



**SOLID
BREAD**

A BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE END TIMES
Week 70: The Patient Endurance of the Saints
November 26, 2023
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Review:

- a. We are getting close to the end of our study in “A Biblical View of the End Times,” and I am already anticipating and thinking about our study in Jude: Acts of the Apostates.
 - b. But meanwhile, we looked last week at the ministry and message of The Three Flying Angels. Our outline was The Good News, The Current News, and the Bad News.
 1. The Good News was a brief study of the Gospel message: what it really is and what it is not.
 2. The Current News was about the demise of the false one-world religious system that will dominate from a point following The Rapture to the midpoint of The Tribulation.
 3. The Bad News was the clear announcement that, despite all pressures to do so, that anyone who took the Mark of the Beast would be eternally damned. We looked at why that was so.
 - c. Again, all of this is taking place around the midpoint of the Tribulation. We have not yet started the Bowl Judgments, and the Mark of the Beast has just debuted on the world scene.
- I. This week, I want to look at a sobering and grim passage which immediately follows what we studied last week. It’s found in **Revelation 14:12-13**.
- A. GENERAL COMMENTS:
1. The third angel’s message about the Mark of the Beast in the passage we looked at last week was directed at the unsaved, those who would choose to follow the antichrist and take his mark.
 2. This week’s passage is directed to those who have already made a decision for salvation. In **vs. 12** we see it is directed to “*the saints*.”
 3. These are the saints who: will not take the Mark of the Beast, who will not follow and support the antichrist and his policies, who will not play by the ever-more-difficult rules of the antichrist’s globalist regime, and who are doing everything they can do to survive.
 4. It is a sobering passage to consider, as it directly implies that faithful living during these future terrible times is most likely to result in death.
- B. I want to look at two main points from these two verses today: First, what it means to “patiently endure.” Secondly, I want to briefly examine the Biblical position of “death for the believer.”

1. These are two key issues that are mentioned in **vs. 12 and 13** here. While the context in this passage is FUTURE, these points have a great deal of PRESENT application for us today.

C. QUESTION: How can we understand what it means to “patiently endure?”

1. First, a connection is made here that patient endurance is necessary in severe trials.
 - a. This is clear from the context. There is the pressure to take the Mark of the Beast in order to buy or sell.
 - b. There is pressure to conform to the new world order, to worship the antichrist, and to avoid getting killed.
 - c. However, the third angel’s message made it very clear that those who do these things will be eternally damned.
 - d. In the midst of these incredible trials, the only option for the saints of this future time will be to “patiently endure.”
 - e. They have no other choice. They must do the right thing regardless of risk to self.
2. Second, “patient endurance” is found in total acceptance of God’s sovereign control over one’s life.
 - a. Job demonstrated this posture precisely when he stated in **Job 1:21**, *“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.”*
 - b. He’d had everything one could want and then he suddenly had none of it.
 - c. Job’s acceptance of God’s sovereign control was made clear in the fact that he stated God’s absolute right to permit both blessing and hardship.
 - d. In just a few words, Job demonstrated a correct worship response and a right relationship with God. He understood and he accepted that he was not in control, and that God was in complete control.
 - e. Job understood that he didn’t have any inherent rights, but instead God had the right to do what He willed. Job showed no entitlement and no posture of self-centeredness.
 - f. That’s why it says in the next verse: *“In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.”* He continued to exercise faithfulness.
 - g. This is the same posture these future Tribulation saints will have. We read in **vs. 12 of Revelation Ch. 14** that these future saints, in the midst of severe trials will *“....obey God’s commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.”*

D. Let me make some uncomfortable comments.

1. What I mean is these comments will be uncomfortable for some of you to hear because the patient endurance of future Tribulation saints, just like the patient

endurance of a great saint from ancient past, is a very different posture than you and I typically take when we face OUR trials.

- a. A REAL faith is not one that shows up when things are going well. Anyone can act the part during good times.
 - b. A REAL faith is one that shows up when things are not going well and when things are painful.
 - c. A REAL faith is one that understands trials make us more mature in Christ, and perhaps more importantly, they prove to us that we are “IN Christ” in the first place.
 - d. It’s not the good times that prove we are the Christians we claim to be, it’s the rough times that do that (“A Christian is like a teabag; he’s no good till he’s been through some hot water.”)
 - e. Our reaction to trials shows if we are really on the path to eternal glory, or if we have reason to make some changes and to get right with Jesus Christ.
 - f. This is why **James 1:2** urges us to “*Consider it pure joy whenever you face trials of many kinds.*” It goes on to say that trials “*test our faith.*” It’s trials that prove if we have the real deal or not.
 - g. As **the next verse in James** says, “*trials ultimately make us mature and complete, not lacking anything.*” This is a statement about the integrity of our faith and the assurances of future glory, and these things are priceless.
 - h. These future saints of the Tribulation will have this kind of faith and they will have this attitude in response to their trials. They will see the bigger picture and they will know their short-term pains are nothing compared to their long-term gains.
 - i. Job had precisely this same kind of faith. That’s why **Job 1:22** says, “*In all this Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.*”
 - j. That’s basically the opposite way many of us react when we face trials:
 - “How could God do this to me?”
 - “Why does God hate me so much?”
 - “This is so unfair - - what have I done to deserve this?!?”
 - k. It’s reactions like these, it’s our anger, our frustration, our resentments, and our bitterness in response to trials that show we are not demonstrating “*patient endurance.*” It raises a legitimate question: “Are we remaining faithful to Jesus?”
 - l. As in the example of Job, we show we really cannot worship God as we ought to. What we are really showing is we value our eternal faith less than our temporary comforts and conveniences. This is really a bad position to be in.
3. Thirdly, and all that said, I want to wrap up this matter by looking at FIVE ways we can exercise “*patient endurance*” during these times when the world is getting tougher and tougher to live in.

NOTE: We live in times during which we can already see the early shadows of Tribulation dynamics starting. How can we learn from these Tribulation saints as far as our own choices are concerned?

II. **Here are: FOUR Points to Faithful Living** (or “How can we ‘remain faithful to Jesus’ as these Tribulation saints will remain according to **Revelation 14:12**): **FOUR “W’s” to remember:**

A. Well-spoken (We must speak boldly the Word of God and the testimony we are called to maintain; **Cf. Revelation 6:9, et Al.**)

1. These saints of future times will always be speaking of and will always be demonstrating a correct relationship with their Lord and Savior.
2. If we are to be the same way, if our mouths will confess the true condition of our hearts. This means we must ALWAYS be “...ready for service...”
3. Two things no good service is without:
 - a. **‘Sacrificial’ Cf. Luke 9:23-25** - - You must be prepared to let go of your own interests.
 - b. **‘Selfless’ Cf. Philippians 2:3** – “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves.”
 - c. You must be prepared to take up the cause of others’ interests. Our words are empty if we cannot back up what we say with what we choose to do.

B. Waiting (We must be eagerly and consciously waiting for the arrival of our Lord and Savior)

1. **(Cf. Luke 12:35-36)** – “Be dressed for service (there’s that service thing again...) and keep your lamps burning, like servants waiting for their master to return.”
2. Waiting for their master to return is precisely the most important thing these Tribulation saints will be living for. All their burdens and all their pains and trials are focused on the promise of His return.
3. NOTE: We get too impatient with our present circumstances too easily. We hate waiting, and we despise our discomforts. It’s a sense of entitlement. We feel our needs are important and must take priority.
4. We cannot have the correct perspective in waiting if we do not have the correct perspective in who we are with respect to Jesus Christ. (“What we think when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” – AW Tozer)
5. Diligent waiting is one of the most difficult lessons to learn, however it is a clear indication of being “faithful to Jesus.”

C. Watching (**Cf. vs. 37 of Luke Ch. 12:35-36**)

1. In mentioning those who are faithfully living, they are those: “...whose master finds them watching when he comes...” (Notice “WHEN” he comes – Jesus **will** return.)

2. A proper 'watchful' attitude is one that does not question the tasks and the challenges of 'watching' itself. (Think of a guard patrolling the edges of a camp. It can be tedious. However, the task is worthy.
3. There is a RIGHT attitude to have concerning the Lord's return (**Cf. 2 Peter 3:3-4**):
"Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."
4. Here's the bottom line: Faithful living includes the surety of the Lord's return and an eager and reverent anticipation of it.
5. The Tribulation saints of this passage will be watching for their Lord's return above all else. It will be their main focus and source of endurance.

D. Willing (Cf. twice in vs. 48b of Luke Ch. 12)

1. Here's the truth. Faithful living has never been resentful living.
 - a. If we look at our circumstances begrudgingly, and maybe God as well, in the process, we are not capturing the vital spirit of what it means to have a vibrant faith.
2. Faithful living is willful living. Two important principles are outlined:
 - a. From the first one: "Are we willing to give much of what we have been given ourselves?"
 - b. (Challenge: Write a list of all you have been given: health, home, family, daily sustenance, salvation). Now ask yourself.....
3. The second one: "Are we willing to be stretched even further?"
 - a. Are you holding on too tight to something? Are you saying to God, "Enough! I've reached my limit and I'm not willing to go further?"
 - b. These Tribulation saints of **Revelation Ch. 14** WILL be giving much of what little they have, and they WILL be stretched much further than they had ever imagined they could endure.

- E. Now here's the second point from this passage in **Rev. 14** I want to visit, and it's a rather sobering one to consider. It's the statement in **vs. 13**, "*Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on,*" and it raises a second major question for us today:

1. QUESTION: "How should we as believers deal with the issue of death?"

NOTE: The most immediate effect should be a greater seriousness about God and His Word. Meantime, we all need to be reminded of what God has to say about death.... this is a brief Biblical overview.

2. **The Bible portrays physical death as an enemy.**
 - a. NOTE: We all must face this enemy
 - (**Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:22**) – "*For as in Adam all die...*"
 - (**Cf. Hebrews 9:27**) – "*And as it is appointed unto men once to die...*"
 - b. This enemy will not hold power forever.

- **(Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:26a)** *“The last enemy to be destroyed is death...”*
- Christ holds the final power over death, and death’s curse will eventually be done.

3. The Bible encourages a different perspective of death for the believer.

- a. It is a temporary state.
 - **(Cf. John 11:11)** – *“He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.”*
 - We have good reason to look forward and not be stuck in looking back
- b. It is a gateway to a better state.
 - **(Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:22b)** *“...even so in Christ all shall be made alive...”*

4. The Bible acknowledges that grieving is normal.

- a. But there is an endpoint to our grief.
 - **(Cf. Matthew 5:4)** - *“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”*
 - It's normal and healthy to grieve when we lose a loved one, or when we are facing our own death
- b. The reality is that our present grief is to be tempered by hope.
 - **(Cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13)** – *“But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.”*
 - We should not repress our grief, but include a perspective or a posture that is unique to our faith:
 - Healthy grieving depends on a proper eternal perspective.
 - Healthy grieving (for the believer), is tempered (assisted) by HOPE.
- c. God Himself feels our grief.
 - **John 11** tells the story of Lazarus's death and resurrection.
 - Jesus did not criticize the family and friends of Lazarus for weeping.
 - Jesus also wept **(Cf. John 11:35)**.
 - It is important for loved ones and friends to spend time together and to support one another.

5. The Bible declares that properly facing death is part of our growing process

- a. It makes us wiser in our present life
 - **(Cf. Ecclesiastes 7:2)** – *“It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, for death is the destiny of every man; the living should take this to heart (NIV).”*
 - Facing the truth about life and death matures us. This is the same principle we learned earlier: our spiritual growth is fertilized more in difficult times than in easy times.
 - When a loved one dies, it is valuable time to reflect on your own mortality and on your own relationship with God.

6. (And finally, as we see with the Tribulation saints in *Rev. 14:13*, those who *"...die in the Lord are blessed."*)

NOTE: How can we better understand this?

- a. With these Tribulation saints, the point is made that they have moved beyond their pain, their struggle, and their great trials. They are now at eternal peace and rest when they die.
 - If we are truly "in Christ" now, then we will not face these Tribulation trials.
 - **1 Thessalonians 1:10** says, *"...and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath."*
 - The reality of these Tribulation saints is they have a 99% chance of dying. They will die for making the RIGHT choices – not the wrong ones.
 - Understand this! Every right decision they make will have a painful and life-threatening consequence. That's why they are *"blessed"* when they die. Their immense struggle is over.
 - That is why their efforts are noted as *"labor,"* and they will be rewarded *"for their deeds."*
- b. The principle for you and I is we live even now in a fallen and difficult world. Times are tough – and they are going to get tougher.
 - When we leave this life – either by Rapture or death – we too will be blessed for we have left the struggles of this life behind us.
 - Death, again, is nothing more than a gateway to a better place and to eternal glory. We cannot measure or even imagine the joy and rewards that await us IF we live *"faithful to Jesus"* in the here and now.

