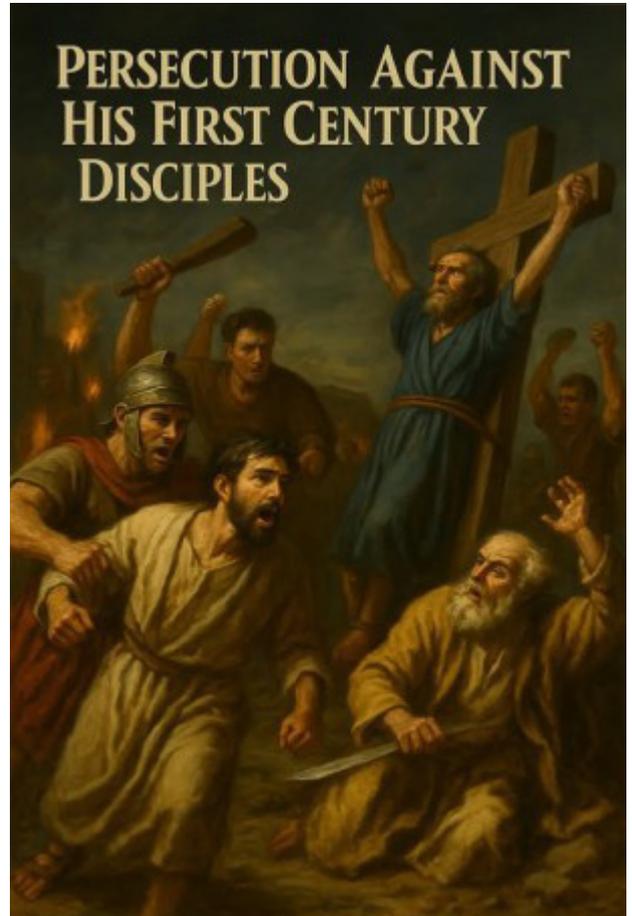


Fulfilled Prophecies

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Persecution - Persecution Against His First Century Disciples



By Dan Maines

Persecution Against His First Century Disciples Matthew 24:9-12; Mark 13:9-13; Luke 21:12-17

Jesus warned His disciples face to face about the persecution they would soon endure. He was not speaking to a future generation thousands of years later. He was addressing those standing directly in front of Him in the first century. These men would live through the very tribulation He described.

Matthew 24:9-10 "Then they will hand you over to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My

name. And at that time many will fall away, and they will betray one another and hate one another."

This prophecy was fulfilled in scripture and confirmed by history:

Stephen was stoned to death (Acts 7).

James the brother of John was killed by the sword (Acts 12:2).

Peter and John were arrested and beaten (Acts 4:3, Acts 5:18, 40).

Paul faced persecution, imprisonment, and was ultimately executed (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

Acts 28:22 – "But we desire to hear from you what your views are, for regarding this sect, it is known to us that it is spoken against everywhere."

2 Timothy 4:10 – Demas abandoned Paul.

Galatians 2:12-13 – Peter and Barnabas withdrew from Gentile fellowship under pressure.

1 John 2:19 – "They went out from us, but they were not really of us..."

All of this occurred just as Jesus foretold. The betrayal, hatred, and violent tribulation that Jesus warned about were real, and they happened within that generation.

Mark 13:9 "But be on your guard, for they will hand you over to the courts, and you will be beaten in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them."

Luke 21:12-13 "But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, turning you over to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors on account of My name. It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony."

Confirmed by Historical Sources

The Jewish historian **Flavius Josephus**, in Antiquities 20.9.1, records that **James the brother of Jesus** was stoned to death by order of the high priest. Josephus writes: "Ananus... assembled the Sanhedrin of judges and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others... and delivered them to be stoned."

The Roman historian **Tacitus**, in Annals 15.44, confirms **Nero's brutal persecution of Christians**, writing: "Nero fastened the guilt... on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace... they were torn by dogs, or perished in flames to serve as a nightly illumination." This happened in the mid-60s AD, fulfilling Jesus' warning that His followers would be **hated by all nations** for His name's sake.

Beyond scripture and secular history, early church tradition also preserves accounts of how the apostles were martyred. These were recorded by early Christian writers like Clement of Rome, Origen, and Eusebius:

Peter – crucified

Matthew – killed by a sword in Ethiopia

Mark – dragged to death in Alexandria

Luke – hanged in Greece

Bartholomew – flayed and beheaded

Andrew – crucified

Thomas – speared in India

Jude – killed with arrows

Matthias – stoned and beheaded

Barnabas – stoned in Salonica

James the Less – thrown from the temple and beaten

Paul – traditionally beheaded under Nero

These traditions, while not scripture, support and illustrate the fulfillment of what Jesus told them.

Matthew 24:13 "But the one who endures to the end is the one who will be saved."

Luke 21:16-17 "But you will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, sisters, other relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death, and you will be hated by all people because of My name."

This was not about the distant future. It was about their own generation, and it was fulfilled before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

Colossians 1:23 "If indeed you continue in the faith, firmly established and steadfast, and not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister."

As a Preterist, I affirm that these events are not future. They are fulfilled. The tribulation, persecution, gospel proclamation, and judgment all came just as Jesus said they would.

2 Timothy 3:12 "Indeed, all who want to live in a godly way in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

Let us honor the memory of those early disciples. They endured what Jesus foretold. Their suffering confirmed the truth of His words and laid the foundation for the faith we now walk in.

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