



Blessed are.....

(PART 8 OF 8)

December 25, 2017

MATTHEW 5:10 NKJV – (10) Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." The biblical passage continues to elaborate: "Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you" (**Matthew 5:11-12**). Jesus said many times that those who follow Him will be persecuted. *"If they persecute me, they will persecute you"* (**John 15:20-21**). Before his Conversion, Saul persecuted the early Church in Jerusalem, which scattered the Christians throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1). St. Peter advised "Whoever is made to suffer as a Christian should not be ashamed but glorify God because of the name" (**1 Peter 4:16**). The Woman who brought forth the male child destined to rule all nations with an iron rod was persecuted in **Revelation 12**.

Stephen, Peter and Paul, nearly all of the Apostles, and many Christians in the Roman era suffered martyrdom. Oppressive governments and endless conflicts in the last one hundred years, such as World Wars I and II, and the Middle East wars in Iraq, Egypt, and Syria have seen their share of martyrs. Middle Eastern Christians have suffered severe persecution since the crises in Iraq and Syria.

LETS BRING IT HOME TODAY: At least 58 Christians were slaughtered during Sunday Mass at Our Lady of Salvation Syriac Eastern Catholic Church in Baghdad on October 31, 2010. In July 2014 the terrorist Islamic State marked remaining Christian homes in Mosul with the Arabic letter Noon - for Nazarene, Nasrani, or Nasara - and advised residents that they have 24 hours to leave, convert to Islam, or die. Sixty thousand Christians in Mosul have been displaced from their homes, and over one million Christians have fled Iraq since the beginning of the Iraq War in 2003. It is estimated that the present turmoil in Syria has resulted in over 700,000 Christian refugees escaping to Jordan, Lebanon, and other Middle Eastern countries.

Let us not forget, [this is the reason we celebrate His birth, death and resurrection](#). The story can sound scary and discouraging, but let me remind you, Jesus promised those that suffer for His sake will be rewarded with the Kingdom of Heaven. We are not exempt! All blessings in the Beatitudes is for us. Give God thanks.

On behalf of the **SOHLMEDITATIONS Weekly ministerial staff**, Merry Christmas and may God continue to bless you in purpose and (Spiritual) prosperity.

SCRIPTURE READING

MARK 13:9

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Tolerance implies no lack of commitment to one's own beliefs. Rather it condemns the oppression or persecution of others.