

A Study Of The Book Of Revelation

March 15, 2020

Background/Circumstances

- **Severe persecution:** (2:10, 13, 22; 3:10)
 - Already under way.
 - Rome felt Christianity to be a threat to the government.
- **Moral conditions:** (13:3-4)
- **Caesar Worship.**

Persecution From Authorities

Authority of the Jews. (Acts 4:5-6)

Court put on trial ... *"Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard."* (Acts 4:19-20; cf. 1 Peter 4:14-16)

Authority of the Jews. (Acts 5:17ff)

1. "We must obey God rather than men ..." (Acts 5:29)
2. Note Acts 5:41-42
3. Stephen stoned. (Acts 7)

Authority of the Jews. (Acts 9:1ff)

- *"But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord ..."*

Persecution From Authorities

Authority of Herod. Acts 12:1-2

1. Death of James.
2. Arrest of Peter.

Authority of the Magistrates in Philippi. (Acts 16:22ff)

1. Paul and Silas arrested, beaten, and imprisoned. (Acts 16:22ff)
2. Returned to Lydia's house. (Acts 16:35ff)

Warnings About Persecution

- Luke 21:16-17, *"But ye shall be delivered up even by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends; and (some) of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake."*
- Acts 21:13, *"Then Paul answered, What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."*
- Philippians 1:29-30, *"because to you it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer in his behalf: having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me."*
- 1 Thessalonians 3:4, *"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."*

Warnings About Persecution

- 2 Timothy 1:8, *"Be not ashamed therefore of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but suffer hardship with the gospel according to the power of God"*
- 2 Timothy 3:12, *"Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."*
- Luke 22:33-34, *"And he said unto him, Lord, with thee I am ready to go both to prison and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, until thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me."*
- 1 Peter 4:16, *"but if (a man suffer) as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name."* (cf. 1 Peter 2:12)

Caesar Worship

- When the worship of the Caesars as “lord” had become the popular state religion, Christians came under suspicion of conspiracy and treason because of their refusal to bow to “Lord Caesar.”
- This was one cause of Jesus' crucifixion.
Matthew 2:2; 27:11, 29, 37, 42; John 19:12; Acts 17:7
- Romans knew nothing of the one true God.
- Caesar worship was not a big problem for most.
- Some of the Caesars refused it while others accepted it.

Caesar Worship

- To Domitian it was a political question.
(Loyalty to Rome)
- To the Christian it was a religious question.
(Loyalty to God)

William Barclay:

“By the time the Revelation was written Caesar worship was the one religion which covered the whole Roman Empire; and it was because of their refusal to conform to its demands that Christians were persecuted and killed. The essence of Caesar worship was that the reigning Roman Emperor, as embodying the spirit of Rome, was divine. Once a year everyone in the Empire had to appear before the magistrates in order to ...

William Barclay:

... burn a pinch of incense to the godhead of Caesar, and to say: ‘Caesar is Lord.’ After he had done that, a man might go away and worship any god or goddess he liked, so long as that worship did not infringe decency and good order; but first of all he must go through the ceremony in which he acknowledged the Emperor as a god. The reason for all this was very simple. Rome had a vast heterogeneous (*diverse, mg*) empire, stretching from one end of the known ...

William Barclay:

... world to another. It had in it many tongues, many races, many traditions, many countries. The problem was how to weld this varied mass into a self-conscious unity. There is no unifying force like the force of a common religion. None of the national religions, and none of the local gods, could conceivably have become universal. But Caesar worship could. It was the one common act and common belief which turned the Empire into a unity. And to refuse to ...

William Barclay:

... burn the pinch of incense, and to refuse to say: ‘Caesar is Lord,’ was not an act of irreligion; it was an act of political disloyalty. If a man refused to go through the annual ceremony, the Romans did not regard him as an irreligious man; they regarded him as a bad and disaffected citizen who refused to acknowledge the greatness of Caesar and the divinity of Rome. That is why the Romans dealt with the utmost severity with the man who would not say: ‘Caesar is Lord.’ And no Christian could be persuaded to give the title ...

William Barclay:

... Lord to any one other than Jesus Christ. For the Christian – it was the centre and essence of his creed – Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ alone is Lord.

But we must see how this Caesar worship developed, and how it was at its peak in the time when the Revelation was written.”

Revelation of John, 1:19-20

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Message

- This great book was written to encourage those Christians who were suffering persecution at the hands of the wicked Domitian.
- “The book is designed to encourage Christians to be faithful in the face of all opposition and persecution, regardless of how terrible the onslaught might be.” – Hailey

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Message

- Victory of Christ and His saints over the forces of Satan
 - Christ – Victorious (**1:18; 6:2; 11:15; 14:1; 19:16**)
 - Saints – Overcome
 - Endure (13:10; 14:12)
 - Washed robes (7:14; 22:14)
 - Victory over beast (15:2)
 - Come out of tribulation (7:14)
 - **Summary: (17:14)**

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