

“The world’s opposition is strong and subtle. And behind these things stands the devil, bent on ‘taking men alive’ and keeping them prisoner. For the devil hates the Gospel and uses all his strength and cunning to obstruct its progress, now by perverting it in the mouths of those who preach it, now by frightening them into silence through persecution or ridicule, now by persuading them to advance beyond it into some fancy novelty, now by making them so busy with defending the Gospel that they have no time to proclaim it” THE MESSAGE OF 2 TIMOTHY - JOHN STOTT

On the other hand...

“The persecution of the church...is not always by the world, who are strangers unrelated to us, but by our half-brothers, religious people, the nominal church. It has always been so. The Lord Jesus was bitterly opposed, rejected, mocked and condemned by His own nation. The fiercest opponents of the apostle Paul, who dogged his footsteps and stirred up strife against him, were the official church, the Jews. The monolithic structure of the medieval papacy persecuted all Protestant minorities with ruthless, unremitting ferocity. And the greatest enemies of the evangelical faith today are not unbelievers, who when they hear the Gospel often embrace it, but the church, the establishment, the hierarchy.” THE MESSAGE OF GALATIANS - JOHN STOTT

The good news of Christ crucified is still a ‘scandal’ (skandalon = stumbling-block), grievously offensive to the sinful pride of man. As long as man remains in his sinful state by birth he will always resist and fight against both the message and the messengers of the Gospel of Grace apart from human merit.

Matthew 23:32 ff

Hebrews 11:32 ff

John 15:18 ff

Acts 8:1 ff; Acts 9:1

From Genesis to Revelation man’s redemptive history is the story of the serpent persecuting the Seed of the woman and all who are in union with the Seed - Who is Christ.

The question remains...

**WHY IS THERE PERSECUTION AGAINST GOD’S PEOPLE?**

1. POLITICAL - Matthew 10:17-18; Mark 13:9; Acts 12:1-2; 17:5-7; 18:12 ff

2. THEOLOGICAL - John 5:16-18; 16:2 - entire Book of Acts

3. ECONOMICAL - Acts 16:16-24; 19:23-41

4. SOCIAL - John 15:18-20; 1 Peter 2:5-8; Matthew 10:36; Mark 13:12-13

5. THE ULTIMATE REASONS- 1 John 3:11-13

THE LORD'S FIRST MARTYR - ABEL



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