

Prophecy: What Lies Ahead

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Fourth Address: [Persecution – How Can Christians Endure it?](#)

Tonight's teaching is one of the most difficult and spiritually sobering I have ever done. It comes with a heavy weight on my heart to present this message as I felt the Holy Spirit direct me. I realize, this is not the usual message that Christians hear in church, and it's not a comfortable one. It is not my intent to scare people, but to prepare Christians for the difficult times ahead. I feel that I would be giving you a false sense of security if I didn't teach what the Bible says about Christian persecution in order that you may obey Jesus's commands in the end times to "Watch, Pray and be ready".

The timing of the rapture is not the issue here. Whether the Rapture is pre-tribulation or late tribulation, this teaching is still relevant since God has promised that Christians must be prepared to endure suffering in the end times. People who don't think God would allow Christians to suffer, simply haven't been taught what the Bible says about tribulation and suffering and are unaware of church history over the past 2,000 years. Or they have been deceived due to prosperity preachers who avoid this topic. The real church has always produced Christian soldiers of martyr spirit, and that is sadly lacking in most Western churches today.

Why have over 50 million Christians throughout history chosen to not deny Christ and face a torturous death for their faith? Why was it that early Christians went to the lions singing hymns of praise, and many people who were burned at the stake spoke historic Spirit Filled words that we can read about still? How is that today, millions of Chinese, Nigerian, former Muslims and many others risk their lives and sacrifice their freedom to voluntarily choose to follow Jesus, knowing that death likely result? How did the martyrs find the supernatural courage and strength to seemingly defy human fear and pain to endure such a fate? How were they not afraid to die?

2 Timothy 1:10 says "Our Saviour, Jesus Christ...has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." The reason Jesus is so important to the world is because He brought mankind a great new hope – the hope of life beyond the grave. He robbed death of its sting and the grave of its victory (1 Cor. 15:55).

Until Jesus came, people died without hope. Death was feared and was the enemy. No other religion, philosopher or technology can provide hope after death and true immortality. Only Jesus was able to draw back the veil and let us see beyond the grave with confidence and certainty, because He had been there, Heaven was His home. Jesus told of a future life; a life of endless bliss and joy, a life where there would be no more pain. Never before had anyone heard of such a life. What a hope! What a deliverance! No rebirth into animals, no purgatory or dread of evil spirits, no suffering. Instead He promised Heaven, Paradise, the Father's House with Many Mansions. A life with Christ in a place where there will be indescribable joy and peace.

This new life starts the moment the soul leaves the body (2 Cor. 6:8), and it last eternally. First with Christ in Paradise (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor 12:4), then the glorious Resurrection (1 Cor 15) when soul and body are reunited, and finally in God's Heaven (Revelation 21).

No wonder so many Christian martyrs gave their bodies to be beaten, burned and imprisoned. They remembered that Jesus said “do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matt. 10:28)

What if you do face losing all of your possessions on earth? What if you face starvation, and people despising and hating you? What if you face separation from your family, life imprisonment and possible torture and death if you don't deny Christ? Have you considered the cost of following Jesus and the real possibility of having to “take up your cross”?

If you've been disappointed, full of heart ache, fear, loneliness, pain and sorrow, like Lazarus, don't worry, it won't make any difference in the long run. This life is brief and it will all be made right in Eternity. Heaven will be yours soon.

It's time to begin praying for the filling of the Holy Spirit to give you the strength, power and courage to be able to withstand this kind of promised persecution.

If you are presented with a choice to accept a mark (tattoo) on your right hand or forehead, that is identified with a man having a number of 666, and if this mark is required to buy and sell, then the Bible says you must reject it, even if it costs you unspeakable suffering and death.

Remember, we should not be worried about the present. This world is not our home, we are only pilgrims on a journey to heaven (Hebrews 11:13, 13:14; Phil. 3:20; John 15:19, 17:14-16). We must obey the Word of God and change our thinking from the present to the eternal.

There is no sorrow like that of separation from friends and loved ones, especially upon death. For the unbeliever, there is no hope in a future reunion or in heaven. There is only pain and loss.

But for Christians, we know the Truth, that Jesus Himself said “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die...” (John 11:25). Then to climax it all, on the Cross Jesus makes a glorious promise to the repentant dying thief on the cross who chose to believe, saying “Today you will be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43). What a glorious hope we have, and for those who suffer for Jesus and His Word, great rewards will be received in Heaven.

Jesus Christ has invited everyone on earth to accept His offer of forgiveness for your sins if you just admit that you are sinner and believe that He is God who sacrificed His life on the Cross so that you may have His gift to you of eternal life. Who could reject such a glorious promise of Eternal life in heaven with the creator of the universe? Yet there are many who do reject it, unwilling to humble themselves to accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour and rejecting the Truth of the Bible, thinking somehow that they have found a better way, based on nothing but feelings or what the world tells them. Jesus says that the lake of fire will be their eternal destiny for rejecting Him. Let me plead with you now to accept Jesus, today is the day of Salvation.

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