



Today's Message

Date: May 22, 2022
Speaker: Pastor Steven Thomas
Title: *Persecution and Proclamation*

Text: Luke 21:12–19 (ESV)

¹² But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. ¹³ This will be your opportunity to bear witness. ¹⁴ Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, ¹⁵ for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. ¹⁶ You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. ¹⁷ You will be hated by all for my name's sake. ¹⁸ But not a hair of your head will perish. ¹⁹ By your endurance you will gain your lives.

Introduction: The end of Passion Week was drawing near. The rejection of Jesus, Israel's King, was nearly complete. The effects of Israel's rejection would reverberate throughout the world, and even the universe. The promised transformation his Kingdom would bring now must wait until his Second Coming. Instead, this age will see growing deception, wars and social upheavals, and natural disasters. Rather than repenting, such tragedies fortify the world's hatred of the King. As their hatred deepens, so does the intensity of their persecution of Jesus' followers.

I. Persecution is not the exception but the norm for Christians in this age. 12

- A. Persecution will characterize this age.
- B. Persecution will come from many sources.
- C. Persecution will occur for the sake of Christ's Name.

II. Seasons of persecution afford Christians unique opportunity to speak for Christ. 13

III. Jesus promised to help Christians speak for him in the face of persecution. 14-15

- A. Christians should not anxiously prepare a response to use in the day of persecution.
- B. On that day, Jesus will help Christians give an answer that will confound their persecutors.

IV. At times persecution of Christians will be extreme. 16-17

- A. They will face the most heartbreaking betrayal.
- B. They will face the most severe condemnation.
- C. They will face the most intense hatred.

V. Despite the severity of persecution, no Christian will ever perish. 18-19

Today's take-home truth: Do not be surprised when persecution comes; in faith, seize the day and speak for Christ.