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HISTORICAL PERSECUTION OF BELIEVERS – LESSON 16

A SHIFT IN PERSECUTION

Jesus told his followers that the world would hate them because they hated Him. Just as the world hated Jesus to the point of killing Him on a Roman cross, so they also killed eleven of the twelve disciples and several of the deacons.

We then saw fourteen centuries of the Roman Catholic church killing true believers who dared to step away from the doctrines, traditions, and practices of the RCC or dared criticize it in any way. This persecution intensified with the Protestant Reformation.

Now we will shift focus from the RCC as the persecutor to Protestants persecuting other Protestants.

England's King Henry VIII separated from the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) in 1534 very early in the Protestant Reformation to establish the Church of England with himself as head of the church. He established the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings, saying God puts kings in place, therefore whatever a king decrees is of God's own will. The Church of England still followed much of the Catholic practices including its authority over both civil matters and religious matters.

This laid a foundation for the church to require sworn allegiance by oath to the English King and the Church of England.

Tomorrow we shall see how this stirred up persecution which eventually brought it to America. Yet the great persecution of believers that came to America eventually led after much sorrow and abuse to the freedoms guaranteed in our Constitution. These freedoms did not come cheap.

Stay tuned as we examine our own history.