

The End-Time Martyrdom of Saints

A Matter of Great Interest and a Teaching receiving Major Embrace in the Church involves Saints being Protected in the very End Time.

Under-Explained is the Contrasting Situation seen in Revelation's Fifth Seal.

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There is always a certain appeal to the idea of our escaping out of a difficult situation. A old booklet that drew requests in great numbers a generation ago was titled “*There IS a Way of Escape*”, which dealt with the impending Great Tribulation, that multi-year time of extreme trials prophesied for the human race, in particular God’s Saints, just prior to what is called ‘the end of this age’, or more simply, ‘the End’. There was a very positive response to what this booklet offered. After all, who wouldn’t like to be spared their own personal holocaust?

Major doctrinal premises were built around the idea of the ‘escape’ of the more faithful among God’s end-time Saints, with ‘the rest’ being left to the ravages of whatever circumstance was their lot that Satan’s wrath would surely bring upon them. It was comforting to realize, THAT wasn’t to be US! Those premises appear to a certain degree to be quite valid, based on clearly stated events in places such as Revelation chapter 12. Where questions developed was with the apparently coincident circumstance seen in Revelation chapter 6. After the opening of the first four seals, images we’re more familiar referring to as the ‘Four Horsemen’, false religion, war, famine and death.¹ The fifth seal describes the spirits of martyred Saints crying out for revenge on those who persecuted them, but with the response to their pleas being that they must **wait** for yet a little more time to pass **until** their modern counterparts should meet similar fates as had they! This passage introduces for us what is generally known as the ‘end-time martyrdom of Saints’.

¹ The identity of the first horseman is often misinterpreted as being Christ, rather than false religion, but from the Olivet prophecy we can see the true identification: a False Christs.

Seeing the contrast, of some being protected, and seeing also that some obviously are **not** protected, explanations were posed that these unprotected saints were in some way spiritually inferior to those who would be protected. It was strongly inferred, and in some cases bluntly shouted out, that these were to be put through extreme persecutions as a result of their being spiritually lethargic. The Laodicean syndrome.² It did make some sense. At least, it did IF we didn’t also factor-in other passages having bearing on this same era.

Given White Robes

Even within the dialog of Revelation 6:9-11, if we read carefully, we’re given the distinct feeling that these individuals are not chided for their spiritually inferior condition, where some alleged that **it was the reason** for their having to endure such things. They are there given the highest honor by being invested with white robes, indicating the righteousness of Saints! By implication, the same would carry over to their latter day counterparts, as that latter day group is to experience the same as did they earlier, and presumably for similar reasons. From that premise, it was posed that they attained their purified state **as a result** of going through such extremes of persecution, which also carries a certain amount of logic. The question is, was that or IS that completely correct? How should we regard those who stand-up in the latter days and face into the wrath of Satan against the ‘remnant of her seed’ whom he can still access after those who are taken from his reach are put under protection?

² The lukewarm condition seen in the end-time Church found in Revelation 3:14-22. My articles “*Considering Laodicea*” and “*The Place of Final Training Revisited*” each deal more specifically with aspects of these teachings.

Daniel Also Weighs-In

There is another passage that has relevance to this matter, found woven into the carefully developed sequence of future world events leading to the very end-time. That is found in Daniel chapter 11, which deals with the ongoing generations-long struggle between two major world power blocks, the king of the north and the king of the south. (We're told that their latter day manifestation would not be exactly the same as the earlier one. (Dan. 11:29) The latter day application beginning about verse 27.) We're told we should expect different geographical players, with different ethnicities than were in the centuries BC. For example, Egypt itself is not the king of the south, as we can see in verse 42, otherwise this inclusion wouldn't be necessary to even mention.

Unique Opportunities

But in the middle of that back and forth series of regional struggles we're made aware that in the very end days, the Saints of the Most High God still will 'do exploits' within their very strained situations. *"And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: **but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.** 33: **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.** 34: **Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries.** 35: **And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed."** While they are presented some spectacular opportunities, they are also to fall prey to the focused persecutions then ongoing. The world will offer flattering praise, but will not really repent!*

Prophet Witnesses

In addition to and as a capstone to these widespread exploits, two world-prominent Witnesses will become the focus of the world media. The hatred toward them will be extraordinary, but yet, if anyone attempts to harm them prematurely, they will experience fire

being brought upon them by these two until their three-and-a-half year ministry is completed. These are extreme examples as far as the martyrdom issue is concerned! We can read of them in Revelation chapter 11. *"And I will give power unto **my two witnesses**, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three-score days, clothed in sackcloth. 4: These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. 5: And if any man will hurt them, fire proceeds out of their mouth,³ and devours their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. 6: These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. 7: And when they shall have finished their testimony, **the beast** that ascends out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and **kill them.** 8: 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. 9: 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. 10: 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."*

Despite seeing their miracles, the world will react rather negatively, instead being faithful to their old religious system that represents these Witnesses to be satanic frauds. As to their lesser counterparts on the world scene, we can expect martyrdoms with great regularity. When will it all begin? We know when it will end. From its placement in Revelation 6, it apparently is well underway during the general turmoil leading up to the Great Tribulation.

Jerusalem Shaken

11: *"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. 12: And they heard a great*

³ A situation similar to that of Elijah in 2 Kings chapter 1.

voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they **ascended** up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. 13: And the same hour was there a great **earthquake**, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.” With this development, there’ll be a sharp change of attitude, though motivated by fear rather than any genuine desire to repent.

But, where is this in the time-continuum? If their 42 month ministry coincides with the 3½ years of the Tribulation, then we are to the point in time of Christ’s Second Coming. If so, their resurrection would be shortly before the time of the first resurrection at the Last Trump. The Two Witnesses’ ministry is called the Second Woe. The Third Woe is the sounding of the Seventh (Last) Trump! We can see from chapter 11:15 -18, that the Seventh Trump will include the resurrection of Saints, the taking over of world power, and punishing the entities that caused the Earth’s destructions.

It was mentioned earlier that the explanation offered as to why these end-time individuals would suffer martyrdom was their spiritual lethargy or ‘lukewarmness’ and that it will take being put thru a life crisis to bring out their faith and stir them to meet the expectations of their calling. That idea was put forth by a religious institution with a very high self-regard. Now with the perspective of time, it became apparent that that group, who imagined themselves to be the spiritually superior, and thus worthy of protection, were in fact populated by a great number of the very type they imagined others to be. Reticence and lethargy was endemic! And, there was found little resistance to apostasy when people of rather low spiritual cognizance dragged it in and imposed it upon them! They were found to be deficient of any real stability!

Competence is Apparent

Then, reading the descriptions of those many who at the end-time would face extreme persecutions, while still bearing potent witness, we are left with the impression of them exhibiting commendable Faith and example, not

something we would expect of spiritual slackers or well-practiced ‘do nothings’. Considering the matter from another angle, would God leave the performance of prophesied ‘exploits’ to relative novices and practical incompetents? It says of them that ‘they **know** their God’. It says ‘they are **strong**’! It says they are people of ‘**understanding**’ who are used by God to **instruct many**. Frankly, these don’t sound like the spiritually inferior people that they were typically portrayed as being!

The organization that is largely the one responsible for that premise wouldn’t consider allowing their supposedly ‘spiritually superior’ people to instruct anybody, even among themselves. Superiority had its clearly defined limits, it seems!

The real fact is, God will choose out certain individuals to stand in the gaps at the appropriate times and places. More than likely, it won’t be the trained ministry who He’ll select for these tasks. They’ll come from among the ranks of the steadfast and knowledgeable. Not from reticent ‘side-liners’. Similarly, the Two Witnesses will likely not be persons of stature within any of the so-called modern ‘successor organizations’, despite the many self-inflated types who present **themselves** as being either of those two Witnesses to enhance their esteem!

I Will Pour Out My Spirit

Besides those two, an Old Testament prophecy, with sufficient applicability to warrant a repeat in the book of Acts, should help us better conceive of the end-time witness situation. In Acts 2:16-20 (quoting Joel 2:28) we see a situation where sons and daughters, men young and old, **prophesy**, seeing visions and dreaming dreams. Servants and hand-maidens will have God’s Spirit poured upon them and they too will prophesy! Doing so with accompanying heavenly signs.

These obviously are not the ordained ministry of the day! Are they the ones Daniel 11 refers to?

These show us that God will select a few zealous individuals to do His will, irrespective of their ‘official’ standings. The real question now is, how long will present suppression techniques used by the structured ministries continue? Ω

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