

## Are You Prepared for Persecution?

How spiritually strong are you, really? With escalating hate and violence against America and its allies around the world, we all need to strengthen ourselves for the tough times ahead. And as the body of Mashyach grows and our impact grows on this Yahuwah-rejecting world, our persecution will also be an increasingly obvious part of our lives. After describing the end-time wars, earthquakes, famines and disease epidemics, Amanuwal said: "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My names's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many" (Matthew 24:7-11).

When the going gets tough, will you be one of those who turn aside to a seemingly easier path – perhaps influenced by some false minister or family member? If we who are Yahuwah's true servants are indeed to be "hated by all nations," it will be easy to grow discouraged. It will be natural to look for an easy way out!

But somewhere on this earth will be the true Philadelphians (see Revelation 3:7-13) who will "hold fast" to what they have been taught (v. 11) and will have a zeal to go through the "open doors" to teach the good news to those on the world wide web. Being a part of a little flock will seem, to many, the most unlikely place to be. For its members will suffer a great deal of indignation and persecution from the world and even from other so called believers – just as Amanuwal, Peter and Paul did.

Amanuwal himself warned: "And this is the condemnation that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed" (John 3:19-20).

We in the Body of Mashyach, those of His Way, have the opportunity and the responsibility to teach the TRUTH with power. And that Truth – the "light" – will infuriate large portions of this present society! We will teach heartfully about the need to obey the Aluhym of the Scriptures and keep ALL 10 of the Ten Commandments – including Yahuwah's Kadesh Sabbath. We will occasionally point out particularly vile sins of the world – such as practicing sexual perversion (Romans 1:24-27). And we will continually lift up our voices as Yahuwah commanded: "Cry aloud, spare not; lift up your voice like a trumpet; tell My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins" (Isaiah 58:1).

So we will be singled out collectively and individually for ignominy and persecution.

Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, we will truly need to "feed on the scriptures" and be genuinely closer to Yahuwah in active obedience and living faith. We must always remember Amanuwal's own words: "Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner their fathers did to the prophets" (Luke 6:22-23).

In addition to this religious persecution, we will also be affected – along with our countrymen – by the growing resentment, envy and even hate that increasing millions of people feel toward the US, Britain and their allies. As most of you know, the radical Muslims are turning the entire Middle East conflict into a war between the entire Arab world and America, Israel and their allies.

Finally, it appears that Yahuwah is using the recent Middle East wars to begin the process of truly “breaking” America’s power and prestige (Leviticus 26:19). This process may take several more years. This prophecy in Leviticus goes on to indicate that we will be visited with drought and famine. Food supplies will run short, and there will be times of panic in the general population as a people previously unaccustomed to hardship realize the absolute starvation is drawing close, even in the US, Britain, Canada and Australia! Next will come the horrifying disease epidemics that will shake our society to its foundations (v. 20, cf. Matthew 24:7).

As untold millions of people in our previously affluent society are scrambling to get enough to eat, and are then moved to desperation by the “incurable” disease epidemics and plagues that begin to strike, how “popular” do you think our warnings and teachings will be? People will perceive this as predictions of Yahuwah’s coming wrath and as an attack on them and on their cherished way of life. Though our own purpose will be to give them, in love, a heartfelt warning to protect them from future disaster, the vast majority of people will not want to acknowledge their sins, and will furiously reject the warning. Instead, as humans have nearly always done when confronted with an evil report, they will “attack the messenger.”

Amanuwal powerfully warned the religious leaders of His day: “Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues (churches) and persecute from city to city” (Matthew 23:33-34). Again, Amanuwal said, “Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword” (Matthew 10:34).

Brethren, how should we as those of HIS Way (the Way) prepare ourselves for these coming persecutions and hard times?

First of all, we need to build the mindset that Amanuwal explained in Matthew 10. Notice especially verses 38-39: “And he who does not take his cross (burdens) and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.: Through Amanuwal within us, we must make ourselves mentally and spiritually prepared to go through the trials, test and persecutions that the new Testament clearly indicates will come on faithful followers of Amanuwal Ha’Mashyach. We must meditate and pray about whether we are trying to “find” our lives – our ultimate fulfillment – in this present world, or whether we are genuinely willing to “lose” our lives for Mashyach who died for us? Meanwhile, we must ask ourselves whether we are demonstrating this commitment to Yahuwah by really following the Apostle Paul’s inspired instruction to all followers: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of Yahuwah, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, kadesh, acceptable to Yahuwah, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to

this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of Yahuwah" (Romans 12:1-2).

Let us each ask ourselves: "How am I truly giving my life to Yahuwah? Am I trying to go all out in giving my time, my talents, my strength and my resources in serving Yahuwah, in serving His people?" Each of us has different ways in which we serve. Yahuwah knows this. And He will bless each one of us – for all eternity – to the degree that we actively surrender our lives to Him to serve and sacrifice according to our means. As Amanuwal said: "For everyone to whom much is given, to him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:48).

Also, each of us – by "walking with Yahuwah" in regular scripture study, fervent prayer and meditation, heartfelt service and sacrifice – should be growing in the living faith we will need during the trials ahead. Yahuwah states: "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to Yahuwah must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him: (Hebrews 11:6). And Yahuwah's word also tells us: "What then shall we say to these things? If Yahuwah is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:31-32).

Dear friends, there is no good reason for any of us to become discouraged or to "fall away." But we all need to carefully think through – ahead of time – the trials, tests, and temptations that will surely come upon us, and what our response will be. Then we need – right now – to beseech Yahuwah for more of His Spirit and for His guidance in doing our part to build the faith and courage that we will surely need in the perilous years just ahead.