

PERSECUTION

(δεδιωγμένοι = 'theethiogmeni')

Persecute, to make to run or flee, put to flight, drive away, to run after, to press on, to pursue (in a hostile manner), to harass, trouble, molest, to be mistreated, suffer persecution on account of something, to seek after eagerly, earnestly endeavour to acquire.

Matthew 5:10,11, “Blessed are those who are persecuted from righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil falsely against you for My sake.” (Original Greek) “Blessed are they who have been persecuted on account of righteousness.”

Notice, neither translation says “on account of ‘being’ righteous.” Therefore, the primary cause of persecution is loyalty or devotion to righteousness. And ‘righteousness’ in this context means ‘anything that conforms to and is consistent with the revealed will of God’ (as in verse 6). However, the revealed will of God is His Word! So whenever we align ourselves to God’s will for our lives, or do anything that conforms to and is consistent with His Word, we attract persecution. Obedience to the Word makes us targets!

Here we clearly see the results of spiritual maturity. As we mature, we are capable of reconciling our actions and they begin to agree with God’s revealed will for us, so we get persecuted. The Greek word for ‘persecuted’ means ‘to be pursued’ or ‘driven away’ (as an animal that is being hunted). However, if we are pursued (or driven away) because of anything that does not conform to God’s Word, this isn’t persecution! Therefore, being hounded because of misdoings is merited punishment.

Persecution is a direct result of our lives being in complete alignment to the will of God. Why? Because when they are, the might of heaven is backing our every move! The enemy hates this, so tries to apply enough pressure for us to back off and do our own thing.