

Church History

Persecution



Persecution

- A prepared elite in Jewish and Gentile world.
- *³⁵ Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.*
- *³⁶ Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together.*
- *³⁷ Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true.*
- *³⁸ I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor."*
- *(Jn. 4:35-38 NIV)*
- Gentiles
 - No need to be circumcised.

Reason for the spread

- The event really happened – God invaded time
- Christianity gave to the Gentiles what Greek Philosophy could not. God's love and grace made the Christian life possible and moved the believers outward to the lives of others.
- The practical expression of Christian love.
 - Tertullian quotes the pagans as saying, “See how these Christians love one another.”
 - Christians burying the dead – churches purchasing burial grounds – one named Catacumbas – thus the catacombs.

Persecution

- From the Jews first
 - Stephen – James the brother of John – Peter arrested – Saul's persecution
- Rome
 - James, Peter and Paul all possibly killed within five years of each other.
 - James in Jerusalem in 62, Peter in 64 and Paul in 68, both by Nero.

Persecution

- Rome considered State the highest good.
- Christians didn't live like others.
- Roman religion was external and impressive.
- Christians did not worship the emperor.
- Society built on slavery was filled with social classes – Christians held all men equal before God.
- Family life was very corrupt.
- Union of State and religion
- Romans worshipped many gods and tolerated various religions.
- Secret meetings of Christians gave rise to claims of cannibalism.