

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO DO NOT BECOME OFFENDED AT JESUS FOR BEING REJECTED, ABANDONED, AND MARTYRED FOR THEIR FAITH

It will surely come to pass, sooner or later, when we have truly died to everything important to us that defined who we used to be before we became saved, it is only then God can and will greatly use us for His glory and His “eternal” purposes to prevail. Only then will His Ekklesia—His “called out” ones—be able to produce the proper and the abundant “fruit” God has determined that those who follow in the footsteps of Jesus will produce. Because we, like John the Baptist, must decrease so His Holy Spirit can increase in us.

And, speaking of John the Baptist, a forerunner preparing the way for the first coming of Jesus Christ, Jesus said of John the Baptist in Matthew 11:11, that among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist. Yet he who is least in the *kingdom of heaven* is greater than he.

However, when it came time for John the Baptist to die because he had indeed fulfilled God’s purpose for his life and his earthly ministry had come to an end, Jesus did, in fact, allow John the Baptist to be beheaded by King Herod, even though Jesus and John were relatives and grew up together as children.

In addition, we must remember it was John the Baptist who declared Jesus was the Lamb of God in John 1:29, when he proclaimed, “*Behold! The LAMB of GOD who TAKES AWAY the SIN OF THE WORLD!*” (NKJV) (emphasis added).

Nevertheless, when it came time for John the Baptist to die and leave this world, John couldn’t comprehend why Jesus would let him actually be martyred.

In fact, this is why John the Baptist sent two of his disciples to Jesus to ask Him, “*Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?*” (Matthew 11:3 and Luke 7:19, NKJV)

To which Jesus replied to the two disciples John had sent to Him, “*Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them. And*

BLESSED IS HE who is not OFFENDED because of ME.” (Luke 7:22–23, NKJV) (emphasis added).

What Jesus was saying to John the Baptist was this: He was telling John the Baptist, and us, to not become offended at Him because of our trials and tribulations, even unto death.

This is why Jesus says to us through the apostle John in Revelation 14:12–13, after He tells us about the fall of Babylon and what will happen to those who worship the beast, his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name the following:

“Here is the PATIENCE of the SAINTS; here are THOSE who KEEP the COMMANDMENTS of GOD and THE FAITH of JESUS. Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, ‘Write: “BLESSED are THE DEAD WHO DIE IN THE LORD FROM NOW ON.” ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may REST FROM THEIR LABORS, and THEIR WORKS FOLLOW THEM.’” (Rev. 14:12–13, NKJV) (emphasis added).

And, Jesus tells us, in Revelation 20:6, another reason why those of us who die in the Lord from now on will be blessed. We are His saints who keep the commandments of God and have faith in Him. Jesus says to us in Revelation 20:6, the following:

“BLESSED and HOLY is HE who HAS PART in the FIRST RESURRECTION. Over such the SECOND DEATH has NO POWER, but THEY SHALL BE PRIESTS OF GOD and OF CHRIST, and SHALL REIGN WITH HIM A THOUSAND YEARS.” (Rev. 20:6, NKJV) (emphasis added).

Yet many believers in the body of Christ will become offended at God when they realize He will allow us to go through trials and tribulations, including the *Great Tribulation*, for His name’s sake. We must be willing to drink from the same “cup of suffering” and follow in the footsteps of Jesus, who was willing to lay His life down for “a cause greater than Himself.”

This is why Jesus tells us in John 12:25, *“He who LOVES HIS LIFE WILL LOSE IT, and HE WHO HATES HIS LIFE IN this WORLD will keep it FOR ETERNAL LIFE.”* (NKJV) (emphasis added).

And, so it is with us. When the purpose for which our heavenly Father created us before the foundation of the world is fulfilled and our time is up to be on this earth, only then will He call us out of this world and we shall die a *physical* death. This truth is substantiated in First Chronicles 28:20 when King David told his son Solomon, “...*Be strong and of good courage, and do it; do not fear nor be dismayed, for the Lord God—my God—will be with you. He will not LEAVE YOU nor FORSAKE YOU, UNTIL you have FINISHED ALL THE WORK FOR THE SERVICE OF THE HOUSE OF THE LORD.*” (NKJV) (emphasis added).

And, this is the reason, as we are told in Matthew 27:46, why Jesus cried out with a loud voice to His Father about the ninth hour when He was on the cross at Calvary, saying, “*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*” that is, ‘*My God, My God, why have You FORSAKEN Me?*’” (NKJV) (emphasis added).

For you see, Jesus had fulfilled His purpose; He had accomplished all that His Father had sent Him to the earth for when He spoke these heart-wrenching words.

So did God really forsake Jesus when He had chosen to drink from His “cup of suffering” in order to fulfill the very reason He was sent to the earth by our heavenly Father, to do the will of His heavenly Father?

No, because Jesus knew this is what His Father required of Him *before* the foundation of the world.

Yet for Jesus, John the Baptist, and many others who have followed in their footsteps and died for “a cause greater than themselves,” at that very moment in their final hour on this earth, when they were faced with unimaginable and excruciating agony, it may have felt as if He had forsaken them. So, it is with us as we go through our various trials and tribulations. God uses His refining fire and allows us to experience persecution and afflictions in our lives in order to ensure we will be crucified with Christ and die to ourselves for this reason: We can glorify Him and fulfill our destinies He created us for before one of our days on this earth ever came to be for His good pleasure and for His glory.

In fact, God will often use those who are closest to us, our family members, to refine us through hurt, betrayal, and rejection. Jesus warns us ahead of time of this fact in the following Scriptures:

“For I have come to ‘set a man AGAINST his father, a daughter AGAINST her mother, and a daughter-in-law AGAINST her mother-in-law’; and ‘A MAN’S ENEMIES WILL BE THOSE OF HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD.’ He who loves father or mother MORE THAN ME IS NOT WORTHY OF ME. And he who loves son or daughter MORE THAN ME IS NOT WORTHY OF ME.” (Matt. 10:35–37, NKJV) (emphasis added).

“Now BROTHER WILL DELIVER UP BROTHER TO DEATH, and a FATHER HIS CHILD; and CHILDREN WILL RISE UP AGAINST PARENTS and CAUSE THEM TO BE PUT TO DEATH. And YOU WILL BE HATED BY ALL FOR MY NAME’S SAKE. But HE WHO ENDURES TO THE END WILL BE SAVED. When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes. ‘A DISCIPLE IS NOT ABOVE HIS TEACHER, NOR A SERVANT ABOVE HIS MASTER. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have CALLED THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE BEELZEBUB, HOW MUCH MORE WILL THEY CALL THOSE OF HIS HOUSEHOLD! Therefore DO NOT FEAR THEM. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. (Matt. 10:21–26, NKJV) (emphasis added).

And, God’s Word specifically tells us that any branch grafted into the Tree of Life—who is *the Word*—that does not produce the proper “fruit” will be put through God’s refining fire.

Therefore, God will cut off persons, places, or things from us so we can bear much “fruit” for His purposes and His “eternal” glory to prevail. Yet if we do not listen to His instructions and make a course correction as we are convicted by the Holy Spirit, and we

continue to not produce the “proper” fruit for God’s kingdom and His glory, then we will be “cut off” from being His people. We will be cast into the *lake of fire* if we do not repent and turn from our wicked ways before we die.

For those who hold fast to their faith and “overcome” until we take our last breath or Jesus returns, we will be granted the opportunity to eat from the Tree of Life located in Paradise. We must keep our focus on the prize and finish the race which is set before us based on the words from our Master in the following Scriptures:

*“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who **OVERCOMES** [G3528: *nikaō*: to subdue (literally or figuratively): conquer, overcome, prevail, get the victory] I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the **PARADISE** [G3857: *paradeisos*: a park, that is, (specifically) an Eden (place of future happiness, “paradise”)] of God.”* (Rev. 2:7, NKJV) (emphasis added).

*“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who **OVERCOMES** [G3528: *nikaō*: to subdue (literally or figuratively): conquer, overcome, prevail, get the victory] shall NOT be HURT by the **SECOND DEATH.**”* (Rev. 2:11, NKJV) (emphasis added).