

American Minute with Bill Federer
Roman Empire Persecutions "Early Christians ...
carried into the Coliseum to make a spectacle for
those more savage than the beasts"-William Jennings
Bryan

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**"Christian persecution
'at near genocide
levels'"** reported the
BBC, (5/3/19):

"A report ordered by
Foreign Secretary Jeremy
Hunt ... **Christians were the most persecuted
religious group** ... Mr Hunt said he felt that 'political
correctness' had played a part in the issue not being
confronted ...

The interim report said **the main impact of
"genocidal acts against Christians is exodus"**
and that **Christianity faced being "wiped out"**
from parts of the Middle East ...

Evidence shows **not only the geographic spread
of anti-Christian persecution**, but also its
increasing severity" ... continue reading ...

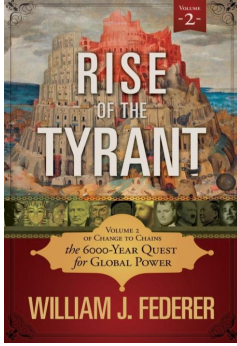
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**Christian persecution
'at near genocide levels'**

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TheGatewayPundit.com (5/13/24) "9-Year-Old White Christian Child Savagely Beaten on Minnesota School Playground Because 'She Wasn't Muslim'"

The **Christian church** was born into **persecution** from an **anti-Christian one world government** -- the **Roman Empire**.



Eleven of the twelve apostles were **martyred**, with the 12th, **John**, being reportedly thrown into a **boiling pot of oil**, but miraculously survived.

Jesus said in Acts 1:8:

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:



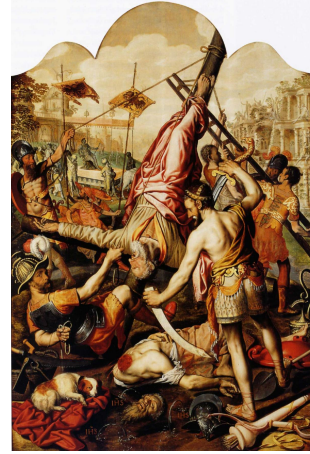
and ye shall be **witnesses** unto me both in **Jerusalem**, and in all **Judaea**, and in **Samaria**, and unto the **uttermost part of the earth.**"

The word "**witness**" in Greek is "**martyr.**"

The traditional histories are:

- **Peter** preached in Rome and

was crucified upside down c.66 AD;



- **Andrew** preached in Asia Minor, modern-day Greece and Turkey, before being crucified on a sideways "Saint Andrew's Cross" around 60 AD;



- **Thomas** preached east of Syria, Parthia, and possibly India, and was pierced through with spears by four soldiers in 72 AD;



- **Philip** reportedly preached in Egypt, Carthage in North Africa, and Asia Minor. After converting the wife of a Roman proconsul in Phrygia, he was arrested and cruelly put to death in the city of Heliopolis around 80 AD;



- **Matthew** preached in Parthia, Persia and Ethiopia, where he was reportedly stabbed to death in the back in city of Nadabahl in 74 AD;



- **Bartholomew**, according to

tradition, preached in India, Armenia, Ethiopia and Southern Arabia, before being skinned and martyred in the 1st century AD;



- **James**, the son of Zebedee, also known as "James, the greater," was arrested by Herod Agrippa, and beheaded by the Romans in 44 AD;



- **James**, the son of Alphaeus, also known as "James, the younger," is said to have ministered in Syria, where he was stoned and clubbed to death in 62 AD;



- **Thaddaeus**, or Jude, preached in Asia Minor and Greece, till he was crucified in Beirut or Edessa around 65 AD;



- **Simon the Zealot** reportedly preached in Persia, Mauritania, on Africa's west, and possibly England, before being crucified in 74 AD;

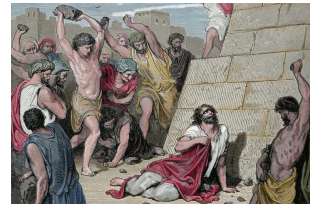


- **Matthias** preached in Syria,

where he was burned to death.



The **first martyr** was **Stephen**, as told in the Book of Acts, chapter 7:



"When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with *their* teeth.

But **Stephen**, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven ... And said, 'Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God' ...

They cast *him* out of the city, **and stoned *him***: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was **Saul** ...

Stephen, calling upon *God*, and saying, '**Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.**'

And he kneeled down, and **cried with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."**

Saul converted and became the **Apostle Paul**, who preached in **Syria, Asia Minor, Greece**, and **throughout the Roman Empire**, till he was **beheaded** in Rome in 66 AD.

James the Just, also known as "**James, brother of the Lord**," was one of the leaders of the

early church in Jerusalem till he was **martyred** in 62 AD.



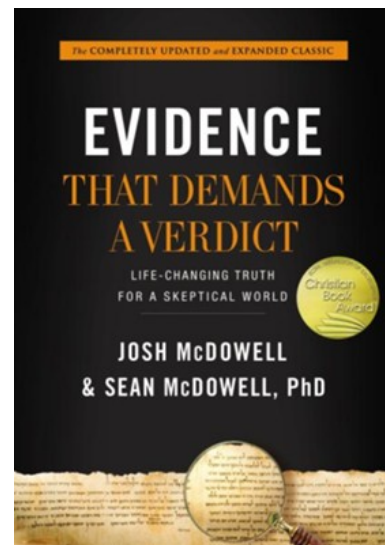
In 155 AD, **Polycarp**, a disciple of John, was ordered to **deny Christ or die**.



Polycarp responded:

“Eighty and six years have I have served Him, and He has done me no wrong. **How can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?**”

Josh McDowell explained the significance of the **Apostles being martyred** in his best-selling book, ***Evidence That Demands a Verdict*** (1972).



The book was updated (2017) with his son and co-author, **Sean McDowell**, who stated:

“**The apostles** spent between 1.5 to 3 years **with Jesus** during His public ministry ...

Although disillusioned at His untimely death, **they became the first witnesses of the risen Jesus** and they endured persecution; **many subsequently experienced martyrdom**, signing their **testimony**, so to speak, **in their own blood** ...

Their willingness to die, indicates that **they did not fabricate these claims**; rather, without exception, **they actually believed Jesus to have risen from**

the dead ... lending credibility to their claims about the veracity of the resurrection, which is fundamental to the case for Christianity."

Jesus foretold persecution in the Gospel of John, chapter 15:

"You are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you ... If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you ...

But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me ... He who hates Me hates My Father also."

Jesus said further in John 16:

"The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

And these things will **they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.**

But these things have I told you, that **when the time shall come**, ye may remember that I told you of them."

Jesus forewarned in Matthew 24:

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake ...

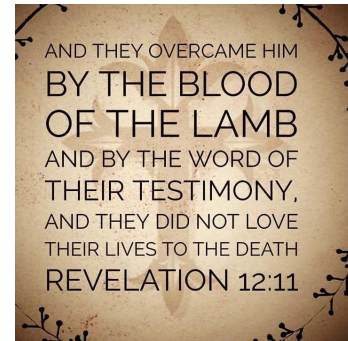
And because iniquity shall abound, **the love of many shall wax cold**. But he that shall **endure unto the end**, the same **shall be saved**.

And **this gospel of the kingdom** shall be

preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

The Book of Revelation, with chapter 12, stated:

"Now is come ... the **kingdom of our God**, and the **power of his Christ**: for the **accuser of our brethren is cast down**, which **accused them before our God** day and night.



And **they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb**, and by the **word of their testimony**; and **they loved not their lives unto the death.**"

There were **ten major persecutions of Christians** in the **first three centuries**:



- 1) **Nero** A.D. 54-68;
- 2) **Domitian** A.D. 81- 96;
- 3) **Trajan** A.D. 98-117;
- 4) **Antoninus Pius & Marcus Aurelius Antoninus** A.D. 138-180;
- 5) **Severus** A.D. 193 - 211;
- 6) **Maximus** A.D. 235-238;
- 7) **Decius** A.D. 249-251;
- 8) **Valerian** A.D. 253-260;
- 9) **Aurelian** A.D. 274-287;
- 10) **Diocletian** A.D. 292-304.

It was a **criminal act for Christians to assemble**.

If the government caught Christians meeting together, they were subject to being **arrested and killed**.

This resulted in **Christians meeting in caves carved underground called "catacombs."**



Emperor Diocletian's persecution was the worst.



When **Diocletian lost battles in Persia**, his generals blamed it on the army's **neglect of worshiping the Roman gods.**

Diocletian ordered **all military personnel and government employees to worship the Roman gods.**



This order forced **Christian soldiers** to either go **out of the military or into the closet.**

After purging Christians from the military and government, **Diocletian** surrounded himself with **anti-Christian advisers.**



In 303 AD, he consulted the **Oracle Temple of Apollo at Didyma**, which told him to **initiate a great empire-wide persecution of Christians.**



Diocletian revoked the tolerance issued a previous

Emperor Gallienus in 260 AD, and then **used the military to force all of Rome to return to worshiping pagan gods.**

What followed was a decade of the worst and most intense **persecution of Christians to that date.**



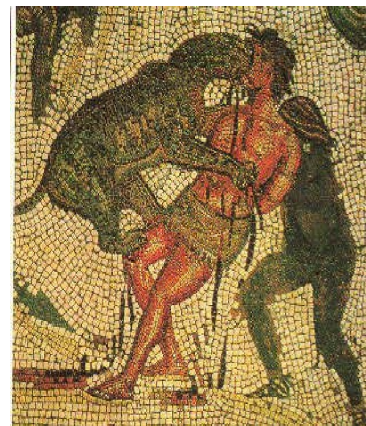
Diocletian had his military go systematically province by province **forbidding church gatherings, arresting church leaders, burning scriptures, destroying church building.**



He ordered the beautiful new church at **Nicomedia to be torn down.**

Christians were deprived of official ranks, lost their jobs, imprisoned, had their tongues cut out, were boiled alive, and even decapitated.

From **Europe to North Africa**, thousands were **martyred.**



The faithful cried out in fervent prayer.

Finally, **Diocletian** was struck with an **intestinal disease** so painful that he **abdicated the throne** on **MAY 1, 305 AD.**



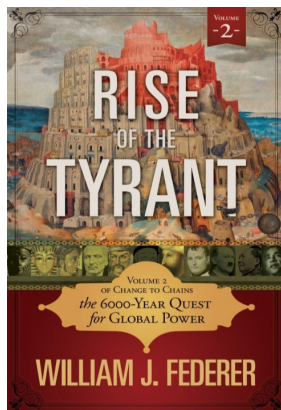
The next emperor, **Gelarius** continued the **persecution**, but he too was struck with the **intestinal disease** and died in 311.



Emperor Constantine defeated Emperor Maxentius in 312 AD at the **Battle of Rome's Milvian Bridge**.

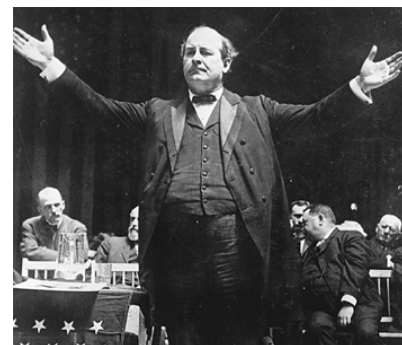


In 313 AD, **Constantine** issued the **Edit of Milan**, ending the **persecution of Christians**.



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Commenting on **Roman persecutions** was **Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan**, the **Democrat Party's candidate for President** in 1896, 1900, and 1908.



William Jennings Bryan, in his speech, "The Prince of Peace,"

(*New York Times*, September 7, 1913), stated:

"I can imagine that the **early Christians** who were carried into the **Coliseum** to make a **spectacle for those more savage than the beasts**, were entreated by their doubting companions not to endanger their lives.



But, **kneeling in the center of the arena**, they prayed and sang until they were devoured ..."

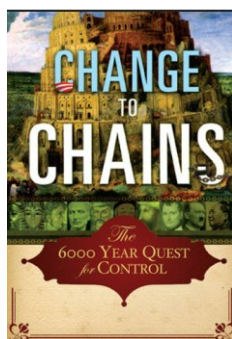
Bryan continued:

"How helpless they seemed, and, measured by every human rule, how hopeless was their cause!



And yet **within a few decades** the power which **they invoked proved mightier than the legions of the Emperor**, and the faith in which they died was **triumphant o'er all the land ...**

... They were **greater conquerors in their death** than they could have been had they purchased life."

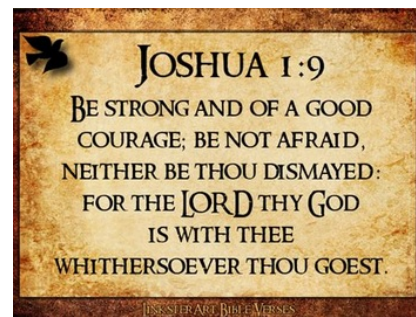


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It takes **courage** to walk in faith:

Joshua 1:9:

"Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."



The **Book of Revelation 21:8** lists **cowards** as the first ones thrown in the lake of fire:

"But the cowardly (fearful), unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

The Center for Studies on New Religions found that in 2016, **over 90,000 Christians courageously kept their faith, even though they were murdered**, 30 percent of whom were at the hands of Islamic terrorists.

Fox News published a report, January 6, 2017, titled **"Christians the most persecuted group in world for second year."**

Open Doors UK & Ireland CEO Lisa Pearce reported:

“Persecution levels have been rising rapidly across **Asia and the Indian subcontinent**, driven by extreme religious nationalism which is often tacitly condoned, and sometimes actively encouraged, by local and national governments ...

... If a Christian is discovered in **Somalia**, they are **unlikely to live to see another day**.

North Korea is at the top of the list of countries persecuting Christians, followed by **nations practicing sharia Islam**.

China has increased **targeting Christians and demolishing churches**."

Catholic News Agency reported:

"All top 10 countries with the **worst persecution of Christians** are in **Asia and Africa**. **Somalia** ranks second on the list, followed by **Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Yemen, and Eritrea** ...

More Christians were recorded as killed (in **Pakistan**) for their faith in 2016 than any other country."

Open Doors reported that in 2016:

- Islamic fundamentalism is responsible for persecution of Christians in 35 of the top 50 countries;



- **Pakistan is 4th in persecution, worse than northern Nigeria;**
- **Sudan is the 5th worst persecutor of Christians, with President Omar al-Bashir proclaiming, "Now we can impose sharia here";**
- Christians are killed in crossfire in **Yemen, Syria and Iraq;**
- Hindu nationalists have caused **India** to reach its highest level of persecution, battering churches;
- **Laos, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Bhutan increased persecution;**
- Buddhist nationalism in **Sri Lanka** has put the country among the top 50 persecutors;
- **Turkish President Erdogan used a suspicious coup to eliminate opposition and increase persecution of Christians, moderate Muslims and non-Islamists.**

President Ronald Reagan commented on the **courageous Christians** who suffered **persecution in the Roman Coliseum** at the National Prayer Breakfast, February 2, 1984:

"This **power of prayer** can be illustrated by the story that goes back to **the fourth century** -- the **monk** (Telemachus) living in a little remote village, spending most of his time in prayer ...

One day he thought **he heard the voice of God** telling him to go to Rome ...

Weeks and weeks later, he arrived ... at a time of a **festival in Rome ...**

... He followed a crowd into the **Coliseum**, and then, there in the midst of this **great crowd**, he saw the **gladiators** come forth, **stand before the Emperor**, and say, 'We who are about to die salute you.'



And he realized they were going to **fight to the death for the entertainment of the crowds.**

He cried out, '**In the Name of Christ, stop!**'

And **his voice was lost** in the tumult there in the great **Colosseum ...**"

He continued:

"And as the games began, **he made his way down through the crowd** and climbed over the wall and **dropped to the floor of the arena.**



Suddenly the **crowds saw this scrawny little figure** making his way out to the **gladiators** and saying, over and over again, '**In the Name of Christ, stop!**'

And they thought it was **part of the entertainment**, and at first they were **amused.**

But then, when they realized it wasn't, **they grew belligerent and angry ...**"

Reagan added:

"And as he was pleading with the gladiators, 'In the Name of Christ, stop!' one of them plunged his sword into his body.

And as he fell to the sand of the arena in death, his last words were, 'In the Name of Christ, stop!' ...



... And suddenly, a strange thing happened.

The **gladiators** stood looking at this tiny form lying in the sand.

A silence fell over the Colosseum.

And then, someplace up in the upper tiers, **an individual made his way to an exit** and left, and the **others began to follow.**

And in the **dead silence, everyone left the Colosseum.**

That was the **last battle to the death between gladiators** in the **Roman Colosseum.**

Never again did anyone kill or did men **kill each other** for the **entertainment of the crowd ..."**

Reagan ended:

"One tiny voice that could hardly be heard above the tumult. **'In the Name of Christ, stop!'**



It is something we could be saying to each other throughout the world today."

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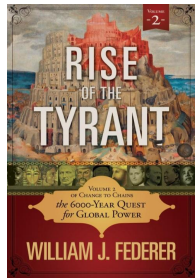
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wjfederer@gmail.com

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