

GNITN

#1355

Prophecy Update: Hunted and Unhindered Persecution Rising, Gospel Rising Faster

Two Signs, Five Verses Apart

Jesus lists the birth pangs of the last days in Matthew 24 - wars, famines, earthquakes, pestilences - all building toward something. But two of the signs He names aren't natural disasters at all. They're about people. In [Matthew 24:9](#) He says His followers will be *hated by all nations* for His name's sake. Five verses later, in [Matthew 24:14](#), He says the gospel *will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come*.

Those two sentences sit right next to each other on purpose. The same chapter that predicts the Church getting hated predicts the Church finishing its assignment. This lesson is about watching both of those predictions come true in the same news cycle.

The Fire Is Real

Start with the hard one. Open Doors' 2026 World Watch List [put the number](#) of Christians living under high levels of persecution at 388 million worldwide - up 8 million from the year before. Fifteen countries now sit at what the report calls *extreme* persecution, up from thirteen. Nearly 4,850 believers were killed for their faith in the reporting period, and watchdogs [expect that number to climb higher](#) before the year is out.

None of that should surprise anyone who's read John 15. Jesus told His disciples plainly, *if the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you* ([John 15:18](#)). Paul said the same thing to Timothy in blunter terms: *all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution* ([2 Timothy 3:12](#)). The hatred isn't a sign something's gone wrong. It's a sign something was foretold.

Rome Couldn't Stop It Either

This isn't the first time governments have tried to cut believers off from the Word. In 1990, the ministry Open Doors ran an operation [named Project Pearl](#) - smuggling one million Bibles into Communist China in a single night. It worked because determined believers found a way around a wall that was supposed to be unbreakable.

The wall today is digital instead of physical, and it's just as determined. China's government has [scrubbed Bible apps](#) from its app stores and uses facial recognition to track who's showing up at church. North Korean believers still memorize entire books of Scripture because owning a paper copy is too dangerous. And Christians in both places are answering with the same tools their governments use against them - VPNs, encrypted messaging apps, and Scripture loaded onto microSD cards small enough to hide in a shirt seam. The same technology that makes surveillance possible also makes smuggling nearly weightless.

A New Language Every Seventeen Hours

While persecution is climbing, so is the pace of getting the Bible into languages that have never had it. Translation groups like Biblica and SIL report that AI-assisted drafting has [cut as much as twenty-five years](#) off a project that used to take a full human generation. As of last year, a new language somewhere in the world begins its first translation work roughly every seventeen hours. Only around 540 languages worldwide still have no Bible translation underway at all - down from thousands just two decades ago. The Every Tribe Every Nation alliance is now targeting 2033 for a goal that would have sounded impossible not long ago: at least some Scripture available in every language on earth, with a full Bible reaching ninety-five percent of the world's population.

A Billion and Counting

Then there's what happens once the translation exists. YouVersion, the Bible app founded out of a church in Oklahoma, [passed one billion installs](#) in November 2025 and hasn't slowed down since. It now carries Scripture in more than 2,300 languages. This year - not years ago, this year - Easter Sunday alone [brought 21.6 million people](#) to the app in a single day, the most engaged day in its seventeen-year history. Engagement is up fifteen percent year over year worldwide, thirty-seven percent in Sub-Saharan Africa, and twenty-two percent in Latin America. A phone that used to be a distraction from Scripture has quietly become one of the fastest delivery systems for it in human history.

The Math Jesus Gave Us

Put the two trend lines side by side. Persecution is rising toward a record. Gospel access is rising toward completion. Matthew 24 said both would happen, and both are happening in the same decade, often in the same countries, sometimes to the same believers. That convergence doesn't prove a date - Scripture is clear that *the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night* ([1 Thessalonians 5:2](#)). But it does say something about the other contrast of working during the day because the night comes when no man can work.

So here's the challenge - not a Bible-app download stat, an assignment. This week, use the technology already in your pocket for what it was actually built to do. Send one verse to one person who needs it today, by name, not as a mass forward. Or do like I'm doing and post a video online on your social media. Then look up a ministry still working to get a full Bible into a language that doesn't have one yet, and get behind it, even if it's a small donation. Persecuted believers are risking their lives for access you can get in four seconds. The least the free can do is use it.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV).