

WHEN YOU FEEL OVERWHELMED

Mark 13:9-13, 21-27,32-37

Times of Persecution, Mark 13:9-13

HATED FOR THE GOSPEL'S SAKE

Intro: Listen to a few facts that ought to cause us to stop and think.

- A Chinese Pastor is arrested and thrown into prison. His sons are beaten by the police.
- 70,000 Indian Christians were driven from their home and forced to march through a jungle to safety to avoid people intent on their murder.
- A Christian Mexican family is attacked and killed by their neighbor because he blamed them and their faith for his daughter's stomach ailment.
- In Saudi Arabia a man cut out his own daughter's tongue and burned her to death because she converted to Christianity.
- Taliban gunmen in Afghanistan shot and killed a Christian aid worker as she walked down the street just because she was "**spreading her religion**".

Approximately 60 percent of the world's Christians live in prosperity and peace. We have most of the money, most of the Bibles, the various outreach opportunities such as radio, television, printed media and the Internet. 40 percent of the world's Christians live in poverty and persecution. Many of these people suffer daily for their testimony, and many others are tortured and killed for believing in Jesus Christ.

The greatest number of conversions and the greatest moves of God are being reported among our poverty stricken, persecuted brethren. They are suffering and dying for their faith, and millions are being influenced. We, on the other hand, enjoy our peace and prosperity and influence not for Jesus. We neither draw men to Him nor do we confirm them in their unbelief. The persecuted, on the other hand, give daily testimony to the depth of their faith and commitment to the Gospel.

Jesus warned His men that just as the world hated Him, they would hate those who follow Him, **John 15:18-21**. This proved true for all of the disciples of the Lord Jesus.

- **James** – Beheaded by King Herod
- **Peter** – Crucified upside down in Rome
- **Andrew** – Crucified on an olive tree
- **Thomas** - Thrust through with pine spears, tormented with red-hot plates, and burned alive.
- **Philip** – Tortured and crucified
- **Matthew** – Beheaded
- **Nathanael** – Skinned alive and then crucified
- **James the Less** – Thrown down from the temple mount and then beaten to death with a club.
- **Simon the Zealot** - Crucified
- **Thaddeus** – Beaten to death with sticks
- **Matthias** – Stoned while hanging on a cross
- **John the Beloved** – Thrown into boiling oil, but did not die. Later exiled to the prison island of Patmos.
- **Paul** – Beheaded in Rome

It also proved true for millions down through the centuries. It still proves true millions in our own day. They hated our Savior, and they will hate us until He delivers us from this world.

Times of Celebration Mark 13:21-27

'Twas the night before Jesus came and all through the house
Not a creature was praying, not one in the house. Their Bibles were lain
on the shelf without care In hopes that Jesus would not come there.

The children were dressing to crawl into bed,
Not once ever kneeling or bowing a head. And Mom in her rocker with baby on her lap
Was watching the Late Show while I took a nap.

When out of the East there arose such a clatter, I sprang to my feet to see what was the matter. Away to the window I flew like a flash
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash!

When what to my wondering eyes should appear
But angels proclaiming that Jesus was here. With a light like the sun sending
forth a bright ray I knew in a moment this must be The Day!

The light of His face made me cover my head
It was Jesus! returning just like He had said. And though I possessed worldly wisdom
and wealth I cried when I saw Him in spite of myself.

In the Book of Life which He held in His hand
Was written the name of every saved man. He spoke not a word as He searched for
my name; When He said "It's not here" my head hung in shame.

The people whose names had been written with love
He gathered to take to His Father above. With those who were ready He rose
without a sound While all the rest were left standing around.

I fell to my knees, but it was too late; I had waited too long and this sealed my fate. I stood and I cried as they rose out of sight; Oh,
if only I had been ready tonight.

In the words of this poem the meaning is clear; The coming of Jesus is drawing near. There's only one life and when comes the
last call We'll find that the Bible was true after all!

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Times of Uncertainty Mark 13:32-37

After 14 years of studying the Bible, William Miller became convinced that Christ would return in 1843. When Miller announced April 3 as the day, some disciples went to mountaintops, hoping for a head start to heaven. Others were in graveyards, planning to ascend in reunion with their departed loved ones. Philadelphia society ladies clustered together outside town to avoid entering God's kingdom amid the common herd. When April 4 dawned as usual the Millerites were disillusioned, but they took heart. Their leader had predicted a range of dates for Christ's return. They still had until March 21, 1844. The devout continued to make ready, but again they were disappointed. A third date--October 22, 1844--was set, but it also passed.

Today in the Word, December 20, 1991.

John was a poor servant-boy to a rich doctor in London, England. John's master loved the Lord Jesus and often had church meetings in the large living room of his home. At one of these meetings the doctor talked about the coming again of the Lord Jesus to take to Heaven all those who believe in Him. Everyone else, he said, would be left behind. After the meeting was over, the doctor said, "Well, John, I just want to tell you that if Jesus comes before I die, I shall no longer want the things I have now. He will take me away with Him and then you may have my house and all my money." Such an offer took John by surprise. He could only stammer his thanks. That night he lay awake wondering why his master had offered him all that wealth. Suddenly he thought, "Why should I want a house and furniture, a car, horses, and money after the Lord comes? How terrible it would be to be left behind, even if all my master's belongings were mine!" Soon he could bear the thought no longer. He slipped out of bed, ran quickly down the hall to the room where his master slept and knocked on the door. "Why, John," asked the doctor, "what's the matter? What do you want?" "Please sir," answered John, "I don't want your house after the Lord comes, or your car, or horses, or money." "Well, John, what do you want?" "Oh sir, I want to be ready when the Lord comes, to go with Him to Heaven." Right there in the doctor's bedroom John put his trust in the Lord Jesus. Right there John was saved. Right there John was ready for the Lord's coming.
