

Bible Readings

Basic biblical teaching about persecution:

- Christians are to expect persecution. (John 15:18-21; 17:14; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 John 3:13)
- God blesses right suffering. (Matthew 5:10-12; Luke 6:22-23)
- We should not be ashamed or embarrassed about persecution. (1 Peter 4:16; Hebrews 13:12-13)
- We must follow the example of Christ. (Philippians 2: 1-11; 1 Peter 2:19-25)
- We must react under persecution as the Lord did. (Matthew 5:38-48; Romans 12:14,17-21; 1 Peter 2:21-23)
- We are called to stand with those who are persecuted. (Matthew 25:31-46; Hebrews 10:32-38; 13:3)
- We can have the victory. (John 16:33)

Persecution foretold:

- Matthew 18:21; 28:34; Mark 10:30; Luke 11:49; John 15:20; 1 Corinthians 4:9; 2 Timothy 3: 12

Jesus warns and teaches about persecution:

- Matthew 10:16-42; Luke 14:25-35; John 15:18-16:4

The apostles and first missionaries are persecuted:

- Acts 4:1-22 – Christ's supremacy threatens the supremacy of the totalitarian and theocratic leadership. (v. 2,17)
- Acts 5:12-41 – Power and attraction of the gospel arouses jealousy. (v17)
- Acts 6:7-15 – Success of ministry arouses competition.
- Acts 7:54-8:4 – Stephen becomes the Christian Church's first martyr; persecution breaks out.
- Acts 12:1-4 – Herod persecutes apostles for political gain.
- Acts 12:1-18 – While Peter is in prison, the church prays.
- Acts 13:49-14:7 – Opposition to the gospel forces missionaries to flee.
- Acts 16:16-34 – The gospel threatens trade, economic prosperity and the fortune-telling industry (v19);
- false accusations lead to missionaries being severely beaten.
- Acts 17:1-15 – Missionary success arouses jealousy; missionaries forced to flee. (v5)
- Acts 19:23-32 – The gospel threatens trade, economic prosperity and the idol industry; idol-makers incite riot that goes out of control.
- Acts 21:27-36 – Enemies of the gospel incite hatred and violence; Paul beaten and arrested.

Prepare for persecution:

- Understand it to be normal. (1 Peter 4:12; Philippians 1:29)

- Know the teaching of the Word of God. (Philemon 3:10; Romans 6:3-5; John 8:31-32) Abide in Christ. (John 15:4)
- Submit daily to the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18; 4:30)
- Rest in the will of God. (Ephesians 5:17; Hebrews 4:1,9-11)

Conduct under persecution:

- Matthew 5:44; 10:22; Acts 5:41; Romans 12:14; Philippians 1:28; Hebrews 10:34; 1 Peter 3:13-19

Results of persecution:

- Matthew 5:10; Luke 6:22; 9:24; James 1:2; 1 Peter 4:14; Revelation 6:9; 7:13

Rewards for suffering persecution:

- Glory in heaven. (2 Corinthians 4:17-18; 1 Peter 5:1,10,11)
- Eternal consolation. (2 Corinthians 1:7; Romans 8:17)
- Christ is made known. (2 Corinthians 4:11)
- Life is being given to others. (2 Corinthians 4:12)
- Grace of God is being made manifest. (2 Corinthians 4:15)
- A guarantee that God will judge righteously. (2 Thessalonians 1:4-5)
- Will reign with him. (2 Timothy 2:12a)
- Spirit of glory rests upon. (1 Peter 4:14)
- Glory is brought to God. (1 Peter 4:16)
- Reason for joy. (1 Peter 4:13-14)

Place and power of prayer:

- 2 Thessalonians 3:1-3 – Prayer is desired and required for persecuted believers.
- Romans 15:30-33 – Our prayers help struggling believers.
- 2 Corinthians 1:10-11 – God works as we pray.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4; Ephesians 6:10-18 – Spiritual battle requires spiritual weapons.
- James 5:16b-18 – The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

Some possible forms that persecution may take:

- By slander (evil report). (Psalm 31:13; Job 19:18; 55:12-14; Luke 6:22)
- Shame. Open embarrassment, dishonor or disgrace. Manner in which our Lord was accused of being
- Conceived (born out-of-wedlock); also, manner in which His nakedness was openly displayed on the cross. (Hebrews 13:13; 11:26)
- Falsely accused. (Psalm 35:11; 27:12; Matthew 5:11; Luke 23:2,5,10; Mark 14:55-60; Acts 6:13; 16:19-23; 26:2,7)
- Ensnare through deceit, trapping, tricks. (Daniel 6:4-5; Luke 11:54; Matthew 10:16-18)
- Object of conspiracy. (2 Samuel 15:12; Genesis 37:18; 2 Corinthians 11:32; Acts 9:23)

- Mocked, scorned, scoffed and sneered at. (Psalm 42:3, Job 12:4; Matthew 27:29,31,41; Acts 2:13; 17:18,32; Hebrews 11:36) Betrayed, treated treacherously. (Matthew 24:10; Luke 21:16; Psalm 41:9)
- Despised, to have contempt for, to loathe, to think nothing of, to consider without honour. (1 Corinthians 1:28; 4:10c)
- Hated by family. (Matthew 10:21, 34-36; Micah 7:6; Luke 21:16)
- Hated by men. (Luke 21:17; Matthew 10:22; Job 19:19)
- Defamation of character, libel, slander, evil report. (Psalm 31:13; Job 19:19; 1 Peter 2:12; 1 Corinthians 4:13)
- Feared by own people. (Acts 9:26)
- Subject to special trials. (1 Corinthians 4:9-14; 2 Corinthians 11:23-28)
- Imprisoned. (Luke 21:12; Acts 4:3; 5:18; 12:4; 16:24; 2 Corinthians 6:5; 11:23c; Hebrews 11:36b)
- Beaten. (Acts 5:40; 16:23; 2 Corinthians 6:5; 11:24; Matthew 10:17)
- Contradicting. (Acts 13:45)
- Stir against. (Acts 6:12; 13:50; 14: 2,19; 19:23,25-26,29; 21:27)
- Charges pressed. (Acts 18:12; Matthew 10:17-18)
- Threatened. (Acts 4:18,21; 5:40)
- Stoned. (Acts 7:58-59; 14:19; 2 Corinthians 11:25; Hebrews 11:37)
- Afflictions. (2 Timothy 3; 11; Psalm 34:19)
- Expulsion. (Acts 13:50; John 16:2a)
- Exhaustion, extreme fatigue. (2 Corinthians 11:27)
- Hunger and thirst. (2 Corinthians 11:27; 1 Corinthians 4:11)

- Spectacle. (1 Corinthians 4:9; Acts 9:16; 20:23; 21:11; Hebrews 10:33a)
- Suffer physical need. (1 Corinthians 4:11; 2 Corinthians 6:4; Philippians 4:12; Hebrews 11:37)
- Martyrdom. (Luke 21:16; Acts 7:59; 12:2; John 16:2)
- Afflictions. (2 Timothy 1:8; 4:5; Matthew 24:9; Psalm 34:19; 2 Corinthians 4:17; 6:4; Hebrews 10:32-33; 11:25,37; Colossians 1:24; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; James 5:10)
- Poverty. (2 Corinthians 6:10; Philippians 4:12) Loss of property and material goods. (Hebrews 10:34b)

In the modern church calendar, the first two Sundays of November is set apart to remember and pray for the persecuted church, through the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP).

Organised by the Religious Liberty Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance, the IDOP is a time set apart for us to remember thousands of our Christian brothers and sisters around the world who suffer persecution, simply because they confess Jesus Christ as Lord.