

The Bride of Christ in the End Times **(part 5)**
The Bride of Christ as a Persecuted Bride

The Heroes of faith carried the title heroes for their courage in standing strong for their faith unto death; they, as it is described in Hebrews chapter eleven, were men and women of whom the world was not worthy; they roamed over the desolate places and the mountains and in caves and caverns and holes of the earth without receiving the fulfillment of what was promised (vs. 39). No matter the hardness of the suffering they faced, they never denied their faith, believing the promise for a better life after their death. Paul says to Timothy that all who delight in piety and are determined to live a devoted and godly life in MESSIAH YAHSHUA will meet with persecution (II Tim.3:12). YAHSHUA also warned His disciples that their lives will be marked by persecution, because they didn't belong to the world. In fact He said, If you belonged to the world, the world would treat you with affection and would love you as its own. But because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, the world hates you (John 15:19). The Bride of Christ must consider a privilege to suffer for her Lord in this end time. Many Christians have suffered and are suffering persecution for a long time in ways that you and I could not endure. They have been our modern day heroes and heroines of the faith.

The end time will be a time of refining of the Bride of Christ; she must submit to Him for the complete renewing of her mind. In fact, suffering unjustly for Him positions her with the heroes of the faith of old, including our Lord YAHSHUA, the One and only true YAHWEH ELOHIM. He said, If the world hates you, know that it hated Me before it hated you (John15:18); and blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil things against you falsely on My account; be glad and supremely joyful, for your reward in heaven is great, for in this same way people persecuted the prophets who were before you (Matt. 5:10-12). One can never receive persecution as a form of joy when outside of the perfect will of YAHWEH. The persecuted church of today rejoices in suffering for her Lord, according to the account available to us concerning their faith. We see a genuine faith in their heart springing forth courage and complete surrender to her Savior. In the Western Hemisphere we resist any form of persecution in the name of freedom of religion, instead of suffering submissively for our Lord. YAHSHUA warns us that if we deny Him before men, He will also deny us before His angels (Matt. 10: 33); if we endure, we shall also reign with Him; but if we deny and disown and reject Him, He will also deny and disown and reject us (II Tim. 2:12). We are not commanded to flee persecution, but suffer it, if we are to reign with Him. Paul said, And if we are [His] children, then we are heirs also heirs of YAHWEH AND FELLOW HEIRS WITH CHRIST; only we must share His suffering if we are to share His glory, for the sufferings of this present time are not to be compared with the glory that is about to be revealed to us and in us and for us and conferred on us (Rom. 8: 17-18). The faithful church of Philadelphia was commended for not have denied the Lord, He said to her, I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept My Word and guarded My message and have not renounced or denied My name; because you have guarded and kept My word of patient endurance, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which is coming on the whole world to try those who dwell upon the earth; I am coming

quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one may rob you and deprive you of your crown (Rev. 3:8b-11).

Ready to persevere and to hold her ground patiently, the Bride of Christ will arrive safely to her eternal abode with rewards waiting her. Her goal should be that of studying the Word with eagerness to learn how to love her Lord, and suffer for Him. Our Lord was guilty of no sin, yet He was reviled and insulted, but always submissive to the will of His Father to accomplish His purpose on earth; and so we believe that by His wounds we are healed to proclaim His love and live accordingly to His example in whatever form of treatment the world gives us. If we retaliate we are denying Him in some form of self-preservation, when He commands us to rejoice and be glad with the persecution, for it carries a weight of eternal reward; for if we want to save our life, we will lose it in the end. Peter said, One is regarded favorably if, as in the sight of YAHWEH, he endures the pain of unjust sufferings (1 Peter 2:19). The genuineness of our faith will be tested through persecution and sufferings and it calls for us to remain firm and steadfast in Whom we have believed. The measure of earthly life is a short span, very short in comparison to the eternal life. Persecution that brings death will be but a short cut for us to enter our permanent place –heaven. Fear should not be the feeling existent in the Bride of Christ in face of death, for there is absolutely nothing to fear, but to rejoice as we are transferred from this life to the other- from earth to heaven. “As for me I will continue beholding Your face in righteousness; I shall be fully satisfied, when I awake beholding Your form” (Psalm 17:15).

As the Bride of Christ goes through her testing time, she must find solitude in the presence of her Master with her door shut to receive His understanding and His strength and her cleansing from all anxieties and worries; then her promised hope will be experienced while away from the noise and fear of the news, and the oil of anointing from the Holy spirit will be poured on her to strengthen and enable her to go through the road of persecution and suffering fighting the good fight with joy in her heart. In this phase of our peregrination on earth it is of absolute importance to spend time alone with YAHSHUA so we can build each other up in faith and perseverance, enduring the test of time.

Run with confidence the race before you girded with His truth, redeeming the time, for your redemption is near, very near. Let not the turbulence of the storm sink you in worries and anxieties to the point of losing your hope and denying His faithfulness to you. What is there of more importance to the Bride of Christ than to be found faithful when she sees Him face to face? Your life, you must not preserve by denying Him, or you will lose it in the process. The counsel of the Lord will guide us to His heavenly place, where He is awaiting us; our flesh is weak and frail, but He is our Strength and our Rock in times of trouble and the testing of our faith. In **persecution** we are blessed with all the spiritual blessings available for us; in **suffering** with and for Him we are promised to reign with Him; in **persevering in the faith** we will be delivered from all harm that will come on this earth; in **faithfulness**, we will be rewarded and that is glory to me!