

## Saints Being Persecuted

Writing to Timothy, the apostle Paul said that “*all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will **suffer** persecution,*” 2 Tim. 3:12. In the sermon on the Mount Jesus said “*Blessed are those who are **persecuted** for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,*” Matt. 5:10. When Jesus sent the 12 disciples out on “the limited commission” (to go preach “*to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,*” Matt. 10:6), He warned them, saying, “*you will be hated by all for My name’s sake,*” and then He encouraged them by the statement that “*he who **endures** to the end will be **saved,**” Matt.10:22.*

Many other Scriptures could be cited which further underscores the fact that faithful service to the Lord often results in God’s people having to “*suffer for righteousness sake.*” And a study of the book of Acts reveals many instances in which God’s people were subjected to much suffering at the hands of evil people, often even being put to death!

Of course, suffering comes in many different forms, some relatively minor, and others very cruel and difficult to endure. However, in “the good ole U.S.A.” faithful Christians have not had to suffer great abuse from the Government. Of course, that could change as our society waxes “*worse and worse*” (2 Tim. 3:13), but up to this point “*the powers that be*” (Rom. 13:1) have not generally sought to subject Christians to undue hardship, persecution, or even execution.

But some people are not so blessed. For example, John Humphries (known to most members at Seffner), has made many evangelism trips to India, beginning as far back as 1976. Health permitting (He is now 82 years young), he plans to go again in 2020. Sadly, many of the Christians in that part of the world are not able to enjoy many of the blessings we generally take for granted. With this in mind, please note these comments made by bro. Humphries in a recent letter.

*“We feel that we need to mention that the preachers from the villages in some of the districts report an increase in harassment and even persecution from the Hindu majority in their area. One action by the local government in some districts is to demand that the churches register and give the names of all the members of the church. Then these lists are used to remove the brethren from any of the government social programs since they are no longer Hindus. This is the same as telling members of the church here in the USA that if you are a Christian, you will not be eligible for social security and will lose that benefit. What do you think of that, brethren? Yes, there is persecution of our brethren in some places in India. You don’t hear of this on the evening news. Our brethren out in the remote villages need our prayers.”*

However, notwithstanding the suffering to which they may be subjected, it seems that the people in India (generally speaking) are more receptive to the gospel than in the USA. For example, in bro. Humphries’ most recent trip to India (lasting a little over a month) there were 39 baptisms — not counting the good accomplished in the many Bible classes designed to teach and strengthen those who were already Christians. This is reflective of the results of evangelism efforts in America 50 to 100 years ago. Could it be that we, as a nation, have had it so good in recent years that we no longer feel a need for God? Could it be that, in the eternal scheme of things, our **blessings** will turn out to be our greatest **curse**? Think on these things!  
—B. Witherington

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