

The People of the Apocalypse  
“The Martyrs”

Throughout the history of the faithful, martyrdom was prevalent as “Foxes Book of Martyrs” accurately chronicles, for the church of Jesus Christ has experienced an almost countless number of saints being put to death for their unwavering faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

However, as the end of the age draws near, martyrs are increasing and as Daniel 11:32-35 indicates, after the abomination of desolation (Matthew 24:15), when the Antichrist demands world worship (Revelation 13), there will be many who will not take the mark of the beast and will consequently be put to death for their faithfulness to the Lord:

*“And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil many days.” (Daniel 11:33)*

*“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.” (Revelation 6:9)*

These specific martyrs are inquiring of the Lord:

*“How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” (Revelation 6:10)*

They want to know how long it will be until the Lord judges those who are responsible for their deaths indicating that God’s Day of the Lord judgment of those responsible, who are still alive, had not yet begun.

That one of the seven seals is fully devoted to these end of the age martyrs, reveals the prominence of martyrdom during the close of this age when the Antichrist has his way in the world causing God’s people to be slaughtered for their obedience to the word of God, and their Christian testimony!

The Lord’s response to these martyrs supplies additional information concerning end of the age martyrs:

*“And white robes were given unto every one of them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.” (Revelation 6:11)*

According to this text, they are given a three-fold response:

1. They are given white robes like their brethren the raptured and resurrected saints who also appear in heaven (Revelation 7:9, 13, 14).
2. They are told to rest yet for a little [brief] season.
3. They are told that there is a certain predetermined number of their “*fellow servants*” that will have the high privilege of being martyred for the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ, just as most of the apostles and many prophets and saints of past ages have accomplished in their service for their Lord!

The book of the Revelation records the Holy Spirit-filled warfare principles of these end of the age martyrs:

*“For the accuser of our brethren [Satan] is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.” (Revelation 12:10b, 11)*

There are three key elements to having victory over Satan:

1. The overcoming warrior will rely totally upon the atoning sacrificial Blood of the Lamb which supplies the necessary cleansing power (I John 1:9) to give the saint the required personal holiness needed to stand blameless before the throne of God victorious over the accusations of Satan

2. The word of their testimony is the result of personal holiness which provides the saint with access into the very presence of Lord (Hebrews 12:14).
3. They loved not their lives unto the death describes their attitude of complete selflessness totally giving themselves as *“Sheep unto the slaughter”* for the glory of their Lord as was the Apostle Paul’s desire: *“That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering being made conformable unto His death.”* (Philippians 3:10)

The next incident of martyrdom in Scripture supplies much detail and is the most graphic as the *“two witnesses”* of (Revelation 11:3-13) are brutally martyred after their ministry on earth is ended:

*“The beast...shall make war with them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.”* (Revelation 11:7,8)

Although, they will have a powerful ministry of judgment in the earth during the last half of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week, they will come to a violent end as they die at the hands of *“The beast”* [Antichrist] being martyred and subsequently left lying in the streets of Jerusalem.

*“And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.”* (Revelation 11:9, 10)

At this point it appears that *“the beast”* has won the day. All the world is viewing the corpses of these mighty prophets of God as the electronic media beams around the globe the literal proof of this supposed victory of their ruthless leader, the Antichrist.

There is a worldwide party atmosphere including the almost unthinkable *“sending of gifts”* as though the most celebrated event of that time has taken place! But, as the Scripture records, God always has the last word and He is not finished with His two servants just yet!

*“And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither, And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.”*(Revelation 11:11, 12)

The Lord miraculously resurrects His servants and *“Great fear fell upon them which saw them”* indicating the world will also witness the climactic ending of this event with the natural response of fear, for they in essence have shown their approval of the deaths of these two servants of God demonstrated by their worldwide celebration during the previous 3-1/2 days.

*“And the same hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant [remainder] were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.”* (Revelation 11:13)

The Lord concludes this most significant episode of martyrdom in Scripture by sending an earthquake which destroys a tenth of the city of Jerusalem resulting in the deaths of seven thousand.

The word translated *“remnant”* literally means remainder indicating that those who were not killed *“were affrighted”*, or terrified meaning thrown into a state of great fear. Later, during the Day of the Lord, just before the *“seven last plagues”* (Revelation 15:1) which are the seven vial judgments, there are more martyrs seen in heaven:

*“And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast [the Antichrist], and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, GREAT AND MARVELLOUS ARE THY WORKS, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, JUST AND TRUE ARE THY WAYS, THOU KING OF SAINTS. WHO SHALL NOT FEAR THEE, O Lord, AND GLORIFY THY NAME? FOR ALL NATIONS SHALL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE THEE; for Thy judgments are made manifest.” (Revelation 15:2-4)*

These glorified saints appear in heaven during the time the Antichrist and his minions are still active in the earth. The great tribulation is over and the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel has ended with the sounding of the seventh trumpet and these glorified saints “*stand on the sea of glass*” which is “*before the throne*” (Revelation 4:6) of God. They are singing “*The song of Moses*” which was first sung by Moses and the children of Israel (Exodus 15:1-19) after the Lord miraculously wrought the victory over Pharaoh and his army.

At this juncture in God’s end of the age plan, the Lord Jesus Christ has redeemed Israel:

*“And the Redeemer shall come to Zion and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.” (Isaiah 59:20)*

And, they also are singing “*The song of the Lamb*” with the lyrics to this song being listed here in Revelation 15:3,4 tying together and harmonizing the Old and New Covenant. The words are the expected responses to the “*everlasting gospel*” heralded by an angel to:

*“Them that dwell on the earth...Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” (Revelation 14:6, 7)*

Three specific commands are given in the “*everlasting gospel*”:

1. Fear God
2. Give glory to Him
3. Worship Him

Three expected responses are sung by these martyrs in “*The song of the Lamb*”:

1. Who shall not fear Thee O Lord?
2. Who shall not give glory to Thy name?
3. For all nations shall come and worship before Thee

However, those who experience the supernatural judgment of God, when given the opportunity to repent, instead, do the exact opposite remaining openly defiant, rebellious and unrepentant:

*“And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood; which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk; Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.” (Revelation 9:10,11)*

Although the martyrs of Revelation 15:2-4 are not specifically identified, they are considered to be 70<sup>th</sup> Week Jewish martyrs because they appear at the end of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week immediately after Israel is redeemed and they are singing the Old Covenant victory song of Moses which celebrates the deliverance Israel.

After the seven trumpets end, which are the first series of plagues or judgments, those who dwell upon the earth are unrepentant and the last series of plagues/judgments, the seven vials begin. The focus now turns to the judgment of those who are responsible for martyring the faithful:

*“The men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.” (Revelation 16:1)*

*“And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I*

*heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and was, and shall be, because Thou hast judged thus, For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments.” (Revelation 16:4-7)*

But, the earth dwellers do not respond favorably to these last plagues:

*“And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give Him glory...And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.” (Revelation 16:9, 11)*

They have now been given three opportunities to turn to God:

1. After the great tribulation the angel preaches the everlasting gospel to the world (Revelation 14:6,7)
2. After the seven trumpets at the end of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> Week they are unrepentant (Revelation 9:10, 11)
3. After the seven vials at the end of the Day of the Lord they remain unrepentant (Revelation 16:9, 11)

The next Scripture that refers to martyrs is found in Revelation 17:

*“And I saw the woman [MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH] drunken with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her I wondered with great admiration.” (Revelation 17:6)*

The woman in this passage most likely represents the false religious system of Romanism/Roman Catholicism which has been responsible for martyring countless saints throughout the 1600 years of its existence. Notice, these are specifically called *“The martyrs of Jesus”* which likely refers to those saints who are part of His body the church.

The woman in Revelation 17 is introduced and described along with her willing partner in crime *“the beast”*, upon which she is sitting becoming the means of her transport. The beast represents those political kingdoms who were and are willing accomplices in the martyrdom of the faithful and the coming mega-beast kingdom, the Antichrist and his ten nation empire.

The woman’s destruction is prophesied and in the concluding verse of chapter eighteen this fitting summary is recorded:

*“And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.”*

This underscores and fully belies the justifiable cause for her violent destruction! But, the Lord is not finished condemning her murderous acts:

*“After these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God. 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.” (Revelation 19:1, 2)*

The multitudes in heaven, the glorified saints, now take part in the rejoicing after this number one enemy of God’s children has been judged! This heavenly celebration continues as all of heaven joins in proclaiming the now famous halleluia chorus found in this passage (Revelation 19:1-4).

So, not only are those men who take the identification of the beast responsible for the martyrdom of God’s end of the age servants, but the established world religious system, Romanism or Roman Catholicism, is justifiably destroyed for her part in the killing of God’s servants during the church age!

The last time martyrs are seen in the Scripture occurs at the very beginning of the Millennium:

*“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.” (Revelation 20:4)*

One of the methods of martyrdom used during the end of the age, the now familiar beheading, is presently [2007] being used by another religious enemy of Christianity, the radical Muslims. This may well be the religious system in control after Roman Catholicism is destroyed by God, through the agency of the *“ten horns kings”* indicated in (Revelation 17:16).

As the prophetic Scripture is surveyed, it becomes relatively clear that the martyrdom of the faithful will be commonplace during the end of the age becoming the rule rather than the exception. While martyrdom is the outworking of Satan’s murderous minions on earth, in reality, it results in the most glorious and victorious home-going of the saint as he faithfully gives all to his Lord by *“spending and being spent”* (II Corinthians 12:15) for the glory of God!