

Armies of Angels

by Tricia Berg

*Praise the Lord, you angels, you mighty ones who carry out His plans, listening for each of His commands. Yes, praise the Lord, you armies of angels who serve Him and do His will! Praise the Lord, everything He has created, everything in all His kingdom. **Let all that I am praise the Lord.** Psalm 103:20-22*

*"You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and You preserve all of them; and **the host of heaven worships You.**" Nehemiah 9:6*

I can't help but think of Lucifer, the bright morning star, among that great crowd of the heavenly host in worship, thinking in his inner being that he's the one who deserves worship--the created being thinking that he's better in every (or ANY) way, more worthy than the One who created him (or worthy at ALL apart from Him), able in his own mind to overpower Him (and to WANT to)?!! Talk about deluded and ungrateful!!! It's a disgusting, horrific thought. What's worse, he takes 1/3 of the heavenly host WITH him in his final departure! How unthinkable!

Worship of self is idolatry. Worship of anyone other than God, even our own version of Him that doesn't line up with who He said He is, is idolatry. Loving anyone or anything more than God is idolatry (that includes ourselves, our families, money, fame, pleasure, etc.)

*Moreover, the word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, raise a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, Thus says the Lord GOD: "**You were the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.** You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle; and crafted in gold were your settings and your engravings. On the day that you were created they were prepared. **You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you.** In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned; so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. **Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom***

for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you. By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries; so I brought fire out from your midst; it consumed you, and I turned you to ashes on the earth in the sight of all who saw you. All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have come to a dreadful end and shall be no more forever." Ezekiel 28:11-19

"How you are fallen from heaven, **O Day Star, son of Dawn!** How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! **You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'** But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit. Those who see you will stare at you and ponder over you: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world like a desert and overthrew its cities, who did not let his prisoners go home?'" Isaiah 14:12-17

There will be a final "showdown" between Satan and God, and each of us needs to have a solid, intimate knowledge of and relationship with God before then. There will be great signs and wonders that deceive everyone whose name is not written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Whoever takes the mark and worships the beast will become an official "child of the devil" and receive an "inheritance with him" in the Lake of Fire forever (as opposed to the children of God, who go to be with Him forever and receive rewards for their faithfulness, as described in the letters to the churches and throughout the Bible.)

And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a **great red dragon**, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. **His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth.** And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. Revelation 12:3-4

And **war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.** And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was **thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.** And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our

God. And they have **conquered** him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they **loved not their lives even unto death**. Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and **you who dwell in them!** But woe to you, O earth and sea, for **the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!**" Revelation 12:7-12

One of its heads seemed to **have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled** as they **followed** the beast. And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?" And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for **forty-two months**. It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, **those who dwell in heaven**. Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain. If anyone has an ear, let him hear: If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints. Revelation 13:3-10

The beast performs **great signs**, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was **wounded by the sword and yet lived**. And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the **image of the beast might even speak** and might cause those who would not **worship** the image of the beast to be slain. Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be **marked on the right hand or the forehead**, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. Revelation 13:13-17

Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, **proclaiming himself to be God**. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth

*and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. **The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.** But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the **firstfruits** to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-13*

I became aware last week that a well-loved and respected Bible teacher and preacher, John MacArthur, has stated that people who take the mark can repent and be saved. He defended his verbal statement in an article on his website here: <https://www.gty.org/library/Blog/B131030> If you would like to read my letter to Mr. MacArthur in response to his statement, you may download a pdf of it here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ujXCTcBsXnmaCSGTmQ_YW1XStuypuQcR

It grieves me greatly to write such a letter, but even more so to stand by while people are misled, potentially to their eternal detriment.

Even if we believe, as Mr. MacArthur does, that the entire Church will be in heaven throughout the entire tribulation, we should still care about those left to endure it--but that brings me to my next point. Many say everyone who believes in Jesus prior to that time will be removed from the earth before the start of "Daniel's 70th week," (Dan. 9:24) a/k/a "Jacob's time of trouble." (Jer. 30) I understand the Church is a new entity and this age is an interruption in the prophetic calendar, but we are grafted in to the blessings of Israel (Rom. 11) and "children of Abraham" through faith. (Rom. 2:29, Rom. 9:6-8) We are being made into "one new man" and "one flock." (Eph. 2:11-22, John 10:16)

I agree that the "open door" in Rev. 4:1 is an allusion to the one in Rev. 3:7-8, and that Rev. 4:1-2 is strikingly similar to 1Thess. 4:16-17. However, what about the door in Matt. 25:1-13? ONLY those who were READY with "oil in their lamps" (and they all started out with lamps and oil) go through that door before it is closed by Jesus, just as He said only HE is able to do in Rev. 3:7. That is a quote from Isaiah 22:20-24, which is also referenced in 2 Timothy 2:19-22 (vessels of honor). Also see Proverbs 25:4-5. It's actually quite interesting to see how many times Jesus quotes Proverbs 25. (Prov. 25:6-10 - Luke 14:8-11, Matt. 5:25, Matt. 18:15, Matt. 12:36-37, Matt. 25:41-46, Matt. 13:41-43; Paul also quoted Prov. 25:21-22 in Rom. 12:20.)

God's word is a light for our path and a lamp for our feet. (Psa. 119:105) We need to hear the same word through which we came to faith if we want to recognize our Shepherd's voice and FOLLOW Him. (Rom. 10:17, John 10:1-16) We need to do what He says if we want to enter the kingdom. (Matt. 7:13-29) The word of God illuminates the narrow way that leads to the narrow door to the kingdom. (John 8:12, Eph. 5:3-20, 1John 1:5-10) If we wander off that path, then we are on the *broad path that leads to destruction*--like salt that has lost its saltiness and is trampled--like a branch that didn't abide in the vine, so it withers and is taken away to be burned. (Matt. 5:13-16, John 15:6, Rev. 11:1-2)

Food for thought: If we entered the kingdom the moment we believed, then how is it a path, a race, a fight? (2Tim. 4:7) Why do we still hope for it and need to endure? (Titus 2:11-14, Heb. 10:35-39) Why is everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord *saved*, but not everyone who calls Jesus "Lord, Lord" *enters the kingdom*? (Rom. 10:13, Matt. 7:21)

*Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar **and those who worship there**, but do not measure the court **outside** the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will **trample** the holy city for **forty-two months**." Revelation 11:1-2*

Notice how Jesus connects all of these ideas (persecution, salt, throwing out something useless, trampling, shining light, not hiding) in the Sermon on the Mount:

*"Blessed are those who are **persecuted** for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others **revile you and persecute you** and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for **your reward is great in heaven**, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. **You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.** You are the **light of the world**. A city set on a hill **cannot be hidden**. Nor do people light a **lamp** and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, **let your light shine before others**, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." Matthew 5:10-16*

Jesus teaches that He desires faithfulness in His servants, for which they will be rewarded. As He said above, He doesn't want anyone hiding their light under

a bushel. Remember, the Parable of the Talents (below) immediately follows the Parable of the Ten Virgins. Both parables are about entering the kingdom of God--not being saved--no one who is unsaved can do anything to gain entrance. The people in these parables are all believers, His servants. Judgment always BEGINS with God's own people, followed by His wrath on unbelievers. (1Cor. 11:30-32) Note that the Master dealing with His servants in the parable takes place prior to the "great white throne" judgment in Rev. 20:11-15, and prior to the millennial reign of Christ. Even before the judgment preceding the millennium in Rev. 20:4-6, certain people are already present and have been given authority to judge. (Matt. 19:28)

For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. 1 Peter 4:17-19

*"For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and **hid** his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been **faithful** over a little; I will set you over much. Enter **into the joy of your master**.' And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been **faithful** over a little; I will set you over much. **Enter into the joy of your master**.' He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So **take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance.***

But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 25:14-30

And there's more. Jesus said that the branch that doesn't abide in Him (which we do by loving Him, which in turn we do by obeying Him - John 14:15-24) will be taken away and burned. This goes against "whoever comes to me I will not cast out" (John 6:37) unless we think of the burning as being the "fires of affliction" for purification and refinement instead of the Lake of Fire? (Isa. 48:10-11, Dan. 11:32-36, 1Pet. 1:6-7, 1Pet. 5:6-11, 1Cor. 3:11-18) (I can't say for sure--it's not something anyone would want to go through anyway, but I wouldn't take chances--be ready at all times, like Jesus and Paul said - Matt. 24:42, Luke 21:34-36, 1Thess. 5:4-11, Philipp. 3:7-21, 1Cor. 9:24-27.) We don't produce the fruit of our own power, but it is His Spirit within us who does so when we abide. (Gal. 5:16-25, Rom. 6:20-23, Eph. 5:11-12, Philipp. 1:10-11, Heb. 12:11-29) Jesus also said that by abiding in Him, our joy would be full--just like the servant above who entered (through the open door like the five wise virgins in the parable before it?) into the joy of His master.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. **Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away**, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. **Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit**, for apart from me you can do nothing. **If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you**, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you **bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples**. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. **If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you**, that my joy may be in you, and **that your joy may be full**. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. **You are my friends if you do what I command you**. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. **You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide**, so that whatever you ask the

*Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another. "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but **because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.** Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also **persecute** you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me." John 15:1-21*

If you read Rev. 2-3, the promise to be kept out of this time ("hour") of trial (Rev. 3:10, Rev. 17:12) is made to those who have already endured severe persecution, so no further "testing" is required of them--and even they must "hold fast to their crowns" until Jesus comes. (Rev. 3:7-13) Believers whose love has waned or who are lukewarm toward God need to wake up and serve Him alone instead of blending in and going along with the world around them. If they don't, then they may find themselves on the wrong side of that closed door. (Rev. 2:1-7, Rev. 2:8-11, Rev. 2:12-17, Rev. 2:18-28, Rev. 3:1-6, Rev. 3:14-22, 1John 2:15-17)

Jesus sent His angel to John, telling him to write down all seven letters (and everything he was shown) and put them in a book to be read to each church, because it is all applicable to every believer--thus it says "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the **churches**" at the end of each letter. (Rev. 1:1-3, 11) There is even a blessing for reading and hearing the words of the book (contrary to what many teach, saying it's too hard to understand and dangerous or a waste of time to even try.) The blessing is repeated and applied to those who keep (heed) the words of the book at the end, where there is also a curse for anyone who adds to or takes away from its words (events, warnings, promises, etc.) (Rev. 22:7, Rev. 22:18-19)

Some say everyone will endure the "hour of trial" despite Rev. 3:10 clearly saying otherwise, and the reference to "those who dwell in heaven" during that time. (Rev. 12:12, Rev. 13:6) They say that Jesus "can't" return once [in the clouds] to gather His [called, chosen and faithful] and again in wrath against His enemies--but they haven't studied their Bibles very carefully. Jesus returns with the armies of heaven, who fit the description a few verses describing His bride just a few verses earlier.

*They will **make war** on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and **those with him are called and chosen and faithful.**" Revelation 17:14*

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for **the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure**"— **for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints...** 11 Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And **the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.** ...19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to **make war** against him who was sitting on the horse **and against his army.** Revelation 19:6-19

God's people do not suffer HIS wrath (the "Day of the Lord"), but He has indicated in the Bible that there will be signs in the sun, moon and stars that will form a sort of "cut-off" point between "tribulation" and "wrath [of God]."

*"Immediately **after the tribulation** of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken." Matthew 24:29*

*"And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, **before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.**" Joel 2:30-31 (Also see the rest of Joel 2, Isa. 13 and Isa. 24:17-23.)*

This is also verified by the fact that at the fifth seal, severe persecution of the saints is underway, but at the sixth seal, the inhabitants of the earth recognize that the wrath of God has begun.

*When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, **until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.** Revelation 6:9-11*

When He opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the **sun became black as sackcloth, the whole moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth** as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, "**Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?**" Revelation 6:12-17

God's people will be in their chambers (John 14:2-3), unable to enter the temple in heaven while His wrath is poured out on the earth. They will return WITH Jesus to put an end to the final war. (When Satan brings an army against the holy city at the end of the millennium when he is released for a short time, fire comes down from heaven to destroy it--Jesus has been ruling on earth at that time during the seventh "1,000-year-day" Sabbath. Rev. 20:7-10, Zech. 14:6-21 and many others)

Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the fury has passed by. For behold, the LORD is coming out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth will disclose the blood shed on it, and will no more cover its slain. Isaiah 26:20-21

Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, who do his just commands; seek righteousness; seek humility; perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of the LORD. Zephaniah 2:3

After this I looked, and the sanctuary of the tent of witness **in heaven** was opened, and out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues, clothed in pure, bright linen, with golden sashes around their chests. And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the **wrath of God** who lives forever and ever, and the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and **no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.** Revelation 15:5-8

("Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!") And they **assembled them** at the place that in Hebrew is called

Armageddon. The **seventh angel** poured out his bowl [of wrath] into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and **a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake.** The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath. And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found. And great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe. Revelation 16:15-21

For I will **gather all the nations** against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then **the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle.** On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and **the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward.** And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the **earthquake** in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. **Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.** Zechariah 14:2-5

The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies! **Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your battle, in holy garments;** from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours. The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." The Lord is at your right hand; he will **shatter kings on the day of his wrath.** He will **execute judgment among the nations,** filling them with corpses; he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth. Psalm 110:1-6

I'm not trying to scare anyone, but not only does ONLY God know WHEN this will all happen, but only HE knows who has had their faith proven genuine by suffering for His sake such that they need not endure any further trials. In this country, we feel that we are "persecuted" if someone "unlikes" us on Facebook for our beliefs. Most are careful not to "offend" anyone by speaking up for the truth, but that is not "having salt in ourselves." Neither is attacking others who don't agree with us "being peaceful." There is a difference, though, between

being peaceful and approving of evil. There is a difference between hiding our light under a bushel and "gently correcting error." (1Cor. 13:1-7)

*For everyone will be salted **with fire**. Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have **salt** in yourselves, and be at **peace** with one another." Mark 9:49-50*

*And the Lord's servant **must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness**. God may perhaps **grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth**, and they may **come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will**.
2 Timothy 2:24-26*

*For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but **those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit**. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. **Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him**. But **if** Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. **If** the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. **For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God**. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" **The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him**. For I consider that **the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us**. For the creation waits with eager longing for the **revealing of the sons of God**. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the*

firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we **wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies**. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we **hope** for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Romans 8:5-25

And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, **if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel** that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. Now I **rejoice in my sufferings** for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**. Him we proclaim, **warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ**. Colossians 1:21-28

We are to fear God, not men, even if we are ordered to remain silent and threatened if we refuse--even if people hate us and lie about us because of standing up (with love) for Jesus.

When they had called in the apostles, **they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus**, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, **rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name**. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they **did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus**. Acts 5:40-42

And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, saying, "**We strictly charged you not to teach in this name**, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." But Peter and the apostles answered, "**We must obey God rather than men**." Acts 5:27-29

For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? **If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ**. Galatians 1:10

Only **let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ**, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and **not frightened in anything by your opponents**. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. **For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake**, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have. *Philippians 1:27-30*

Everything happens again. (Ecc. 1:9) The wolves Jesus refers to in the passage below are inside of the church. They are pretending to be sheep in order to destroy the flock from within. (Matt. 7:15-20, Acts 20:26-32, 1Tim. 1, 1Tim. 6, 2Tim. 2-4, 2Pet. 2) We need to be on our guard, clothed in the full armor God because our fight is against unseen forces (right up until they are seen, and very convincing despite being counterfeit). (Eph. 6:10-20) Let's KNOW God so that we can do His will and BE READY for His return. Let's read our Bibles and do what God said pleases Him. (Mark 12:28-34, Rom. 12:1-2, Eph. 5:15-20, Philipp. 2:12-16) Let's keep our beautiful white garments that Jesus suffered and died to clothe us in spotless. (Eph. 5:25-27, Jam. 1:27, 1John 1:9, Rom. 13:14, Rev. 3:4, Rev. 21:7, Rev. 22:14)

*"Behold, I am sending you out as **sheep in the midst of wolves**, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But **the one who endures to the end will be saved**. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns 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 the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, **how much more will they malign those of his household**. So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And **do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell**. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground*

*apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but **whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.** Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. **Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.** Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward." Matthew 10:16-42*

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Praise the Lord, you angels,
you mighty ones who carry
out His plans, listening for
each of His commands.

Yes, praise the Lord,
you armies of angels who
serve Him and do His will!
Praise the Lord, everything
He has created, everything
in all His kingdom.

Let all that I am praise the Lord.

Psalm
103:20-22

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