

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
XIV. Handling Persecution From The Ungodly
(Psalm 14:1-7)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) Religious persecution is on the rise worldwide, and Trans World Radio President and CEO Lauren Libby claims "(p)eople are looking for answers" in handling it. ("President's Column," twr Magazine, 2022, v. 43, #1, p. 3)

(2) Here in America, we Biblical Christians face "soft" or mental and emotional persecution:

(a) We face it in the secular realm: President Biden is very opposed to bill SB 1834 in the Florida state senate (Erin Snodgrass, "Biden slams 'Don't Say Gay' bill a day after Ron DeSantis signaled support for the controversial Florida legislation," February 8, 2022; businessinsider.com), and that bill states, "'A school district may not encourage classroom discussion about sexual orientation or gender identity in primary grade levels or in a manner that is not age appropriate or developmentally appropriate for students.' Parents could file lawsuits against school districts for violations of the bill." (Gov. DeSantis Endorses 'Don't Say Gay' Bill," February 8, 2022; msn.com) The bill is a reaction to efforts by some teachers to hide sexual orientation or gender identity teaching of children in the classroom from their parents, so in supporting the bill, Gov. DeSantis said, "'We want parents to be able to have access to what's going on in the classroom. And it is certainly inappropriate to be hiding these things from parents.'" (Ibid.) Thus, the president of the United States publicly and strongly opposes parents having a say or even knowing whether their children are being indoctrinated on sexual orientation or gender identity in the public classroom even at the elementary level. That is "soft" religious persecution against Biblical Christians!

(b) We face "soft" religious persecution in evangelical realms: (i) "Much of neo-evangelicalism" likes us "to believe that true evangelicals are the cause of the problems in America, the Church, and the world," so "(t)hey refer to" conservative believers "pejoratively [scornfully] as 'fundamentalists.'" (Brannon Howse, Religious Trojan Horse, 2012, p. 194-195) One such evangelical, "Tony Campolo . . . wrote a 28-page paper entitled 'The Road to Damascus'" that "'identifies anti-communist evangelicals as 'members of the forces of darkness.' Good Christians are portrayed as pro-communist while anti-communists are Neanderthal, non-progressive, conservatives.'" (Ibid., p. 191, citing David Noebel, "Tony Campolo, Jim Wallis: The Marxist Delusion and a Christian Evangelist," Feb. 19, 2008)

Indeed, (ii) even the Gospel of Christ is being countered by "progressive" evangelicals: evangelical leader Brian McClaren in an interview on Bleeding Purpose Podcast said while critiquing the doctrine of hell that "' . . . God gets his way through coercion and violence and intimidation and domination just like every other kingdom does. The Cross isn't the center then. The Cross is almost a distraction and false advertising for God.'" (Ibid., Howse, p. 194)

(3) Such opposition to Bible truth and those who believe it was predicted by Alice Bailey (1880-1949) who claimed to write "under the direction of a spirit guide," a "demon" according to Brannon Howse (Ibid., p. 15). She wrote, "'This coming age will be as predominantly the age of group interplay, group idealism and group consciousness . . . for the will of the individual will voluntarily be blended into group will.'" (Ibid., p. 15-16, citing Alice Bailey, The Rays and the Initiations (1934-1947), p. 109) Mr. Howse thus explained that she predicted, "The future . . . will be about socialism – collectivism, or group thinking – not individualism or dissent." (Ibid., p. 16)

As for the Gospel of Christ's salvation, Alice Bailey also wrote that "' . . . an Enlightened People will rule" who "will not accept or permit the rule of any body of men who undertake to tell them what they must believe in order to be saved . . .'" (Ibid., citing Alice Bailey, The Reappearance of the Christ, 1st ed. (1948), p. 164-165)

Need: So, we ask, "What does God call us to do in responding to persecution for the true Biblical faith?!"

- I. The persecution of the godly arises from the depravity that affects the whole human race, Psalm 14:1-4a:**
 - A. Foolish wicked men are practical atheists, claiming in their hearts that there is no God to Whom they are accountable, and from this conviction flows corrupt, evil deeds that reflect their sinful depravity, Psa. 14:1-3.
 - B. The Lord views all evildoers as having no knowledge of God or of His truth, Psalm 14:4a. Obviously, all men need to turn to God for salvation from sin. (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 802)
 - C. However, when some do turn to God, trusting in Him as their Lord, the wicked who fail to turn to God figuratively devour God's people, persecuting them, thinking they will not suffer punishment for it, Psa. 14:4b.
- II. However, God resides in the midst of His people, so the Lord views any persecution of His people as persecution against Himself (cf. Acts 9:4-5), so the wicked who persecute God's people will be in great fear when He responds to punish them in frightening ways, Psalm 14:5; Ibid.**

- III. The wicked may try to shame the plans of God's people, and they may succeed for a time, but God is the Refuge (KJV) or "Shelter from danger" (*mahseh*) for His people, so He will deliver them from the dangers they face from their persecutors in accord with His agenda for His people, Psalm 14:6; *Ibid*.
- IV. The psalmist thus longed for God's Kingdom on earth when all evil persecution is past, Psalm 14:7a, b:
- V. In view of this future hope of God's Kingdom on earth, David called on God's people to rejoice and be glad for God's eventual complete deliverance of them from the wicked, Psalm 14:7c.

Lesson: Humanity is depraved, but if one comes into spiritual relationship with God by faith, he becomes part of God's people. The depraved wicked then persecute the godly, but the Lord defends them in accord with His will for His people as the godly seek God's help. His people must hope for God's Kingdom when all persecution is past.

Application: (1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) If we face spiritual persecution, may we call on God for help, and He will rescue us so we can do His will. May we hope for His Kingdom when all persecution will be past.

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

We address issues mentioned in our sermon introduction for edifying discernment of the truth about them:

(1) On teaching sexual orientation and gender identity to children, Ephesians 6:1-4 NIV calls parents and not schools to rear their children in the "training and instruction" of the Lord. Then, Genesis 2:20-24, Leviticus 18:1-23, Romans 1:24-27 and 1 Corinthians 6:9 in their historical contexts (cf. Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to 1 Cor. 6:9) teach that sexual union should be only for an adult birth-male man and an adult birth-female woman in marriage.

(2) On the term "fundamentalists," it was **first** used of conservative Christians in the early 20th century who, opposite many mainline Protestant denominations, held to the historic Christian doctrines of (a) the virgin birth of Christ, (b) His bodily resurrection, (c) the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture, (d) Christ's substitutionary atonement and (e) the imminent physical Second Coming of Christ. (Wm. W. Sweet, The Story Of Religion In America, 1973, p. 407) We hold these beliefs today, so there is nothing wrong in being a "fundamentalist" Christian!

(3) On Marxism, we have repeatedly noted that this ideology violates two of the Ten Commandments – not coveting what others have and not stealing. (Exodus 20:15, 17) Scripture also calls us to work for our own family's livelihoods (2 Thessalonians 3:10; 1 Timothy 5:8) versus living off the income of others (including the government).

(4) On hell, Scripture reveals that God will send all who are not written in the Lamb's book of life to the lake of fire to face eternal torment, Revelation 20:10, 11-15; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9. The Lamb's book of life is God's record of all who have trusted in Christ for salvation, so faith in Christ is the only way to be saved, Acts 4:10-12.

(5) On "spirit guides," 2 Timothy 3:13 teaches that as history progresses, people will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. To counter such deception, we are to heed written Scripture (2 Timothy 3:15) that equips us for every good work in this life until we meet the Lord at His return (2 Timothy 3:16-17). God never directs us to seek to communicate with spirit beings of any kind, but instead to avoid deception by heeding Scripture.

(6) On the claim by Alice Bailey's "spirit guide" demon that people would eventually not tolerate any group of men telling them what to do to be saved, (a) 700 hundred years before the birth of Christ, His Gospel was predicted by the Hebrew prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 53:11 that foretold how God [the Father] would see the sufferings of His Servant [Messiah] and His wrath against man's sin that was laid on His Servant [Christ on the cross, Isaiah 53:5-6] would be satisfied [propitiated]. Consequently, "by knowledge of him" (Hebrew *beda'to*) "involving faith and a self-appropriation of the Messiah's righteousness" [trusting in Christ for salvation], God would justify [Hebrew *yasdiq*] many [He would graciously pronounce many to be righteous]. (E. J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, 1974, vol. III, p. 356-357) This all precisely fits the theology of the Apostle Paul in Romans 3:21-28 about salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. The Gospel of Christ is thus not a fabrication by some men in the first century A. D. who decided to invent a new religion, but it was foretold hundreds of years before Christ's birth in the Hebrew Old Testament Scriptures!

(b) Also, in Galatians 1:11-12, the Apostle Paul wrote that he did not receive the Gospel of Christ he preached from other men, but that it was given to him by a direct revelation from Jesus Christ Himself. Just like the Old Testament Hebrew prophet Isaiah received Christ's Gospel directly from God, Paul also received it directly from God!

(c) Thus, Christ's Gospel is **not** what a *group* of *men* determined for people to believe to be saved as Alice Bailey's "spirit guide" demon implied, but what **God** determined what people needed to believe to be saved!

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. In facing persecution for our faith, may we call on God for deliverance, trusting He will rescue us so we can fulfill His calling. May we joyfully focus on God's future final deliverance of us from all persecution!