

What Saith the Scripture?

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Martyrdom: They Loved Not Their Lives Unto the Death

"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death"
(Revelation 12:11).

What you are about to read, you will know **when** it is appropriate... "for the time is at hand"
(Revelation 1:3).

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Martyrdom is witnessing for the LORD Jesus Christ, where that witness causes you the forfeit of your life.

1. The word "martyr" comes from the Greek word "martus", which means "a witness" or "one who testifies", especially "one who witnesses through his death". Rev. 2:13 "I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth."
2. Death is the price you pay to give testimony for Christ. You do not seek death, of itself, merely to die. If the Holy Spirit leads you to flee, then you are not being led to seal your testimony with martyrdom. Matt. 24:16 "Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains."
3. Some are led by the Spirit to die... Luke 21:16 "And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death..." while some are led by the same Spirit to flee... Luke 21:21 "Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto."

Martyrs Are Promised the Crown of Life

1. Life is the very thing that you, the martyr, gain by the loss of your earthly tabernacle, ie. your body. Rev. 2:10 "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
2. Love of Christ is the only appropriate reason for you to endure the trial of laying down your life as a witness for the LORD Jesus. James 1:12 "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the LORD hath promised to them that love Him."
3. Like deacon Stephen, your spirit will be received by the LORD Jesus when you are martyred. Acts

7:59 "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, LORD Jesus, receive my spirit."

4. Like the Apostle Paul, your martyrdom is a gain that only those who have lived for Christ can fully appreciate. Phil. 1:21 "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

The LORD Will Avenge His Martyrs

1. Vengeance is not the job of man, but of God. Rom. 12:19 "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the LORD."

2. The days of God's vengeance on earth occur when the Antichrist unleashes his final fury upon you in his attempt to steal the divinity of the LORD Jesus. Luke 21:22 "For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled."

3. Be assured, you who are called to lay down your life for the testimony of Jesus Christ, that the LORD requires your blood to be avenged-- much as the wages of sin earn death. Luke 11:51 "From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation."

4. The LORD's wrath and fury are reserved for His enemies, who have martyred His people. Nah. 1:2 "God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserveth wrath for His enemies."

5. You will rightly call for God to avenge your martyrdom on your impenitent persecutors as you stand before the throne of God. Rev. 6:10 "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

6. Because prophecy records in advance what will be history, be assured that the impenitent murderers of your body will certainly be judged by the Righteous God. Rev. 19:2 "For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand."

God's People Can Be Shown By the Holy Spirit When They Will Be Martyred

1. The Apostle Paul knew the time of his martyrdom.

a. Acts 20:23 "Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me."

b. Acts 21:13 "Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

c. 2 Tim. 4:6 "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand."

2. The Apostle Peter knew the time of his martyrdom.

a. John 21:18-19 "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He saith unto him, Follow Me."

b. 2 Pet. 1:14-15 "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our LORD Jesus Christ hath showed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance."

3. As an end time Christian, you can also know when you will be martyred. Rev. 6:11 "And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

Jesus Is Our Example in Martyrdom

1 Tim. 6:13 "I give thee charge in the sight of God, Who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, Who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession."

The Martyrs Reward Is Gladly Placed at the Feet of Jesus

Rev. 4:10-11 "The four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created."

Love for Jesus Is the True Motivation for Martyrdom

1. True martyrdom is Christ-centered. 1 Cor. 13:3 "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

2. True martyrdom is not self-centered. Rev. 12:11 "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

Martyrs Are to Look to Jesus-- the Joy Set Before You

1. Focus on Jesus, not your martyrdom. Heb. 12:2 "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

2. Happiness comes from your endurance. James 5:11 "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the LORD; that the LORD is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

3. Praise and honour and glory of the Lord Jesus is the result of your martyrdom. 1 Pet. 1:7 "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

4. Your sufferings will beget joy when you shall shortly stand in His presence. 1 Pet. 4:13 "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

Fear is Good Only When Placed in God

1. All men ought to fear God. Is. 8:13 "Sanctify the LORD of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread."

2. To fear God more than you fear man is the same thing as to not fear man. Matt. 10:28 "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Denying Christ Is Your Alternative to Martyrdom

1. Confessing the Lord Jesus Christ is implicit to your martyrdom. Your confession has brought you your plight. Luke 12:8 "Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God."

2. If the Holy Spirit has led you to witness a good confession by the relinquishing of your life, then to refuse to lay down your life is to deny the LORD Jesus Christ. You have been promised by no greater authority than the LORD Jesus Christ that you will be denied before God, ie. "I never knew you", if you deny Him. Luke 12:9 "But he that denieth Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God."

Martyrdom Is the Price of Your Opportunity to Testify for Christ

1. Tribulation saints have more certainty of martyrdom than of deliverance. Luke 21:12 "But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for My Name's sake."

2. Escape is no longer an issue for you. Testimony for the LORD Jesus, that He alone is the only true God, is the course laid for you. Luke 21:13 "And it shall turn to you for a testimony."

3. Trust your LORD to give you the words to speak at the time of your martyrdom. Only be fully persuaded that your life and death will testify of your LORD Jesus. Regardless of how many, or who

actually, witnesses your martyrdom, your LORD Jesus sees, and is pleased. Luke 21:14 "Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer."

4. Know that the LORD Jesus has promised to give you the irresistible words of wisdom, via the Holy Spirit. Luke 21:15 "For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist."

5. Do not be surprised or confused by the identity of your betrayers. Remember that our LORD was betrayed by one of His own hand chosen disciples. Luke 21:16 "And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death."

6. You have no better testimony than to be hated by antichrist. Luke 21:17 "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake."

7. In spite of all the pictures that you may have had, of the seemingly total martyrdom of the early Church, deliverance has been the normal course throughout the rest of Church history. Luke 21:18 "But there shall not an hair of your head perish." Martyrs have been traditionally the select few. These end times are like the early Church because martyrs have again become the norm.

8. Of all times, now is the time to possess your soul in patience. Trust the LORD Jesus to work this grace in you. Luke 21:19 "In your patience possess ye your souls."

You, God's Martyrs -- Of Whom the World Is Not Worthy

1. When called by the LORD to lay down your life, to disobey would place you in prospect of the resurrection of the wicked. Heb. 11:35 "Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection."

2. Notice how simple God is concerning the unspeakable evils that befell His martyrs. Dwell not upon the manner of dying, but upon the LORD Jesus. Heb. 11:36-37 "And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented."

3. Those who murder your body are not worthy of your LORD, or you, who they have pursued to even the deserts or mountains. Heb. 11:38 "(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

4. The promise of the resurrection of the just will not be attained by you, or the other departed saints, until the last trumpet sounds towards the end of Daniel's Seventieth Week. The body of Christ will not be complete until then. Heb. 11:39-40 "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

The Power to Be a Martyr

1. Only God's grace (help) can make you capable of being a martyr. 1 Cor. 15:10 "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."
2. Believe that God calls upon you to be a fellow labourer with Him in your martyrdom. John 5:17 "But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."
3. Even when you acknowledge God's purpose within you, to walk the path of a martyr, that righteous purposing in you is of the Holy Spirit. Phil. 2:13 "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

You Are a Select Group, But ... Why Are You Here?

1. You have entered the Tribulation Week -- what is known as the Seventieth Week of Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27). You missed, what many call, the pre-tribulational rapture. I prefer to call it the [First] "Come Up Hither" -- Rev. 4:1. Either, because:

a. As a backslidden Christian you have been living in unconfessed sin. Like the foolish virgins of the LORD Jesus' parable (Matthew 25:1-13), you have been walking without the oil of the Holy Spirit. The Bridegroom came for the bride. The wise virgins entered into the feast because they kept the oil of the Holy Spirit in their lamps -- as witnessed by their walking consistently with the Word of God [Ps. 119:105 "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"]. Your obvious necessity would be to repent -- if you haven't already. 1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Or,

b. As one who has simply never truly come to the LORD Jesus Christ before the command from Heaven came to "Come Up Hither", you have never been a Christian. 1 John 2:3-4 "And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." Charles G. Finney, a famous Christian evangelist of the 19th century, used to say: "Willingness to obey Christ is to be a Christian".

2. You are about to enter the fellowship of the martyrs. Most of those who have gone before you have not earned what many have called the martyrs' crown because they were not called to martyrdom. Your opponent, the Antichrist, though he is willing to rid himself of you, cannot fully appreciate how "the wrath of man [his wrath against you] shall praise Thee [the triune God]: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou [Jehovah] restrain" (Psalm 76:10). Though your martyrdom is obviously the immediate focus of your concern, as "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7) settles upon your heart, you will be assured that this is a blessing in disguise. Rev. 14:13 "And I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the LORD from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

How Do You Prepare to Be Martyred?

1. Clear your conscience of any known sin -- any offence toward God or man -- by confessing it. Acts 24:16 "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men."
2. Keep the Word of faith in your heart and mind as much as possible. 2 Tim. 4:7 "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."
3. Mingle your thoughts with prayer. 1 Thess. 5:17 "Pray without ceasing."
 - a. Pray for the LORD's grace to keep you faithful to the end. Heb. 4:16 "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."
 - b. Pray for the LORD Jesus to be glorified by your death. Rev. 4:11 "Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created."
 - c. Pray for your murderers. Luke 23:34 "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted His raiment, and cast lots."
 - d. Claim the promises. 1 Cor. 10:13 "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."
4. Keep looking to Jesus. Heb. 12:2 "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."
5. We, your brothers and sisters in Christ, have already prayed for you. We are watching from heaven, and are looking forward to greeting you at your happy arrival home! Heb. 12:1 "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."