

Jesus Prophesied the Persecution of Christians

International Bible Lesson

Luke 6:12-31

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“Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake” (Luke 6:22—KJV).

“Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man” (Luke 6:22—NRSV).

The persecution of Christians around the world seems to be increasing, but we should never forget that Christians have suffered persecution ever since Jesus' disciples began to do and teach what He taught them. Jesus foretold at least four ways that His followers would suffer on earth, and the fact that they have so suffered for centuries is additional proof of Jesus' prophetic ability as the Son of Man, the promised Messiah. The hatred of Christians has led to a variety of ways to persecute them. Some Christians have only been excluded from the benefits others enjoy in society or at work. Other Christians have been reviled and defamed in such a way that those who believe the lies they have been told have come to hate, exclude, and persecute them too. True Christians have a personality that the Holy Spirit transforms; so, whether these Christians ever mention the name of Jesus or not, some will recognize that they are different from them and they will bully or persecute them for being different.

In spite of this world's persecution of Christians, Jesus declared that those who follow Him will be blessed, and those who suffer for His name's sake can rejoice and leap for joy. Why should Christians be so happy while suffering persecution? Because they know that Christians have always suffered for their faith in Jesus and their reward is great in heaven. They know they will spend eternity with all those who love God the Father and Jesus. They know they will never be troubled again by those who hate God and Jesus' followers.

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Thinking Further

1. What three reasons does Luke list for why so many people came to Jesus?
2. Of the three reasons above, which one is the most important? Why?
3. Why should a disciple of Jesus who is poor be happy in spite of their poverty?
4. According to Luke 6:22, what are the four unpleasant situations that Jesus' disciples may experience if they follow Him?
5. What might be the reason when everyone speaks well of you? If your goal is not everyone speaking well of you what is your goal?