

PERSECUTION

Who were the ones to persecute Jesus and the twelve? It was the religious Jews, the scribes and Pharisees, those who thought they were serving God.

Luke 7:30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

Luke 9:22 Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

Luke 17:25 But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

Luke 20:17 And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?

The elders of Israel rejected God's commandment by holding to their own traditions.

Mark 7:8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

What was the Lord going to give unto the twelve and those who followed him?

Luke 18:28 Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee.

29 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake,

30 Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

31 Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, **and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.**

32 For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on:

33 And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.

34 And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

The twelve disciples did not understand why Jesus was to die and be raised again from the dead on the third day. The gospel of Christ's death, burial and subsequent resurrection was hid from them. This was not their gospel. They did not understand Christ's death as the payment for their sins. (However, we now know by the revelation given unto Paul, it was in fact the basis for the payment for all sin). The gospel the twelve preached and the gospel Christ preached was a different gospel from our gospel today. Their gospel was the gospel of the kingdom and according to the prophetic scriptures. The message that God would bless Abraham and make of his seed a great nation, and a King would sit upon the throne of King David to reign and rule forever was prophesied by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began. It was no secret! Israel was to be a blessing to all the nations; the Gentiles were to know and come to

the light through God's chosen people, Israel. A child was to be born, the government was to be upon his shoulders, and there shall be no end upon the throne of David and his kingdom to establish forever (Isaiah 9:6-7).

[Israel's three strikes or sins against them was: First, they rejected God when they rejected the man sent from God when they allowed John the Baptist to be beheaded. Second, they rejected the Son, the Lord Jesus, when they demanded his crucifixion. Third, they committed blasphemy (the unpardonable sin) when they themselves stoned Stephen to death.]

There was to be no forgiveness for Israel's blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. The tribulation and the day of the Lord's vengeance upon his enemies was to commence. According to prophecy, the Lord was to descend from heaven and pour out his wrath upon his enemies, and then he was to establish his kingdom of heaven on the earth.

Mark 12:36 For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

The Lord revealed unto Paul what has now happened to Israel. God set the nation of Israel aside through their unbelief (Romans 11:30). Now, all nations, Jew and Gentile, can be saved by God's grace...and not through the righteousness of the law. We now know that instead of God pouring out his wrath on his enemies, which we know would have been the next event after Israel's rejection of the Holy Spirit when they stoned Stephen to death, the Lord came back to the earth and saved his most-bitterest enemy, Saul of Tarsus.

A religious Jew named Saul, thought he was serving God by persecuting the kingdom believers. He went about committing to prison and to the death, those who believed in Jesus. However, Saul, the persecutor of the kingdom saints of Israel, now became the persecuted by the religious Jews. They most definitely did not like Paul's new message of God's grace going to the Gentiles. He became the hunted to be killed; He was to bear the Lord's name in suffering. But God saved Paul by his grace, made him the apostle of the Gentiles for all nations, Jew and Gentile. By revelation from the risen Lord, Paul received the doctrine and truths of the Lord's mystery program, the dispensation of the gospel of the grace of God, the blessed hope of salvation for Christ's church, the body of Christ. God is now calling out a church, a people to fill the positions of the heavenly places, places of ruling and reigning with Christ in the heavens. Satan will be removed from his position as the prince and the power of the air, and the god of this world, to be cast into eternal hell along with the fallen angels. The manifold plans of God's wisdom and knowledge for his church, the church for whom Christ died, will rule and reign with Him in the heavens, according to the mystery—our hope (Colossians 1:27). Israel will rule with Christ in the earthly kingdom as promised to Abraham, according to the Davidic covenant and according to prophecy. God still has plans for Israel after the rapture of the Church to heaven.

Israel and the Church for today, both serve the same Lord, but we each have a different hope in Christ. There is a difference between these two messages. Israel preaches the gospel of the kingdom of heaven on the earth. We preach the gospel of the grace of God, our home in

heaven (II Corinthians 5:1; Colossians 1:5). People today are being persecuted and martyred for their stand and defense for Jesus. They are not denying him. However, our prayer is that they, and each of us, will be standing for the defense and truth of Christ according to the right message, the right marching orders the Lord later revealed to Paul from heaven. God would have all men to be saved and then come unto the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4).
[Saved according to Paul's gospel.]

II Timothy 2:8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:

9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:

12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.