

**Revivals And Church History :: “The Great Persecution” began in Rome in A.D. 303**

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“The Great Persecution” began in Rome in A.D. 303 under Diocletian. This was a time period when Diocletian published official edicts against Christianity in an effort to destroy the faith. Among the detailed rulings were the following orders :

- Christians holding public office were to be put out of office;
- All accusations against Christians were to be welcomed and received;
- Christians were to be tortured for their faith;
- Scriptures were to be confiscated and burned immediately;
- Church buildings were to be destroyed;
- A Christian’s civil rights were to be forcefully denied; and
- Presidents, bishops, and leaders of churches were to be arrested in order to sacrifice to the gods.

During this time, a young writer named Eusebius documented the atrocities committed against the early church. A church leader and theologian named Pamphilus greatly inspired him. Pamphilus was arrested and tortured in A.D. 308, but not before he made a significant impact on Eusebius’s life.

Eusebius wrote, “We saw with our very eyes the houses of prayer cast down to their foundations . . . and the inspired and sacred Scriptures committed to the flames . . . and the pastors of the churches, some shamefully hiding themselves here and there.”

Pamphilus’s execution in A.D. 309 did not deter Eusebius from writing the manuscript, History of the Church.

Eusebius was later arrested for his contribution to the Christian cause. However, his life was spared. God protected him so he could continue to write his message to the future church. His writings opened the eyes of future generations to the tribulations the early church faced. His record of the life and death of a legacy of Christian leaders reminds us of the great heritage of Christian heroes. If we can learn today from the courageous faith and undying love of our forefathers who were persecuted, the writings are not in vain. And neither are their sufferings. What are you doing today that might inspire the next generation toward greater commitment? Ask God to help you leave your own legacy.