



Be Thou Faithful

- **Early Jewish persecution.**
Acts 2; 3; 4:1-2, 13, 18, 20
- Jewish persecution increases. Acts. 5:14, 17ff, 24, 28-29
- Acts 6-7 Stephen is martyred.
- Acts 8-9 Saul of Tarsus.
- Acts 12 Jews employed civil authorities.

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- **Roman Persecution.**
 - Jewish persecution scattered the church.
Acts 8:1
 - Rome considered the church a “sect” of the Jews. Acts 24:14; 28:22
 - Nero (54-68) Roman empire regarded the church as an unauthorized religion.

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- **Roman Persecution.**
 - Nero rumored to have burned the city, “falsely accused culprits and subjected to most unusual punishments those whom, for their shameful deeds, the populace called Christians” (Tacitus, *Annals*, XV. 44).

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- **Roman Persecution.**
 - Domitian (81-96) called himself, “Master and God.”
 - Official documents beginning with the words, “Our lord and god commands that the following be done ...” (Suetonius, Domitian 13)

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- **The book of Revelation and persecution.**
 - Revelation 2:10, “*Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.*”
 - Revelation 2:13, “*I know where thou dwellest, (even) where Satan’s throne is; and thou holdest fast my name, and didst not deny my faith, even in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwelleth.*”

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• **The book of Revelation and persecution.**

- Polycarp's statement at that time has been often quoted by historians: "Eighty and six years have I served Christ and he has never done me wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me? I fear not the fire that burns for a season and after a while is quenched. Why do you delay? Come, do your will." As the flames licked his body he prayed, "I thank thee that thou hast graciously thought me worthy of this day and of this hour that I may receive a portion in the number of the martyrs, in the cup of thy Christ."
- So Polycarp died, and the Jews assisted in his death.

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• **"Be thou faithful" during difficult times.**

- 2020 Pandemic.
- Civil unrest.
- Political unrest.
- What is a Christian to do? "**Be thou faithful**"

Passages to Remember:

- 1 Thessalonians 3:1-5, "*Therefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left behind at Athens alone; and sent Timothy, our brother and God's minister in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort (you) concerning your faith; that no man be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that hereunto we are appointed. For verily, when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we are to suffer affliction; even as it came to pass, and ye know. For this cause I also, when I could no longer forbear, sent that I might know your faith, lest by any means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor should be in vain.*"

Passages to Remember:

- 2 Timothy 3:10-12, "*But thou didst follow my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, patience, persecutions, sufferings. What things befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*"

Passages to Remember:

- 1 Peter 4:12-16, "*Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you: but insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice; that at the revelation of his glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy. If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed (are ye); because the (Spirit) of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you. For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men's matters: but if (a man suffer) as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name.*"

Passages to Remember:

- Psalms 30:4-5, "*Sing praise unto Jehovah, O ye saints of his, and give thanks to his holy memorial (name). For his anger is but for a moment; His favor is for a life-time: weeping may tarry for the night, but joy (cometh) in the morning.*"
- Psalms 27

Passages to Remember:

- Revelation 2:10, *“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.”*

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- Revelation 6:9-10, *“And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a great voice, saying, **How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?**”*
- Never give up! No place to quit!