

The Persecuted became the Persecutors

The church that Constantine recognized in 300 AD had changed so much from its roots, as described the Acts, that it was beyond recognition as the edah of the first century. It was no longer the way it was meant to be. It became a mystery religion, wearing a new cloak altogether.

Once Constantine recognized it, this church was no longer persecuted. So, then it could take its message unhindered to the whole world under the auspices of the Roman Empire. Millions heard the “gospel” and believed. However it was not the same gospel or the same Spirit as Messiah preached. It was not the gospel of the kingdom (Mk 1:15-16; Mt 24:14).

The church that Constantine recognized wasn't a witness of the coming Messiah. We preach the gospel of the coming kingdom. What this church preached wasn't the gospel Messiah preached, but to the contrary. They were taking up the sword, burning heretics and persecuting instead of turning the other cheek as our Master had taught.

This was the beginning of the universal acceptance of the gospel from the universal church, headquartered in Rome. Instead of the gospel of the coming kingdom of Messiah, it was just a gospel about Christ. They preached the gospel of the acceptance of Christ as savior and the promise of going to heaven instead of hell when you die. They proclaimed Christ as savior, but omitted entirely the gospel of the kingdom.

What we're living for is to bring about the end of the age. That's why we go through suffering and discomfort. That's what we're chosen for. Rev 11:15 is what we're living for. We would be protesting everywhere to make the world a better place if that wasn't our vision.

We're supposed to be a foretaste of the coming kingdom. We don't pick up the sword. We turn the other cheek. There is peace. We don't persecute. Our Master, in reference to other religions, said to leave them alone (Lk 9:49-50).

2 Cor 11:3,13-15 — The subtle persuasion of the servants of Satan, who started preaching the gospel, was making people believe the gospel of going to heaven instead of hell. It was *about* Christ, not the kingdom. It wasn't preached by people who knew Him intimately, who didn't have any falsehood or deceit in them. Jn 7:18 speaks of two types of people: those who seek their own glory and those who seek Messiah's glory.

It says on church signs everywhere, "The Reverend" so and so. Those people want to be recognized. Satan wanted to be like God. That was his original sin. Don't lay hands too quickly on young people. They might get puffed up. Let them be tested first. Let them go through the fire. In time let our Father raise up whom He wants (1 Pet 5:5-6).

What happened to the First Church that was founded on the Rock? As long as they maintained their communion, their fellowship with our Father, He would continually give them revelation, and the gates of hell (the underworld) couldn't prevail against them, for they had revelation. When they had no more fellowship with our Master, there was no more revelation.

2 Cor 11:3-4 speaks of another gospel. Satan comes in to seduce and deceive. His servants say the same thing about being saved, but they don't bring about the witness of the kingdom on earth. They tell the people to go to church on Sunday. During the first three centuries the true gospel was being suppressed and oppressed by the false church that was rising up. In 337 AD, the Emperor Constantine died. He had given his blessing to a church that claimed that Messiah founded them. It was about 300 years after our Master was crucified. Finally they were free from oppression and persecution, and the persecuted became the persecutors.

The few who were left after the end of the first century, that little remnant of people, were finally killed. Any who disagreed were branded as heretics and worthy of punishment. About 365 AD the Catholic Council of Laodicea took place (even though this same Laodicea had been vomited out of our Master's mouth 200 years before). They wrote one of the most famous canons: "Christians must not judaize by resting on the

Sabbath day, but must work on that day. Rather they should honor the Lord's Day." They misunderstood "the Lord's Day" in Rev 1:10. "If anyone be found judaizing let him be *anathema* from Christ." This was the sentence of being tortured for keeping the Shabbat. That's history.

This church that was unrecognizable as the church that Messiah founded became cohorts with the state. The church couldn't put the dissenters to death, so they let the State do it, just like the Jews depended on Pilate. They'll do it again when the clay and the iron start mixing. We'll flee at that time and it won't be long before our Father puts an end to it.

So here we are again, keeping the Shabbat (Ex 31:13-15). It's a sign we are His people. It's a sign between us and Him. We're His people. He is our Father. That's a little bit about the Shabbat we are restoring. A few people down through the ages were trying to keep it, but never a nation, never twelve tribes. We'll make the Jews jealous.

Baruch — I was very affected by the things that we heard tonight. It can be easy to grow dull to what has happened, to what we can learn from history. We have to guard against becoming dull to that which has been carefully preserved for our instruction. These things we heard tonight are part of what was in the "black box."

Can you imagine (and it is shocking to think) that a group of men got together one day for a meeting, and they prayed in Jesus' name for Him to guide and lead them. Then they sat down and abolished the Shabbat. Shocking isn't it? How does it sit with you that they came together again and in God's name decreed the torture of any who would disobey this command? But they did. Those men met there in Laodicea, and that is exactly what they did. We may think that this is so far-fetched, but that is why we have to consider these things, as they are the very ways that we could be destroyed.

Abraham was the father of our faith. He spoke with our Father. He had in his heart all the passion and purpose that was given him, and how many generations later was it that his sons killed our Master Yahshua? And the very ones that came forth from our Master, His brothers, His spiritual seed, what about them? How many generations passed before they too had fallen? Before they too were calling for the blood of the "heretics"?

So now, here we are – are we exempt? They say that history repeats itself, and it probably does, as the schemer of these things has been unhindered in accomplishing these things time and time again. So what about us? Can we afford to grow dull to the lessons we are learning here? Can we fail to understand the demise of the First Edah and still hope to go beyond them? No, we need to hear these things, and we need to cling to what was spoken tonight.

It was said that as long as they would maintain their relationship with our Father, their fellowship, that He would continually give them revelation, reveal Himself to them. But as in 2 Cor 11:3, Satan comes in to deceive as soon as fellowship with Him is gone. Those men in that council didn't even notice that they had no fellowship with Messiah. I was thinking of what it says in 1 Jn 1:7 about our fellowship with Him that we have IF we walk in the light as He is in the light. What if we fail to notice? Could the same demise that befell the sons of Abraham and the passionate brothers of the First Edah befall us? It could, if we are not careful to pay attention.

Yonah — Pr 23:17 — If I am not zealous for the fear of YHWH, my hope will be cut off. They started envying sinners.

Eliezer — I heard something clearer tonight than ever before. The early disciples proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom. When they fell away they preached about Christ, but not the kingdom. We have the message of the kingdom. That's what we share with people.

Mk 1:15 — The nearer it is, the more people will believe, because they see it. We know it's the truth and not just hot air coming out of our mouth. We've got something to back it up. This will give us great confidence to speak. This gives us assurance to bring people home.