

# Jesus Provides Certainty in an Uncertain World

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*Open Doors*, based in Ermelo, The Netherlands, is a Christian mission that supports persecuted Christians around the world by distributing Bibles and Christian literature, providing discipleship training, and emergency relief aid. It maintains the World Watch List, which is an annual ranking of the top 50 countries where Christians suffer very high or extreme levels of persecution and discrimination for their faith. On this World Watch List, Afghanistan is second only to North Korea for Christian persecution.

Recently, the ultraconservative Islamic Taliban movement has taken over Afghanistan on the heels of U.S. and NATO military forces withdrawal. A pastor interviewed under condition of anonymity expressed fears that Christians in the country would be targeted for forced conversion or death by the Taliban.

He said that when the Taliban takes control of an area, they require all households to go to the local mosque to pray. Those who do not must provide a good reason for missing prayer or be accused of being a Christian, which can be a death sentence. Another thing that could potentially reveal Christian converts would be if the Taliban found a person in possession of a Bible, a Bible application on their phone, or other Christian content.

Most Christians in Afghanistan are former Muslims, and they risk being killed for apostasy if they cannot flee. According to the pastor, though some Christians fear betrayal from even their own family, and they continually face grave danger all around them, they trust in Jesus and His ability to answer prayer and preserve His people. They trust in the forgiveness for which Jesus paid completely on the cross, granting them fellowship with God and the assurance of heaven they never could have in Islam.

In Islam, forgiveness of sin and entrance into Paradise is based on Allah's will and determination that a Muslim's good works outweigh his bad ones. All over the world and in many other religions, variations of this belief are common.

In contrast, those Afghan Christians – like believers everywhere in the world – who trust in Jesus alone for the full payment of their sins on the cross can face some of the most intense persecution in the world today with the assurance that they will never lose their fellowship with Him and will be with Him in heaven.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.” (John 5:24)

“But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” (Titus 3:4-7)

Home ownership has been considered for many generations in the United States the fulfillment of a great dream, especially for immigrants from countries where there was little chance of

such a thing being achieved. But the nature of property rights depends on the kind of ownership.

*Fee simple ownership* entitles a homeowner to full enjoyment of the property, including the land and any structures that may be erected on it. It is limited only by zoning laws and deed or subdivision restrictions. It is also subject to eminent domain and the imposition of taxes by federal, state, and local government. This is by far the most common form of property ownership in the United States.

*Allodial ownership* entitles the homeowner not just to full enjoyment of the property, but to absolute possession of it. It is not subject to any rent, service, or acknowledgment to a superior authority. This form of property ownership is neither subject to eminent domain by federal, state, and local government, nor the imposition of taxes by the same.

Because fee simple is generally the kind of property ownership homeowners have, they are aware that even if they achieve the milestone of fully paying off the mortgage loan on their home, unlike the terms of allodial ownership, their property can still be taken away if they fail to pay the yearly property taxes.

Praise and thanks be to God that His redemption is like allodial ownership rather than fee simple! Those who trust alone in Jesus have all their sins forgiven – not some, not most – but all of them! In fact, there is no need to work in hopes of outweighing those sins with enough good deeds. We bring nothing to the table to recommend ourselves to God, and there is no need to live in uncertainty that some forgotten, unatoned sin will cause us not to make it through judgment day. Jesus truly paid the sin debt in full on the cross for us!

“When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with

Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.” (Colossians 2:13-14)

Those whom God saves through Jesus Christ will not be thrown away or lost. This certainty is guaranteed by Jesus Himself, who lived, died on the cross, and rose again on the third day to atone for our sin:

“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.” (John 6:37-40)

Trust in Jesus' love, complete forgiveness, and redemption have given Christians from millennia past to this day the hope, assurance, and courage to endure persecution and even martyrdom.

The apostle John wrote this so that we may know in our hearts and minds that eternal life is ours now since we have accepted Jesus Christ by faith. Such an assurance supplies the basis for joyful prayer and fellowship with one another and provides us with the knowledge that God loves us – a knowledge that tells us we do not have to work so that God can save us. The reality is that salvation is neither something to be achieved by, nor a reward for, enough good deeds done, or bad deeds avoided. It is solely by the grace of God.

“And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the

life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.” (1 John 5:11-13)

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