

GROWING IN GRACE LETTERS! – Calling saints in Christ, (in our homes and with one another in Church), to walk in the Steps of Jesus! (1 Peter 2:15-25) Edited by James Bell, a servant of Jesus Christ!

2 24 2026 V1n42 HOW SHALL WE RESPOND TO PERSECUTION?

SOME YEARS AGO, a pastor who was serving the LORD in his native African nation — where, at times, there WAS SEVERE persecution of Christians, (even unto death!) -- THE PASTOR ASKED:

"What do you think about this Islamic strategy of swallowing Christianity. Do we have to respond somehow?"

[Note: The Scriptures/Biblical principles shared here have application, regardless of the location or source of the persecution!] HERE'S THE RESPONSE I SHARED:

I will seek to look at the question through the TRUTH of the Word of God! FIRST OF ALL:

***** TRUE Christianity will NEVER be swallowed up!**

Jesus has been building, IS building, and will build His church!

JESUS CANNOT BE STOPPED! ... EVEN SO,

***** There has been, there is, and there will be persecution! (Matthew 10:16-42)**

MOREOVER, at times one is hard pressed to find the true church ... yet she has always survived and will not only survive but will be 100% triumphant! Jesus will accomplish all of His perfect will.

***** One of the big questions, of course, is this: When ... at what point do we take up weapons and fight guns with guns ... etc? ... OR DO WE AT ALL?**

NOW: I cannot say that there is NOT a time and place to defend one's family ... or to try to do something to protect a congregation while they are worshipping ... These are difficult questions ... and people respond differently.

(In my country, at our local Church, we have a 'security team' whose purpose is to seek to protect the congregation in the event of evil intruders. Abraham armed 318 men to rescue Lot! (Genesis 14)

***** That being said, what I desire to do in this response to your question is TO FOCUS on that to which the NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH was FOCUSED UPON!**

Thus, looking at the Biblical revelation of the New Testament Church, (as recorded from the Acts of the Apostles THROUGH the last chapter of The Revelation), we find:

1) Bloody persecution came to the New Testament Church, as seen in the book of Acts— but the church never took up physical weapons.

2) THEY PRAYED and KEPT ON PREACHING ... knowing that they were INVINCIBLE UNTIL GOD CALLED THEM HOME!
(Acts 4:23-33; 5:39-42; 7:1-60; 8:1ff; 20:22-24, etc.)

3) A number of the New Testament letters addressed persecution. In 1 Peter 4:12-19 ... among the clear statements about persecution and responding to it ... **INTERESTINGLY, there is a warning NOT TO SUFFER AS A MURDERER!** (This is from the Apostle, who before Pentecost, had taken up a sword!) **MOREOVER**, neither he nor other apostles instructed persecuted Christians to act, based on Luke 22:36... ('He that has no sword, buy one!')

4) Revelation 13, unfolds an ultimate time of massive persecution and martyrdom. **IN VARIOUS PLACES, for the last 2,000 years, THIS HAS BEEN, IS NOW, and WILL BE REALITY** — (IN verse 10, there is a warning about using the sword!

MOREOVER, in Revelation 13, the believers look FOOLISH for not taking the 'mark' ... THEY ARE MARTYRED.

HOWEVER, in Chapter 14 — those who took the mark ARE THE FOOLISH ONES; and they EXPERIENCE the wrath of God for all eternity!

5) In Chapter 15, the martyrs are worshiping and singing and FOREVER HAVE NO REGRETS ... **SERIOUS REALITY: WE HAVE TO TAKE THE LONG VIEW!**

Those who have looked carefully at the History of the Church of Jesus Christ have long concluded that, ***** “THE BLOOD OF THE MARTYRS IS THE SEED OF THE CHURCH!”**

THERE IS A RADICAL DIFFERENCE

between the ways of men

(Especially, including RELIGIOUS MEN!)

from the WAY OF GOD:

***** BLOOD,** (from swords or guns in the hands of the church), has NEVER been the ‘seed’ of the BRIDE OF CHRIST!

***** SPILLING THE BLOOD** OF SAINTS IN CHRIST is the method of the torturing HARLOT!

***** MORE IMPORTANT TRUTH:**

ONE OF THE ROLES OF A COUNTRY'S GOVERNMENT IS TO PROTECT THEIR CITIZENS, EVEN USING FORCE TO DO SO! (Romans 13).

HOWEVER, AS WE KNOW, at times it is one's own government who is the arch enemy of Christ and His people! (OR AS IN RECENT WEEKS, - February, 2026 - IN INDIA, THE GOVERNMENT HAS REFUSED TO PROTECT CHRISTIANS FROM DESTRUCTIVE and MURDERING RELIGIONISTS!)

***** BROTHER,**

THERE ARE MANY THINGS I DO NOT KNOW!

BUT I DO SEE THAT

THE NEW TESTAMENT FOCUS REMAINED ON —

1. PRAYING!

2. PREACHING!

3. BEING FAITHFUL EVEN UNTO DEATH!

(Revelation 2:10)

EXAMPLES:

***** STEPHEN, the first Christian martyr, while dying offered two prayers.**

[1] One was for himself: **“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!”**

[2] The other was for his foes: **“Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!”**

***** The Apostle Paul said:**

“The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and imprisonments await me. But none of these things move me,

neither count I my life dear to myself, so that I might finish my course with joy!” (Acts 20:23)

***** QUOTES FROM HISTORY:**

1. “Do they cast us out of the city? They cannot cast us out of that which is in the heavens. If they who hate us could do this, they would do something real against us. **The only thing we have really to be afraid of is fearing anything or anyone more than God.**”

2. To a King, a persecuted saint said: “Sire, it belongs truly to God’s church rather to suffer blows than to strike them; but let it

be your pleasure to remember **that the church is an anvil which hath worn out many a hammer.**”

3. “The church has sometimes been brought so low and obscure a point that if you can follow her in history, it is by the track of her blood; and if you would see her, **it is by the light of those fires in which her martyrs have been burnt.**”

4. “To banish, imprison, plunder, starve, hang, and burn men for religion is not the Gospel of Christ, but the gospel of the devil. Where persecution begins, Christianity ends.

Christ never used anything like force or violence, except once; and that was to drive bad men out of the temple, and not to drive them in!”

5. “Persecution often does in this life what the last day will do completely— **separate the wheat from the tares!**”

6. JESUS tells us: “You shall have tribulation: but be loyally faithful unto death. For though you may be killed, I will give you the crown of life! Be not afraid says our Lord, my help is nigh! Indeed! Rejoice!” (Revelation 2:2:10-11).

Praise God for the ultimate witness and a most effective soul-winning strategy:

Namely, that when we who are alive in Christ are delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, the resurrection life of Christ is mightily manifest! (2 Corinthians 4:7-12).

GOD HAS A LONG HISTORY

of bringing this to pass:

"FOR WHERE SIN DID ABOUND...

GRACE DID MUCH MORE ABOUND!"

SO LET IT BE!

NOTE: I am happy to report that the dear African Pastor, to whom this was first sent, is still faithfully serving Christ... and is being used of God to equip others... they are still planting churches, etc.
TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

James Bell

jwillie123@aol.com // WWW.SOUTHSIDEGALLATIN.ORG

SUNDAY SERVICES:

MARCH 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, 2026

[1] **Sunday School at 9:30am:** Nursery, Children's classes, Youth, and Adult classes.

[2] **WORSHIP SERVICE at 10:45am!**

SPECIAL SERVICES in MARCH :

MARCH 1, Covered Dish Fellowship Meal, Noon

**SATURDAY NIGHT, MARCH 7— SPRING CLOCKS
FOARWRD!!**

MARCH 15, LORD'S SUPPER // HOME GROUPS

MARCH 22, 4th Sunday Evening Worship

EVERY SATURDAY* 8:00 AM,** — Men's Bible Study! (*Doors open by 7:30am... coffee, juice, donuts, and Hardee's Biscuits are available!*) **FEBRUARY 28 / Romans 6**

NEXT Ladies Bible Study, 3/3/26 @ 11:00 AM – Read Acts 5

*****TUESDAYS: LADIES PRAYER MEETING @ 10:00am**

Young Adults ... Tuesdays at 7:15pm at Jaden and Rhi's home!

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS @ 6:30pm,

MEN'S Prayer Service //

YOUNG FAMILIES SERVICE

LOVE OFFERINGS UNTO THE LORD by MAIL or by ONLINE:

**BY MAIL (checks), make out to Southside Baptist) — MAIL TO:
Southside Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1594, Gallatin, TN 37066 /**

TO GIVE via ONLINE GIVING:

<https://southsidebaptist.breezechms.com/give/online>