



ACTS



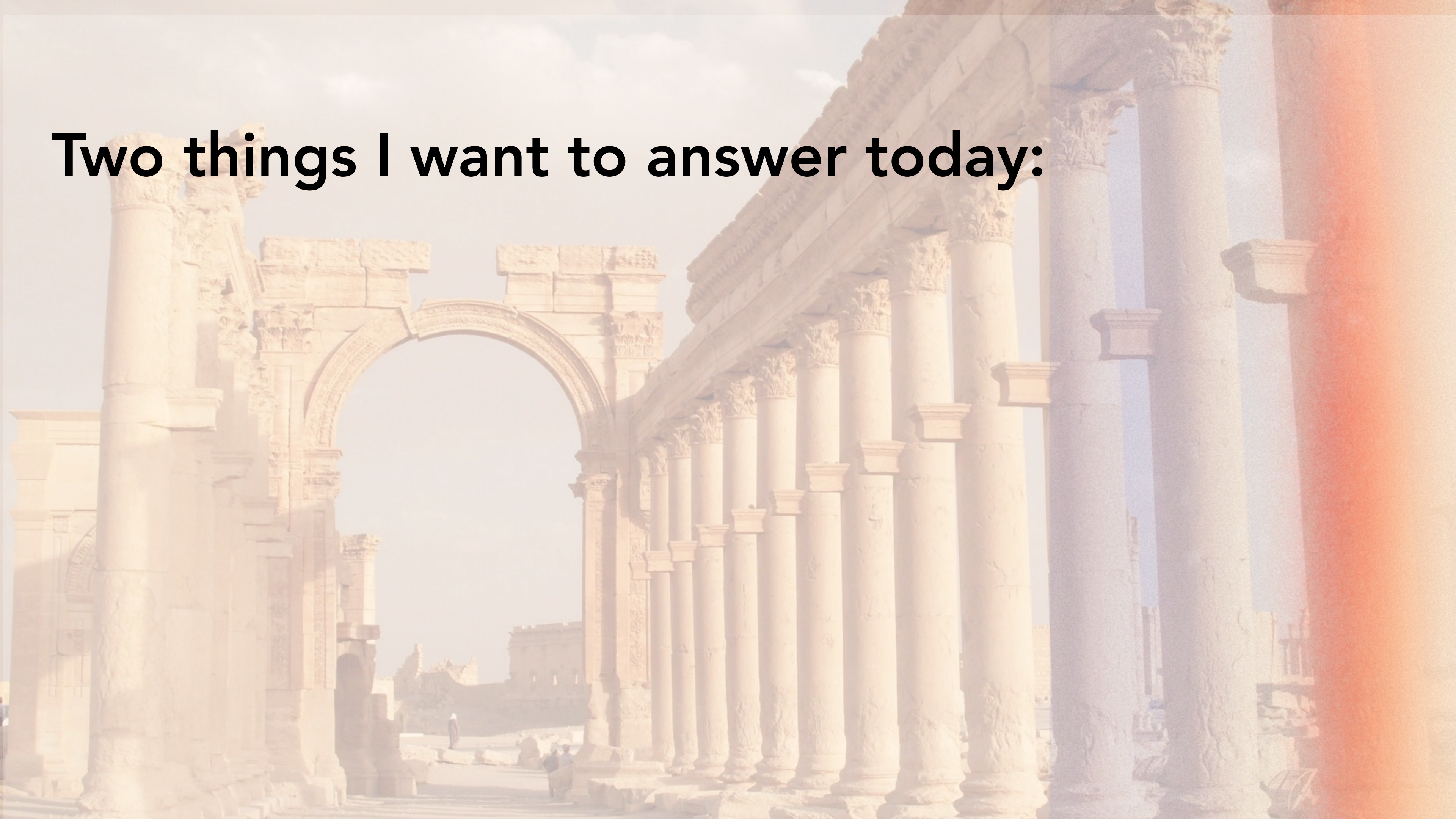


Acts

"Being a Witness for Christ"



Two things I want to answer today:



The background of the slide features a photograph of ancient stone ruins. A prominent row of tall, fluted columns with Corinthian capitals extends from the foreground into the distance. To the left, a large stone archway is visible. The scene is set outdoors under a clear sky, with a few small figures of people in the distance for scale. A soft, warm light, possibly from the sun being low in the sky, creates a hazy, golden atmosphere over the entire scene.

Two things I want to answer today:

1. What are the important things that we need to understand about persecution?

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- 1. What are the important things that we need to understand about persecution?**
- 2. How do we stand firm in the face of persecution?**



1. What are the important things that we need to understand about persecution?



1. What are the important things that we need to understand about persecution?

a. God achieves His purpose through persecution

Acts 7 – Stoning of Stephen



Acts 7 – Stoning of Stephen

Acts 7:54 - 8:1

54 When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. 55 But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”



Acts 7 – Stoning of Stephen

Acts 7:54 - 8:1

57 At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, 58 dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.

59 While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” 60 Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.



Acts 7 – Stoning of Stephen

Acts 8:1

1 On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.



Acts 7 – Stoning of Stephen

Acts 8:1, 4

1 On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

4 Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.



Acts 6:7

“7 So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.”





How should we view our suffering?



1. What are the important things that we need to understand about persecution?

a. God achieves His purpose through persecution.



1. What are the important things that we need to understand about persecution?

a. God achieves His purpose through persecution.

b. God achieves His purpose in spite of persecution.

Acts 8:1-8

1 On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. 2 Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. 3 But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.



Acts 8:1-8

4 Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. 5 Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. 6 When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. 7 For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. 8 So there was great joy in that city.



Acts 8:25

25 After they had further proclaimed the word of the Lord and testified about Jesus, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages.







John 15:18-20

18 “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. 19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. 20 Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.



Matthew 5:10-12

"Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.





1. What are the important things that we need to understand about persecution?

a. God achieves His purpose through persecution.

b. God achieves His purpose in spite of persecution.

A photograph of ancient ruins, likely the Temple of Bel in Palmyra, featuring a long row of tall, fluted columns and a large archway in the background. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

2. How do we stand firm in the face of persecution?

Three things the disciples did to stand firm:



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Acts 2:42

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

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Acts 12:5

“So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.”



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2. They had been with Jesus.

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Acts 4:13

“When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.”

The background of the slide features a photograph of ancient stone architecture. A prominent archway is visible on the left side, supported by a series of tall, fluted columns that recede into the distance. The scene is bathed in a warm, golden light, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The overall atmosphere is one of historical grandeur and stability.

Three things the disciples did to stand firm:

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2. They had been with Jesus.
3. They were bold and fearless, full of the Holy Spirit.

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Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

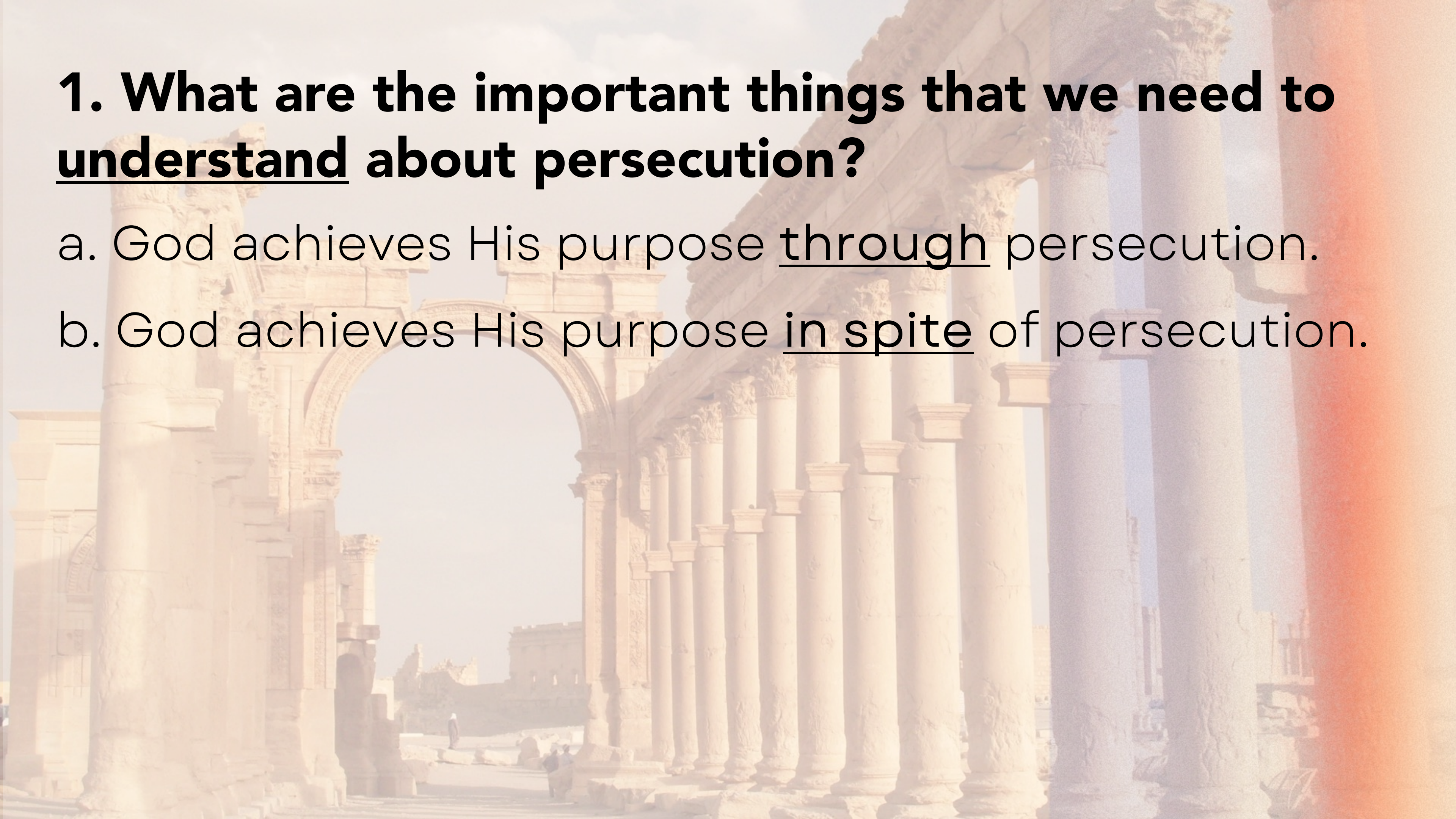
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The background of the slide features a photograph of ancient stone ruins, likely the Temple of Bel in Palmyra. It shows a series of tall, fluted columns supporting a structure with arches. The scene is bathed in a warm, golden light, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The overall tone is historical and evocative.

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