

**As it was in the beginning so it will be at the
end!**

The early Church formed out of the persecution against the Disciples of Christ.

Imprisonment, seizure of property and death caused many believers to escape Jerusalem to preserve their lives.

- Only the 11 disciples remained in the City of Jerusalem.**

The Scriptures do not expressly indicate what happened to the “Seventy” neither does it recount a complete list of their names.

After the Crucifixion of Jesus; The Name of Jesus was forbidden to be mentioned publicly in Jerusalem.

- There was constant conflict between the religious rulers of the Synagogue and the Believers of the Way

In every case that recounts the believers activities in the New Testament early Church one thing is clear:

- They were distinctly marked with AUTHORITY and POWER.

Through the hands of the Apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people so that even the sick were brought out into the streets on beds and couches so that as Peter passed by his shadow might fall on some of them.

The Scriptures teach there are distinct characteristics that identify **GENUINE BELIEVERS**.

And these signs will follow those who believe:

- In My name they will cast out demons;
- they will speak with new tongues;
- they will take up serpents; and
- if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them;
- they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

In the early Church, when any of the signs occurred by the hand of a Believer, the Disciples were arrested and put in prison.

On a certain day a lame man was healed by the hand of Peter as he and John entered the Temple.

The people were in awe and amazement at seeing this and so Peter began to teach and explain saying:

- Why are you amazed? This man was healed by the Faith that comes through Jesus.

Both Peter and John were arrested and put on trial for this miracle. The chief inquiry made by the trial Court was:

- By what Power or by what Name have you healed this man?

At the conclusion of the trial they were released on their own recognizance since among other reasons the Court could not deny the Miracle had truly been done!

- The Court however, issued a strong warning against using the Name of Jesus in public.

Second offence by the Apostles

- *Again the Apostles violated the Court order by speaking and teaching in the Name of Jesus.*

They were each beaten with 39 lashes according to Jewish tradition and then warned again by the Court.

- Then with a stern warning they were released on their own recognizance again.

Signs and wonders were occurring at the hand of one of the deacons whose name was Stephen as he taught in the name of Jesus.

- This offended the Jewish leaders and so they arrested him and brought him before the trial Court.

The lead Prosecutor called several witness forward to testify.

- The defense presented no witnesses on behalf of Stephen for doing Miracles and teaching in the Name of Jesus.

The Court ruled that he was guilty and sentenced him to death by stoning.

Because of the widespread intolerance of the Disciples teaching in the Name of Jesus, widespread persecution broke out against believers and they were scattered into various jurisdictions fleeing away from Jerusalem.

The Rulers of the Synagogue however were determined to capture the Believers and bring them to trial by issuing warrants for their arrest.

- They selected a man named Saul to oversee the apprehension and detention of Believers who escaped from Jerusalem.

So what are some of those things that occurred during the formation of the New Testament Church?

- **Believers Property was confiscated**
- **Believers who confessed Jesus were then excommunicated from the Temple**
- **A Decree was issued not to teach in the Name of Jesus**
- **Those who performed Miracles were put on trial, incarcerated, fined, mocked and beaten.**

Thus, it must be according to Scripture: Only those with a firm commitment to God and to Christ will be able to withstand the assault upon their Faith in the latter days.

- Truly, he who endures to the end will be Saved!

A Young Snake handling Pastor in Tennessee said this when asked about the possibility of dying if bitten by one of those deadly serpents he handled during Church Service.

- A Salvation not worth dying for is not worth living for!**

That's the kind of faith **REQUIRED** to endure until the end.

If history repeats itself as some Scholars have suggested, then at the close of the Church age it will be marked with many of the same things that ushered in the birth of the Church!

- The Name of Jesus will be an offence to many
- The Name of Jesus will be forbidden in the Government, the work place and Public Schools
- Signs and Wonders done at the hand of Believers will be Mocked and Ridiculed

- *Believers will be arrested, put on trial and found guilty, fined and imprisoned.*
- *A task force will be created to search out believers and bring them to trial*
- *False witnesses will appear so that the Believer will be condemned.*

Gross darkness will then cover the earth. It will be a time of tribulation such as never has been before.

- “For behold, darkness will cover the earth And deep darkness the peoples...

There will be many mockers in the last days as there was when Jesus went around REBUKING and CONDEMNING entire cities because they did not BELIEVE and REPENT at the miraculous works of God performed by Him.

Such was the case when he past through the City of
Capernaum

And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.

Jesus went on further to say

- If He had not done work of God among them (which no one else has done) they would have no sin. But as it was they have seen and hated Him for it.

Herein is a remarkable statement by Jesus.

- They hated Him for doing Good!

So there is little need to mention the message spoken by Jesus since they rejected the message also.

- **REPENT! For the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND!**

Getting back to the main point of my message.

Because of the persecution in Jerusalem, Believers' were scattered abroad teaching and preaching in the NAME OF JESUS.

- And, they gathered all kinds; sheep and goats alike.

Such was the case when Philip was Preaching in Samaria.

- **A certain sorcerer named Simon believed Philip's message about Jesus and was baptized in water and then received into the fellowship of believers.**

Phillip soon sent out a request for the Apostle Peter to come and root out the rif-raff from following him around in Ministry.

When Peter arrived, he immediately zeroed in with bulls-eye accuracy and said to Simon... You have neither part nor portion in this ministry, for your heart is not right in the sight of God!

- Repent therefore of your wickedness!

Yes, true to Christ's Words which the disciple know well.

- The Kingdom of Heaven is like a dragnet, that was cast into the sea, AND GATHERED SOME fish OF EVERY KIND, which, when it was filled, they drew up on the beach. They sat down, and gathered the good into containers, but the bad they threw away.

And so the Church will be composed of every kind.

- *Which kind are you?*

Thus, a warning exists to the Believer to work out his Salvation lest he found as a branch cut off and thrown into the fire.

- A believer is to examine himself to see whether he is in Faith with God!

So as it was in the beginning so it will be in the end. They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

***As it was in the beginning so it will be at the
closing of the Church age!***

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- The Name of Jesus will be forbidden in the Government, the work place and Public Schools
- Signs and Wonders done at the hand of Believers will be Mocked and Ridiculed

- *Believers will be arrested, put on trial and found guilty, fined and imprisoned.*
- *A task force will be created to search out believers and bring them to trial*
- *False witnesses will appear so that the Believer will be condemned.*

Believer's will be hated by all for the Name of Jesus in them!

- **But he who endures to the end will be saved!**

Closing