

**Welcome to Promise Land Bible Church
We're glad you're here!**



Be Thou My Vision

Hymn 468



He Keep Me Singing

Hymn 587



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We're glad you're here!**





Praise and Prayer Request

All Prayer request can be e-mail to:

plbiblechurch@gmail.com

***We would love to pray for God's will to be done
your life and for His Name to be glorified in and
through you, as you seek His Holy Face!***



Call to Worship

Psalm 150

Psalm 150 Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens! Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness! Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!

Revive Us Again

Hymn 574



Great is Thy Faithfulness

Hymn 98



Receiving of the Offering

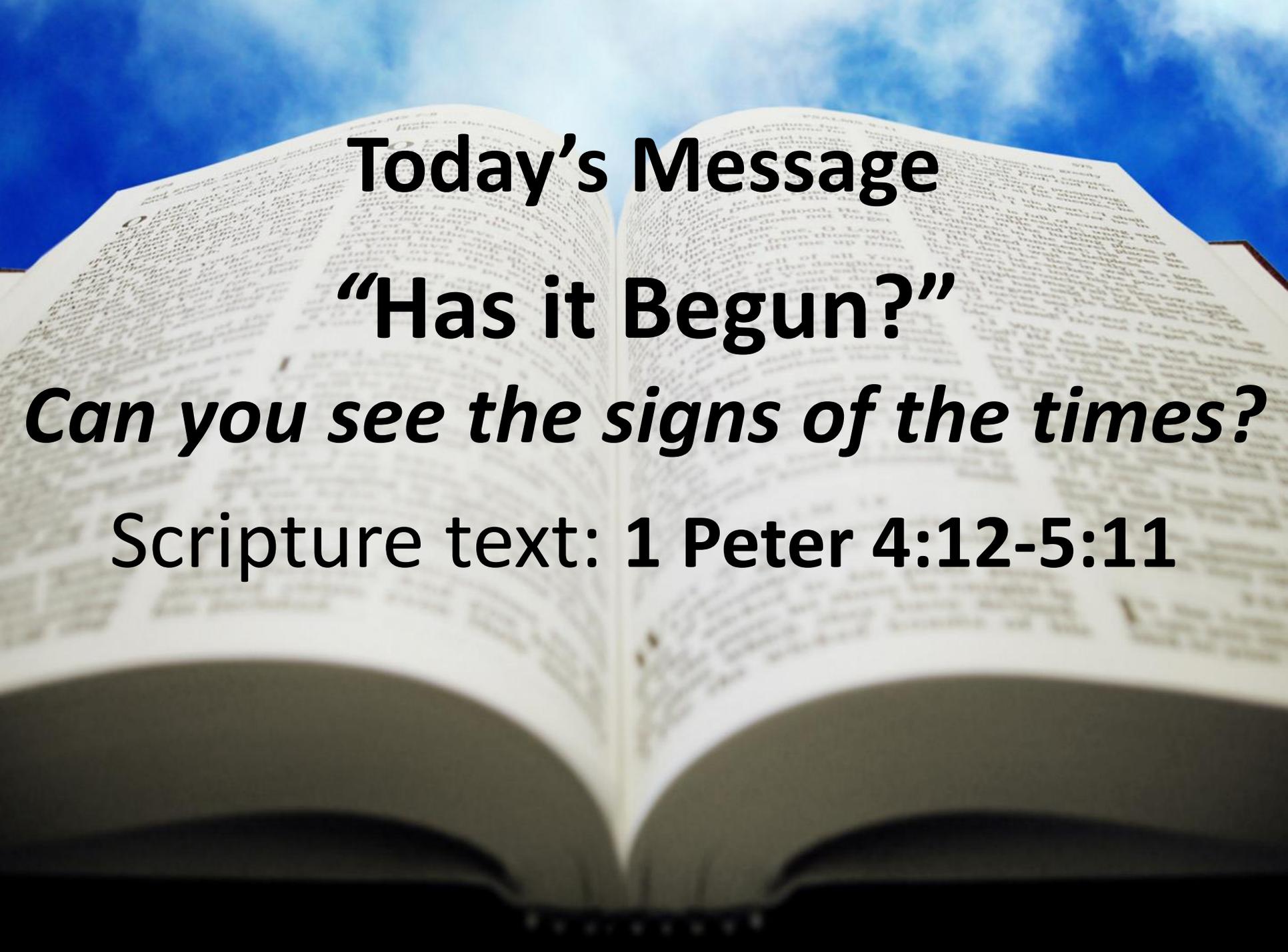


**An offering for the Church can be mailed to:
Promise Land Bible Church
PO Box 1437
Mountain Home, AR 72653**

Famous Quote:

“She is a traitor to the Master who sent her if she is so beguiled by the beauties of taste and art as to forget that to ‘preach Christ ... and Him crucified’ is the only object for which she exists among the sons of men. The business of the Church is salvation of souls.”

CHARLES SPURGEON

An open book is shown from a low angle, looking up at the pages. The pages are filled with small, dense text, likely a Bible. The background is a bright blue sky with wispy white clouds. The text is overlaid in the center of the book's pages.

Today's Message

“Has it Begun?”

Can you see the signs of the times?

Scripture text: 1 Peter 4:12-5:11

FACTS ABOUT FURNACES

1 Peter 4:12–19

Every Christian who lives a godly life experiences a certain amount of persecution. On the job, in school, in the neighborhood, perhaps **even in the family**, there are people who resist the truth and oppose the Gospel of Christ. No matter what a believer says or does, **these people find fault and criticize**. Peter dealt with this kind of “**normal persecution**” in the previous part of his letter.

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

But in this section, Peter explained about a special kind of persecution—a **“fiery trial”**—**that was about to overtake the entire church.** It would not be occasional personal persecution from those around them, but **official persecution from those above them.** Thus far, Christianity had been tolerated by Rome because it was considered a “sect” of Judaism, and the Jews were permitted to worship freely. **That attitude would change and the fires of persecution would be ignited, first by Nero, and then by the emperors that followed.**

Peter gave the believers four instructions to follow in the light of the coming “fiery trial.”

1. Expect Suffering (1 Peter 4:12)

Persecution is not something that is alien to the Christian life. Throughout history the people of God have suffered at the hands of the unbelieving world. Christians are different from unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14–18), and this different kind of life produces a different kind of lifestyle. Much of what goes on in the world depends on lies, pride, pleasure, and the desire to “get more.” A dedicated Christian builds his life on truth, humility, holiness, and the desire to glorify God. This conflict is illustrated throughout the Bible. Cain was a religious man, yet he hated his brother and killed him (Gen. 4:1–8).

The world does not persecute “religious people,” **but it does persecute righteous people.** Why Cain killed Abel is explained in 1 John 3:12: **“Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.”**

The Pharisees and Jewish leaders were religious people, yet they crucified Christ and persecuted the early church. **“But beware of men,”** Jesus warned His disciples, **“for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues”** (Matt. 10:17).

Imagine scourging the servants of God in the very house of God!

God declared war on Satan after the Fall of man (Gen. 3:15), and **Satan has been attacking God through His people ever since.** Christians are “strangers and pilgrims” in an alien world where Satan is the god and prince.

John 14:30-31 I will no longer talk much with you, **for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me,** but I do as the Father has commanded me, **so that the world may know that I love the Father.** Rise, let us go from here.

2 Corinthians 4:1-5 Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, **we do not lose heart.** But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. **We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word,** but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. And even **if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing.** In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of **the gospel of the glory of Christ,** who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but **Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.**

Whatever glorifies God will anger the enemy, and he will attack. For believers, persecution is not a strange thing. **The absence of satanic opposition would be strange!**

Jesus explained to His disciples that they should expect opposition and persecution from the world.

John 15:18-19 "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because **you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.**

John 15:20-24 Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' **If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.** If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. But all these things they will do to you **on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.** If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but **now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my Father also.** If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, **but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father.**

John 15:25-16:3 But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: **'They hated me without a cause.'** "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, **the Spirit of truth**, who proceeds from the Father, **he will bear witness about me**. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning. **"I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away.** They will put you out of the synagogues. **Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.** And they will do these things **because they have not known the Father, nor me.**

But He also gave them an encouraging promise: **“In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world”** (John 16:33).

It was through His death on the cross of Calvary, plus His resurrection, that He overcame sin and the world (John 12:23–33; see Gal. 6:14).

Galatians 6:14 But far be it from me to boast **except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ**, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

John 12:23-28 And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. **Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also.** If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him. "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? **But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.**" Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."

John 12:29-33 The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered, "**This voice has come for your sake, not mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.** And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, **will draw all people to myself.**" He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

The image of "fire" is often **applied to testing or persecution even in modern conversation.**

"Wow, He is really going through the fire," is a typical statement to describe someone experiencing personal difficulties.

In the Old Testament, **fire was a symbol of the holiness of God and the presence of God.** The fire on the altar **consumed the sacrifice** (Heb. 12:28–29).

Hebrews 12:28-29 Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, **and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.**

But Peter saw in the image **of fire a refining process rather than a divine judgment** (see Job 23:10; 1 Peter 1:7).

Job 23:10 But he knows the way that I take; **when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold.**

1 Peter 1:6-7 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, **you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith--more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire--may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

It is important to note that not all of the difficulties of life are necessarily fiery trials. There are some difficulties that are simply a part of human life and almost everybody experiences them.

Unfortunately, there are some difficulties that we bring on ourselves **because of disobedience and sin**. Peter mentioned these in 1 Peter 2:18–20 and 3:13–17.

1 Peter 2:18-20 Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, **one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.**

1 Peter 3:13-17 Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, **you will be blessed.** Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but **in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.**

The fiery trial he mentioned in 1 Peter 4:12 comes because we are faithful to God and stand up for that which is right. It is because we bear the name of Christ that the lost world attacks us.

Christ told His disciples that people would persecute them, as they had Him, **because their persecutors did not know God** (John 15:20–21).

John 15:20-21 Remember the word that I said to you: **'A servant is not greater than his master.'** **If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.** If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, **because they do not know him who sent me.**

The word “happened” is important; it means “**to go together.**”

Persecution and trials do not just “happen,” in the sense of being accidents. They are a part of God’s plan, and **He is in control**. They are a part of Romans 8:28 and will work out for good if we let God have His way.

Romans 8:28 And we know that **for those who love God all things work together for good**, for those who are **called according to his purpose**.

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

Hymn 87

