



# TAKE UP THY SWORD



A newsletter with hope and encouragement from the Holy Bible

*For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword... (Hebrews 4:16)*

ISSUE 17

DECEMBER 2009

## The Glory after The Grief

*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2).*

As we prepare to enter into a new year, we must also prepare to birth new things in the Spirit. And like there are pains (grief) during natural birth before the baby is born (a glorious event), we must expect a similar fate in our Christian walk. The New Testament is filled with scriptures which discuss the fact that we must be afflicted and/or persecuted like Christ in order to share in "the fellowship of His sufferings" (Phil 3:10). However, there is a light at the end of this dark and uncertain tunnel because our reward will be great on earth and in Heaven! Jesus explained His death in this manner:

*... The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit (John 12:23-24).*

But how do we "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim 6:12) without allowing the spirit of oppression or depression to weigh us down? Here's one suggestion: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal 6:9)! When I have to cry a river, lake or ocean of tears because of emotional, mental or spiritual pain, I just remind God of His Word: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy" (Ps 126:5)!

Sometimes a harvest of good things springs out from unpleasant, yet very necessary, seeds. I'm constantly reminded of the old saying that hindsight is 20/20. It's much easier to look back at a situation and give God thanks for a lesson we've learned than to praise Him in advance while we're still in the midst of the storm and unable to clearly see the finish line. Those are the times when I have to remind myself of Abraham's faith, obedience and perseverance:

*... After he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise (Heb 6:15).*

So let the Lord lead you through the transition...

from	to
lack	<i>and all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee (Deut 28:2)</i>
illness	<i>and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up (James 5:15)</i>
sadness	<i>Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing (Ps 30:11)</i>
bondage	<i>if the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed (John 8:36)</i>

Because we know that all things are working together for our good (Rom 8:28), we can better digest this passage in Ecclesiastes 7:8, "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof". Besides the fact that there is a set time and due season for the manifestation of our promises/desires, God also does things "decently and in order" (1 Cor 14:40). I'm glad that He saves the best for last, making sure that we have an awesome prize to press towards according to Philippians 3:14. Therefore, we cannot be discouraged or frightened by this warning:

*Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy (1 Pet 4:12-13).*

Paul plainly told us, "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim 3:12); so we just need to keep our focus on the counsel of the Holy Spirit since "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (2 Cor 10:4). Let's be inspired by the triune (body/soul/spirit) strength of our Savior:

In my Bible, Isaiah 52-53 is entitled, "The Suffering and Glory of the Servant". It begins with "He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high" (52:13) and immediately switches to "His visage was so marred more than any man" (52:14). It goes on to describe why Jesus was crucified and what that sacrifice meant, for "surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (53:4). Because Christ surrendered His own will, the Father said: "Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong" (53:12).

After breaking forth into victory, we can then say that we have "endured a great fight of afflictions (Heb 10:32)!

**THUS SAITH THE LORD: "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ... that [ye] may please Him who hath chosen [thee] to be a soldier" (2 Tim 2:3-4).**

**PRAYER:** *In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God (Ps 62:7).*

**"Be encouraged in the law of the Lord" (2 Chron 31:4):**

Psalm 34:19; Luke 12:48; Acts 5:41; Romans 8:16-18; Philippians 2:8-11; 2 Timothy 2:12; Hebrews 12:3-5; James 5:10-11; 1 Peter 1:6-11, 2:19-21, 3:17-18, 5:10