

Wednesday in the Word
Digging Deeper
July 27, 2022
The Martyrs

Revelation 6:9-11 KJVS

[9] And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: [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? [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.

Revelation 17:6-7 KJVS

And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration (wonder)

Revelation 20:4 KJVS

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Matthew 10:28-32 KJVS

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. t [29] Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. [30] But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. [31] Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. [32] Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

It seems nothing can surpass the evil cruelty of man. We modern American Christians know little of persecution, much less martyrdom. We must speak for Christ and when we do we may suffer ignorance, rebuttal or insult. In this current culture as issues and beliefs turn ever more away from godliness we still stand for biblical Christian principles. Sharing Jesus is tolerated. Offering prayer is usually acceptable. Lovingly handing out correction is most often not well received. This time of mankind is growing constantly more set in it's sinful ways and when we stand in the path of righteousness we are accused of intolerance, hypocrisy and insensitivity. The American tide is turning against Christ and His followers. The news and social media popularize evil and in recent times Christians are erroneously blamed. It has come to the point where supporting life may result in death or destruction, especially when we vocalize our beliefs. We truly desire to share love and acceptance but by our very nature we represent everything antagonistic to current thinking. As the USA has historically been tolerant of religious belief and indeed was founded upon such a pillar, things are changing. Follow politics for one day and this

is evident. Reports flow in each day of persecution in the forms of bombings and shootings. Other free countries share similar stances and impending changes but many nations will not tolerate the gospel or its related issues in any way. Christians daily suffer the removal of their literature, the destruction of their churches and meeting places, the loss of freedoms, the imprisonment of their leaders, threats and beatings of their families, and in many cases they endure brutal death. Hard to comprehend in our modern world but as we study God's Word and apply it faithfully to our lives today we all know that hard times are coming our way. Looking to tonight's passage we are present through the writings of the Apostle John as Jesus our Lord opens the fifth seal binding the scroll of the Wrath of God that will descend upon mankind in the end of days. Most of us agree these events are moments away in God's timetable. First let's focus on these specific martyrs. That these souls were under the altar emphasizes that their life blood was poured out as an offering to God. The idea is drawn from Leviticus 4:7: "And he shall pour the remaining blood at the base of the altar of the burnt offering". The many bloody offerings in Leviticus spoke directly to the final sacrifice of Christ. All His blood was spilled to cover all our sin. But His martyrs share in His sacrifice. Philippians 3:10, 1 Peter 4:13. So these martyrs have their blood mixed with His to continue His Sufferings till His time is full. It is probably best to see this as the cry of all martyrs for God's truth, not merely believers persecuted by the coming world leader, the first horseman of Revelation. God's Word is full of those who suffered for His glory. 2 Timothy 3:12, Acts 7:59-60, Matthew 23:31-37, Hebrews 11:35-37. Scripture records many martyrs but history records more. If you have at all suffered for the cause of Christ, Matthew 5:10-12, then understand the honorable fellowship to which you belong. It is highly recommended that you read and study Foxe's Book of Martyrs. Starting with the Apostles of Christ, all of whom were martyred for Him with the exception of John who suffered greatly, John Foxe compiled as many accounts as existed until his publishing in 1563 of those who gallantly went to their deaths for their Savior. He recounts the brutal first centuries of Roman rule on through the horrors of the catholic church over protestant believers under the throne of Mary of England. Foxe's Book is replete with the collected stories of Christians who were dragged behind horses, stretched on the racks, burned upon the private parts with red hot brass bowls, eyes, ears, scalps and privates violently removed, impaled, hung, whipped, beaten, burned at the stake, 'baptized' in boiling oil, crucified, dragged naked through broken shards, delivered to wild beasts and on and on. Names and dates are provided. This is no fictional tale but a horrific truth. By the thousands, believers and their families were brutalized for one crime only. That of a confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Many were given the opportunity to renounce Christ and sacrifice to false gods yet would not! On horror of death these most intrepid faithful would not turn on the One Who promised them eternal life. During the time of Foxe's writing the injustices were performed by so called believers of a different church. Christian persecuting Christian! As we see these martyrs awaiting justice in Revelation 6 they are clothed in white. The required entrance attire for heaven. They wait as Jesus informs them that many more would join them. This book, the Bible, is truly sweet to the taste but bitter to the belly. Revelation 10:9-10. Our lovely and sweet eternal life in Christ comes at high cost. His blood, martyrs blood and the bitter destruction of those who would reject so great a salvation. Beg God for His protection over your brothers and sisters as they share His Name. Many in places where such action is 'punished' in cruel ways. Beg God even more to save those whom He will so that they may escape a fate worse than death. John 3:17-20.