145:9)*

*“Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain **mercy**.” (Proverbs 28:13)*

*“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive **mercy**.” (Mathew 5:7)*

Submission Ideas

Write a personal testimony if you have experienced an act of mercy from someone. Or, share how you came to faith in Jesus Christ and how His mercy was evident to you.

Write about the Gospel and how His mercy is the heartbeat of the Gospel.

Write about the promises of the Lord to show grace and mercy to those who cry out to Him.

Write a brief Bible study on various verses in the Bible on this topic

Do a study on a character in the Bible who did/did not show mercy. What can we take from this person’s example for what/what not to do?

Do a study on the thread of God’s mercy throughout the Bible...from His mercy show to the Israelites all the way through history to the mercy He shows people in the Last Days.

Describe a Scriptural passage that pops into your mind when you think about mercy and write about how can we apply it to our lives today

Take pictures of God’s marvelous handiwork in creation – try to catch migrating birds, autumn leaves, or the first snowflake.

Sketch and/or paint a picture of God’s creation

Illustrate a promise of the Lord through an object lesson - choose a household inanimate object and use it as an example.

Write a free-verse poem about a parable Jesus taught about mercy. Pray for the Lord to give you words.

Write a poem of praise to our King

Further Out—January: Holiness