

## DO YOU FEEL PERSECUTED? JESUS WAS

By Bill Ferguson, August 4, 2004

Many of us who have decided to turn from our wicked ways, turn from our wrong way of living, turn from a life of sin, and follow God's plan for us must realize the road ahead will not be smooth sailing. Somehow we mistakenly think that because the Holy Spirit has come in and cleaned us up, life will be without problems from now on. The exact opposite is actually true. God's Word tells us we will have problems, but He will help us through them.

**Psa. 41:1** BLESSED (HAPPY, fortunate, to be envied) is he who considers the weak and the poor; the Lord will deliver him in the time of evil and trouble.

**Psa. 81:7** You called in distress and I delivered you; I answered you in the secret place of thunder; I tested you at the waters of Meribah. Selah (pause, and calmly think of that)!

**2 Cor. 4:9** For it seems to me that God has made an exhibit of us apostles, exposing us to view last (of all, like men in a triumphal procession who are) sentenced to death (and displayed at the end of the line). For we have become a spectacle to the world (a show in the world's amphitheater) with both men and angels (as spectators).

**2Cor. 4:11** To this hour we have gone both hungry and thirsty; we (habitually) wear but one undergarment (and shiver in the cold); we are roughly knocked about and wander around homeless.

Those who have chosen to follow a Christ-like life and have come out of prostitution, drugs, Free Masonry, the occult, etc. will be lied to, stolen from, gossiped about and suffer in many ways. The problems just never seem to stop.

All through Jesus' years of ministry He was always dealing with problems, so much so that in some instances the religious people tried to kill Him, and eventually succeeded. He said in John 15:20... if they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.... (those that follow Him).

Thus we know that anyone who comes out of Free Masonry, the occult, a life of drugs, a false religion or whatever, and choose a personal relationship with Jesus, will experience persecution. But any persecution pales in comparison to the rewards, the joy, the freedom and the peace that comes with a personal relationship with Jesus, and the final reward of spending all of eternity with our Father God.

Christianity is not a religion nor does it have a monopoly on morality. The Moslem religion has a very strict moral code. Good for them. Hinduism and Buddhism are religions in various parts of the world. But Christians – followers of Christ, those who choose to be obedient to God's Word, the Bible – are the only people that can lay claim to the term Christianity. Oxford's Dictionary defines Christian as – showing the qualities associated with Christ's teachings – a kind, fair, decent person. Christianity is referred to as having Christian quality or character.

Some may argue that Christianity is a religion just like Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam are religions. Perhaps but I would say that the true Christian life is a life that lives and behaves as Jesus would live and behave. The real Christian looks to the living God as their Father and their source of everything. They look to God's son, Jesus as the one who loved each of us so much that He took our place, paid for our penalty and our sins so we might go free.

Christianity (a way of life) is so much more than any religion and those who adhere to God's Word are privileged to spend eternity with Him one day. Real Christians will be known by their love for one another.

Having a personal relationship with the son of God does not mean merely going to church once a week or reciting the Lord's prayer occasionally or going through a religious ritual. The dictionary defines relationship as "the fact or state of being related; a condition or character due to being related; kinship". If we have made a quality decision with our head and our heart (spirit man) to invite Jesus into our lives and our affairs and forgive us of all our past doings, He will do that. But it must be genuine and from our heart because God, a Spirit, only communicates through our spirit. Having done this, we will notice some changes take place for the better – a heaviness lifted, a freedom we can't explain, a peace we have been searching for, a love from God that permits me to love freely those I couldn't love before, and much more. We will begin to see the world – people and situations around us – with different colored glasses. In other words, change has taken place. Now we have help dealing with those things that seemed out of control. Now those things that were wrong in our lives can become right. Relationships with spouses and with families will change for the better. Love of self will improve dramatically. All of this and more because God is Love and when He becomes part of our life and our affairs good things happen.

Thus we can see that Christianity is much more than religion. It is relationship with the maker of the universe and all creation, God Himself. And He has made Himself available to all humanity. So if you like challenges and want the most exciting life possible, with the greatest high you can get, free of drugs, being a real Christian is for you, persecution and all. God has His eyes on you. He loves you.