



THE MESSENGER

AUGUST 28, 2022

NEWS AND NOTES

Congregational Meeting
September 11

Weekly Bible Studies
Tuesday at 1 on Zoom
Friday at 1 on Zoom
Saturday, 10, Panera
(Georgetown)

Times of Service
Sunday

Bible study: 9:45 AM
Worship: 10:45 AM; 6 PM

Wednesday
Bible study: 7:30 PM
(Immediately followed by a
short worship service)

First Friday of Month
Singing
September 2, 7:30

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ARE YOU READY? (1)

There is a song that seeks an answer this all-important question: Are you ready for the judgment day? The first verse says there is a great day coming, a day when saints and sinners will be parted right and left, and then asks, "Are you ready for that day to come?" Verse two says there is a bright day coming, but warns the brightness shall only come to those that love the Lord. Again, the question is raised, "Are you ready?" Finally, the song speaks of a sad day when sinners will hear their eternal doom announced.

God's people are to be a people prepared and ready for every good work (Titus 3:1); ready in season and out of season (2 Timothy 4:2); ready to share (1 Timothy 6:18); ready to give a defense (1 Peter 3:15). As students know, unpreparedness is the precursor to failure. Spiritually, unpreparedness gives temptation a foothold. The remainder of this article will deal with readiness in light of persecution.

I suspect that severe persecution is the very thing which most Christians today are the least prepared for. But I don't think that was true in the first century. Persecution followed immediately after the church began. Jesus had taught His followers to expect and be prepared for it. He said, *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.* (Matthew 5:10-12) This persecution would be severe, painful, and costly. I believe the Bible shows those early Christians to have been ready to be persecuted for the cause of Christ. Paul wrote, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.* (Romans 8:35-37)

Acts 2 ends with the church in Jerusalem enjoying a short period of peaceful worship and fellowship, but it didn't last long. After healing a lame man, Peter and John were arrested and detained by

Members Needing Our Prayers

Richelle Banks, The Spivey family, Bobbie Atkisson, Gary Brown, Joyce Bolton, Julie Patton, Rick Small, Benny Poynter, Richard and Janet Brundige, Rhonda Boyd, Cindy Bradbury, Paul Atkisson

Others Needing Prayer

Charles Bishop, Brian Mason, Ernestine Byers, Glen Perkins, Allison Walker, Dwight Antle, Randy Cates, Larry McTeer, Charlene Michael, Ann Little, Mary Jean Snyder, Mark Nickles, Adam Fusco Duane Harrod, Grace Meyer, Meredith Nicholson, Alice and Lonnie Anderson, Glen Perkins, Ethan Shelton, Terry Daniels, Leroy Weatherholt, Robert Brundige, William Roberts, Paul and Marrian Lyda, Dana and her children, Shane (a relative of Cindi), Ron Harmon

To Our Guests

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Jewish authorities for preaching Jesus. When interrogated, Peter proclaimed, *let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well.* (Acts 4:10) Realizing they could not continue to hold the two apostles, the authorities charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John responded with, *“Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”* (Acts 4:19-20)

One might say persecution is not so bad when being miraculously protected or filled with the Holy Spirit during an interrogation, but those persecutors were primed to kill, and kill is just what they did. Stephen preached and performing “great wonders and signs.” Certain Jews, whose arguments failed, to conspired against him. He was arrested and brought before the authorities. Was he ready to be persecuted? Yes. He did not struggle, run away, beg to be let go, or deny Jesus. He preached an impassioned sermon to those persecuting him. The Spirit filled Stephen (7:55) but did not choose to prevent his death.

Every Christian must ask, “Am I ready for severe persecution? Am I prepared to experience what those first century saints handled with courage? The first century church continued to experience persecution, which will be covered in a future article, or two. JT

Elders	Deacons	Evangelist
Troy Antle	Richard Brundige	Adam Litmer
David Collins	Adam Daniels	
	Marcus Lake	
	Adam Litmer	
	Frank Patton	
	Jamie Powell	
	Pat Seabolt	
	Matt Thompson	
	James Weatherholt	

