

Difficult Days, Part 5: The State of People
Persecutors of God's People
2 Timothy 3:10-13

I. The world and the people of God are at enmity (vs. 10-12).

- A. God's people have always suffered persecution from the world.
- B. God's people will continue to suffer persecution from the world.

(Jeremiah 20:1-2; 38:1-6; Matthew 4:20; 5:10-12; Luke 6:40; Acts 7:51-53; 13:50-51; 14:5-7, 19; 2 Corinthians 11:22-29; Philippians 3:7-11; 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16; James 5:10)

II. The last days will be characterized by great persecution (v. 13).

- A. Persecution will be bad because of people.
 - 1. People will not know God.
 - 2. People will oppose truth.
- B. Persecution will be bad because of the work of Satan.
- C. Because God has revealed this, believers must be prepared.

(Daniel 7:24-27; 8:23-25; 1 Peter 3:14-16; 4:12-19; Revelation 12:11-12)

Scripture References and Notes

John 15:18-21

¹⁸ "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it hated* you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave 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. ²¹ But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me.

Revelation 12:9, 13-17

⁹ And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

¹³ And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male *child*. ¹⁴ But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the

wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. ¹⁵ And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. ¹⁶ But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth. ¹⁷ So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

παρακολουθέω (parakoloutheó)

- to follow closely, to investigate
- I accompany, follow closely, characterize, both lit. and met.; I investigate.
- (from *pará*, "from close-beside" and *akolouthéō*, "follow")
- properly, follow closely, especially through a *detailed comparing*; follow after closely to resemble (illustrate, play out) what leads.

Matthew 4:20

Immediately they left their nets and **followed** Him.

Acts 13:50-51

⁵⁰ But the Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. ⁵¹ But they shook off the dust of their feet *in protest* against them and went to Iconium.

Acts 14:5-7

⁵ And when an attempt was made by both the Gentiles and the Jews with their rulers, to mistreat and to stone them, ⁶ they became aware of it and fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the surrounding region; ⁷ and there they continued to preach the gospel.

Acts 14:19

But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.

2 Corinthians 11:22-29

²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. ²³ Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. ²⁶ *I have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; ²⁷ *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. ²⁸ Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure on me *of* concern for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?

Jeremiah 20:1-2

¹ When Pashhur the priest, the son of Immer, who was chief officer in the house of the LORD, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things, ² Pashhur had Jeremiah the prophet beaten and put him in the stocks that were at the upper Benjamin Gate, which was by the house of the LORD.

Jeremiah 38:1-6

¹ Now Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashhur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur the son of Malchijah heard the words that Jeremiah was speaking to all the people, saying, ² "Thus says

the LORD, 'He who stays in this city will die by the sword and by famine and by pestilence, but he who goes out to the Chaldeans will live and have his *own* life as booty and stay alive.' ³ Thus says the LORD, 'This city will certainly be given into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon and he will capture it.'" ⁴ Then the officials said to the king, "Now let this man be put to death, inasmuch as he is discouraging the men of war who are left in this city and all the people, by speaking such words to them; for this man is not seeking the well-being of this people but rather their harm." ⁵ So King Zedekiah said, "Behold, he is in your hands; for the king can *do* nothing against you." ⁶ Then they took Jeremiah and cast him into the cistern *of* Malchijah the king's son, which was in the court of the guardhouse; and they let Jeremiah down with ropes. Now in the cistern there was no water but only mud, and Jeremiah sank into the mud.

Acts 7:51-53

⁵¹ "You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. ⁵² Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; ⁵³ you who received the law as ordained by angels, and *yet* did not keep it."

1 Thessalonians 2:14-16

¹⁴ For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they *did* from the Jews, ¹⁵ who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men, ¹⁶ hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved; with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them to the utmost.

James 5:10

As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

persecuted [διώκω (diókō)]

- to put to flight, pursue, by implication to persecute
- I pursue, hence: I persecute.
- properly, *aggressively* chase, like a *hunter* pursuing a catch (prize).
- (*diókō*) is used *positively* ("earnestly pursue") and *negatively* ("zealously persecute, hunt down"). In each case, (*diókō*) means *pursue with all haste* ("chasing" after), *earnestly* desiring to overtake (apprehend).

Philippians 3:7-11

⁷ But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Luke 6:40

A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher.

Matthew 5:10-12

¹⁰ "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ "Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Daniel 8:23-25

²³ “In the latter period of their rule, When the transgressors have run *their course*, A king will arise, Insolent and skilled in intrigue. ²⁴ “His power will be mighty, but not by his *own* power, And he will destroy to an extraordinary degree And prosper and perform *his will*; He will destroy mighty men and the holy people. ²⁵ “And through his shrewdness He will cause deceit to succeed by his influence; And he will magnify *himself* in his heart, And he will destroy many while *they are* at ease. He will even oppose the Prince of princes, But he will be broken without human agency.

Daniel 7:24-27

²⁴ As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. ²⁵ He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. ²⁶ But the court will sit *for judgment*, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. ²⁷ Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of *all* the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom *will be* an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.’

Revelation 12:13-17

¹³ And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male *child*. ¹⁴ But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. ¹⁵ And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. ¹⁶ But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth. ¹⁷ So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Revelation 12:11-12

¹¹ And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. ¹² For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has *only* a short time.”

1 Peter 4:12-19

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³ but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. ¹⁴ If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵ Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; ¹⁶ but if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. ¹⁷ For *it is* time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what *will be* the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER? ¹⁹ Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

1 Peter 3:14-16

¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED, ¹⁵ but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; ¹⁶ and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.