

# Persecution and the Sovereignty of God

Acts 12:1-19

## Introduction

The Holy Spirit is symbolized in Scripture in two ways:

- 1) "A mighty wind";
- 2) "consuming fire"

His arrival incited a progressive persecution.

"a great persecution against the Church" (8:1).

Persecution is the *wind* and *fire* of gospel proliferation.

"Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted," 2 Timothy 3:12

## 1 Peter 3:12

Three crucial points to remember when you are persecuted:

- I. God *Sees* the Persecution of the Righteous – vv1-4
- II. God *Hears* the Prayers of the Righteous – vv5-17
- III. God *Sets His Face* Against Evil – vv18-19

## I. God Sees the Persecution of the Righteous – vv1-4

"For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous," 1 Peter 3:12a

**Herod the Great** (born in 73, ruled 40-4 B.C.).

2<sup>nd</sup> wife **Mariamne I**

**Herod Agrippa I** king of Judea (41-44 A.D.)

**James**, son of Zebedee, brother of John, "sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17)

Matthew 20:20-23

**Herod was able to kill James but not Peter.**

**God exercises sovereign control over all things, including persecution:** Acts 2:22-24; 4:24, 27-28

*But, what comfort can the people of God receive from what the Bible says about persecution?*

**1. God sees *everything* at all times in every place because He is present at all times in every place.**

Psalm 139:7-10

Isaiah 49:5

Genesis 39:21

Daniel 3:23-25

Jeremiah 23:24

“The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.” Proverbs 15:3

**For the *evil*, His seeing is the constant, dreadful, watching eye of a wrath-filled *Judge*.**

Amos 9:8

Jeremiah 16:17

“You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.” Psalm 90:8

Hebrews 4:13

**For the *good*, He watches with the adoring eyes of a *Father*, full of love, concern, and compassion.**

2 Chronicles 16:9

John 1:47-48

Psalm 11:4-5

*“his eyelids test”*

His is a careful, scrutinizing gaze that searches the heart and adjudicates the motive and intent of every thought and action.

**2. God uses persecution as His ‘winnowing fork’ in the lives of those who profess to be Christian.**

**3. God’s all-seeing eyes are searching for any and all imperfections that might hinder us or harm us.**

“His eyes were like a flame of fire” Revelation 1:14.

His loving eyes are like a blazing fire, searching for combustibles to burn up.

“You are a God of seeing,’ for she said, ‘Truly here I have seen him who looks after me.’” Genesis 16:13

Genesis 31:42

Be comforted in knowing that for the true believer God’s all-seeing gaze is loving, caring, compassionate, and kind.

Trust Him. He knows what He’s doing.