

# "A Christian Is Chosen by Jesus Christ"

Mehdi Dibaj

Iran

1994

"Men choose a religion, but a Christian is chosen by Jesus Christ. To be a Christian means to belong to Christ. Jesus asked me to renounce even my life, to follow Him faithfully, not to fear the world even if my body must perish. I prefer to know that God, the Almighty, is with me, even if it means that the whole world is against me.

"I am in God's hands. For 45 years I have walked with the God of miracles, and His goodness is for me a shadow that protects me in His love.

"The God of Daniel, who protected his friends, protected me during my nine years in prison, and all torments changed to my good, so that I have the fullness of love and gratitude.

"Of all the prophets, Jesus alone was resurrected from the dead, and He remains our living Mediator forever. I gave my life into His hands. For me, life is an opportunity to serve Him, and death is the privilege of getting to be with Him."

Pastor Mehdi Dibaj of Iran was on trial for his life, and these words were the defense he gave in court. An upper-class Muslim, he and his family had converted to Christianity. He had dared to translate Christian radio programs and books into the Farsi language. He was arrested in 1985 and accused of apostasy, denying the Muslim faith. For this, he faced the death penalty.

In Iran, social and political pressure is sometimes used to force Christians to recant their new-found faith in Jesus Christ. Some are even tortured. Dibaj was imprisoned alone for two years in a cramped hole with no room to stretch his legs. While he was in prison, his wife, Azizeh, left Dibaj and was forced to marry a Muslim.

When Dibaj steadfastly refused to deny his faith, the court condemned him to death. But after one month he was set free because of international attention that had been brought to his case. Soon after this, however, he was found dead in a park. It is believed by some that Islamic leaders had called for his execution.

Despite losing their father, his four children remain faithful to Jesus Christ.

*As he faced the court that would sentence him to death, Pastor Dibaj said, "I prefer to know that God, the Almighty, is with me, even if it means that the whole world is against me." He had learned the secret of being able to stand alone among men —standing with God.*

*Pray for radio programs that preach the Gospel to Muslims. Pray for safety for all those involved. Pray for the listeners, that the Word of God will penetrate their darkness and bring them to new life in Jesus Christ.*

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