

*"I did not come with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).*

# The Persecutors and the Persecuted

## Who Are the Persecutors?

**Who** are the ones who rage? Are they the saints of God? Who are the ones who are full of fear? Are they the disciples of Christ? Who are the ones who think they must stamp out "cults"? Are they the Biblical believers? Who are the ones who think they must rely on the governments and courts of this world to protect their faith and that of their families? The answers are easily found in the Scriptures.

When true faith comes along, they are threatened and suddenly fearful.

When Saul of Tarsus was yet unconverted and zealous for his religion and the law of Moses, he sorely persecuted the Church of God. Finally, the Lord Jesus stopped him in his murderous tracks on the way to Damascus. He said to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?" (Acts 9). Were the followers of Christ persecuting the wicked ones? Were they persecuting the unbelievers? Were they persecuting those who did not agree with them? Did Jesus encourage His disciples to take up swords or stones against those who were not His? Did He encourage His disciples to take any kind of measures to fight "cults"? No, not at all.

In one place, concerning those who opposed Him, Jesus said, "Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Mt. 15:13,14). Did He say, "We've got to stop them! We've got to root them up! They are preaching falsehood and stealing our flock!?" Did He say, "Let's hold a meeting and plan a strategy against these ungodly people of Satan?"

No, He said, "Let them alone. Those that My Heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up." His dependence was not on the police force, nor on the courts of the land, nor on governments and other religious groups. His faith lay squarely upon His Father. Why? Because God was His Father, unlike those who depend on external forces to help them "defend their faith."

**Who** are those who are incensed? Who are those that seek to quell apparent heretics and cults according to their definition and perspective? They are the fearful. They are those which do not have their faith in God. Instead, their faith is in their doctrines, their churches, their denominations, employers, riches, social structures, families, and friends

and in themselves. And when true faith comes along, confronting them, they are threatened and suddenly fearful. They lash out, insecure in that which they trust. They do not know God, though they may and often do profess otherwise.

"They shall put you out of the synagogue. But an hour is coming that everyone who kills you will think that he bears God service. And they will do these things to you because they have not known the Father nor Me" (John 16:2,3). There is only true security in God; all else is sinking sand.

**They had no need to protect their faith. Genuine faith needs no protection.**

Did Saul of Tarsus persecute those of true faith? Of that there is no question. Once the Lord stopped and converted him, did he then persecute those who opposed the faith as he once did? Did he continue to forcefully change those with whom he disagreed? Not in the least. The old man Saul did persecute; the new man Paul did not. Search the Scriptures and find no such evidence that Paul, the example of a believer set forth by his Lord, ever persecuted anyone. Instead, whereas he was once the persecutor, he became the persecuted, along with those he himself once persecuted.

**What great** contradiction there is among the false religious, many of whom profess faith in Christ. **They** are the counterfeit; **they** are the cults; **they** are the so-called "brainwashed," the hypocrites, the generation of vipers who hide, who strike at those who intend no harm, but who may even approach to help, to teach, to shine the light. But serpents are threatened when anything or anybody foreign to them approaches, and they strike.

Serpents are some of the most colorful creatures, with beautiful patterns on their bodies. But don't be deceived. There are fangs and venom concealed, ready to be used on anyone with whom they do not agree, in what they consider to be major issues. They are murderous. John the Baptist knew it; Jesus knew it. But while they knew it, and exposed them, addressing them publicly, they did not launch any attacks to defame nor destroy nor to uproot. They knew full well in Whom they believed. They had no need to protect their faith. Genuine faith needs no protection.

I referred to the false religious as "brainwashed." They use that term to demean and to defame those of false or true faith. In actuality, the false religious are "brainsoiled," and that is why they "sit in the seat of the scornful" (Psalm 1). Their minds are darkened and fearful, full of evil doctrines they consider to be holy and Biblical but which are to a great extent, doctrines of devils.

Ironically, they speak truly, at least in letter, when they refer to true believers in Christ as "brainwashed." Those in Christ have had their minds renewed (Romans 12:1,2), washed in the water of the Word, cleansed in spiritual baptism. Their brains have indeed been

washed. It is a good thing, but the world thinks it is bad. They think that the true believers have lost their minds. In a sense, it is true what they think. Their minds **have** changed; that is what repentance is all about. Their minds are renewed; they have a new way of thinking, born from above.

Surely, after Saul of Tarsus was converted, they thought he had lost his mind. Roman governor Festus once cried out to Paul, as Paul was testifying of Christ, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning has made you mad!" Yes, true believers are a strange thing to the world... very foreign, misunderstood, even despised.

**Did the disciples persecute those they knew to be false? Not in the least.**

"These things I command you, that you love one another. If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. But because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you," said Jesus (John 15:17-19).

**Did any** of the disciples persecute those they thought or knew to be false? Not in the least. There is not one testimony in Scripture to even suggest that the saints of God ever retaliated in any way, though they lost loved ones to severe persecution by such as Saul of Tarsus. Did anyone find John the Baptist persecuting, or Peter or John or James or Timothy or Stephen or Philip or Barnabas or Silas or Mary or Martha or Cornelius or any other of the true brethren of Christ? Never! **They suffered persecution, but they did not practice it.**

Also we find David, when persecuted and pursued by king Saul, not retaliating in kind. He said to Saul, "The Lord judge between me and you, and the Lord avenge me of you, but my hand shall not be upon you. As says the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness proceeds from the wicked: but my hand shall not be upon you" (I Samuel 24:12-13).

God has His instruments of judgment, and vengeance is His. As Paul also wrote, "Recompense no man evil for evil...Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, says the Lord. Therefore, if your enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing you shall heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:17-21).

History is full of the record of persecution by the religious. The Roman Catholic Church has slaughtered multitudes, at times whole cities of people who believed differently concerning the Christ than did it. [Luther](#) persecuted people of "unlike" faith. [Calvin](#) slaughtered people simply because they did not believe in the "trinity." Imagine!

And Calvin is held up as a great saint, as a "reformer," as a "theologian" and disciple of God. Was he a true believer? The Bible is very clear on that. John, the disciple whom Jesus

loved, says: "He that says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loves his brother abides in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hates his brother is in darkness, and walks in darkness, and knows not where he goes, because that darkness has blinded his eyes" (I John 2:9-11).

**Blessed are you if you are attacked for the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

"Well," you say, "Calvin obviously knew that those he was killing were not brothers in Christ, but heretics." But what did Jesus say? "Hate your enemies? Do evil to those who do evil to you? Burn at the stake those who don't agree with you, those who don't believe in Me?" No, He said, "Love your enemies; do good to those who do evil to you; be perfect even as your Heavenly Father is perfect." He said, "It will come to pass that those who kill you will think they do God service."

**It is true** that evil or misled men and groups have been persecuted for their religion. It is certainly true that saints of God have been persecuted throughout all history of mankind, beginning with Abel. It is also true that wicked or misled men have persecuted others with whom they did not agree, and with whom they obviously strongly disagreed.

But never can it be said, certainly not by Scriptural evidence, certainly not by the Holy Writ of God, nor by His Spirit, that true believers do or should persecute any with whom they do not agree, or any they perceive to be heretical. They may take them before witnesses and the Church, and as a last resort, expel them from their midst. They may deliver them over to Satan, as did Paul with some. They may leave the ignorant or the deliberately errant to their own devices, but their lives were taken up worshiping the Lord and not focusing upon those with whom they did not agree. Thus do the true saints of God.

A saint may find him or herself in a continuing situation of conflict with another. Ask yourself: Am I attacking them, or are they attacking me? Blessed are you if you are being attacked for the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and cursed are you who attack and revile, especially in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. To the persecuted, I say: Great is your reward in Heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets before you. To the persecutors: Your damnation is just, you children of your fathers who, in the Name of God, persecuted the righteous you deemed to be false.

The righteous ones smile at these words because they have comfort; the wicked smile at them because they despise them, justifying themselves.

Victor Hafichuk

[Prophecy to All Religious](#)

[Our Testimonies](#) | [What's New?](#) | [Notice Board](#) | [Teachings](#) | [Falsehood Exposed](#) | [False Teachers](#)  
[The Issues of Life](#) | [Blog Wars](#) | [Proverbs](#) | [Poems](#) | [Music](#) | [Home](#)

[Statement of Doctrine](#)      [Site Map](#)

[How We Use the Scriptures](#) | [Copying & Linking](#) | [How One Is Saved](#)

[Healthy Living Advice in Everyday Things](#)