

The Privileged Path of Persecution

Throughout the Bible we see the persecution of those who are doing God's work. The New Testament makes it clear that a life in Christ comes with trying times. The Christian can expect persecution as a result of bearing Christ's name and doing his works.

2 Timothy 3:12—*"Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."*

Persecution takes many forms and can be motivated in different ways. Examples of the persecution of Godly men will be explored.

I. Abel (Genesis 4:1-8)

- A. You can be persecuted by those close to you.
- B. Those trying to serve God can persecute you.
- C. Abel was killed because his deeds were righteous and his brother's evil (1 John 3:12).
- D. Sometimes the persecution isn't really about you (Genesis 4:6-7).
- E. You can continue to speak for God, even in your death (Hebrews 11:4).

II. Joseph (Genesis 37:9-11, 37:25-28, 45:4-8)

- A. You can be persecuted by those close to you.
- B. Causes for your treatment might be out of your control.
- C. It may take a lot of time before you understand the reason.
- D. Lasting good may come from what you endured.

III. Stephen (Acts 6:8-15, Acts 7:54-60)

- A. No one is off limits because of the works they are doing (Acts 6:5; 6:8).
- B. Persecution may come based on lies.
- C. You may have an escape route available to you (Acts 7:1, Matthew 26:74).
- D. Those persecuting you still have value (Acts 7:58b, 60)

Conclusion

- A. Despite the risks, we are expected to be beacons for Christ (Matthew 5:13-16).
- B. Know that when you are persecuted, you are not alone (Matthew 5:11-12)
- C. It is a privilege to bear the name of Christ (John 15:18-19, Acts 5:40-41)
- D. As a servant of God, death may come at any time.
- E. As a disciple of Christ, there is no fear of death (Matthew 10:28, Acts 7:60).