

Welcome to the Worship Celebration of



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The image is a composite of two parts. The top half shows a dark, stormy night sky with a massive, brilliant pillar of fire and light descending from above, illuminating the clouds in shades of purple, blue, and orange. The bottom half shows a detailed illustration of the Tabernacle, the temporary dwelling of God, at night. It is a large, rectangular structure with a white outer covering and a gold and precious stone inner covering. The Tabernacle is surrounded by a wall of white curtains. Numerous tents and booths are pitched around the Tabernacle, and many people are visible, some standing near the entrance of the Tabernacle. The scene is lit by the fire pillar and the lights within the Tabernacle.

**Let's Prepare Our Hearts to Worship
our HOLY and AWESOME GOD**

Now let's Listen to God's Holy Word →



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Persecution & Suffering for Christ's Sake

Up to this point we've studied in Romans 1 thru 8:17

- 1. The Gospel of Jesus Christ**
- 2. God's Righteousness and God is HOLY**
- 3. Mankind's sinfulness and depravity**
- 4. God's Judgment against Sin (His Wrath)**
- 5. Our Justification, Reconciliation, Forgiveness of Sin in Christ Jesus ... sinners saved by God's Grace**
- 6. Hope In God, the Hope of God**
- 7. Sanctification in Christ ... growing in Christ and Victory over sin**
- 8. Paul's Testimony**
- 9. Life in Christ, Life in the Holy Spirit**

Persecution & Suffering for Christ's Sake

Today we are going to Pause a wee bit and Study a Central part of our Sanctification → Suffering for Christ's Name

Sanctification is a big theological word that means ...

The Process of being made Holy ...

In this case – the Holy Spirit works in our lives and makes us more like Jesus Christ – as to His Perfect Humanity

(the Human-side of the equation of Christ ...)

To become more like Jesus in His Moral Qualities of Life.

God uses Suffering as a Part of this process as the Holy Spirit works in our Lives as He Leads us ...

This is not Suffering from sickness or disease, either...

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Romans 8:14-25 - ¹⁴For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are children of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again leading to fear, but you received the Spirit of Adoption by WHOM we cry out, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶The Spirit Himself BEARS WITNESS with our spirit that WE ARE CHILDREN OF God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, IF INDEED WE SUFFER with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

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Romans 8:14-25

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. ¹⁹ For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; ²¹ because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

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Romans 8:14-25

22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with PERSEVERANCE.

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Romans 8:14-25 → Why is God telling me about suffering, now that I am saved, filled with God's Spirit, etc.?

Let's look at what God's Word has to say:

Acts 14:22: through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

2 Timothy 3:12 → In fact, all those who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus WILL BE PERSECUTED.

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Matthew 5:10-16 (Jesus said this)

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹² Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

¹³ "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

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Matthew 5:10-16 (Jesus said this)

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your **GOOD WORKS** and glorify your Father in heaven.

Notice the connection between Persecution and being **SALT** and **LIGHT** (which is sharing God's Word to the lost)

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Jesus said, "Therefore, **DON'T BE AFRAID** of them, since there is nothing covered that won't be uncovered and nothing hidden that won't be made known. What I tell you in the dark, speak in the light. What you hear in a whisper, proclaim on the housetops. **DON'T FEAR** those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; rather, fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Mathew 10:26-28

Again, does that sound like God is calling us to be **SILENT**?
What are we **NOT** to **FEAR**?

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The Only Reason Persecution Occurs against Christians... the SUFFERING we experience when we are following Christ ... that is the aim of what Romans 8:14-25 is focusing on ... we are suffering because we are Obeying Christ, Following Christ, and Proclaiming Christ with our lips and our lives.

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The SUFFERING Paul the Apostle is talking about in Romans 8:17-25 ... is Suffering for Christ's NAME ...

→ The Glory we will Receive cannot COMPARE ...

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1 Peter 3:13-18

¹³ And who will harm you if you are deeply committed to what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear or be disturbed, ¹⁵ but honor the Messiah as LORD in your hearts. Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. ¹⁶ However, do this with gentleness and respect, keeping your conscience clear, so that when you are accused, those who denounce your Christian life will be put to shame. ¹⁷ For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. ¹⁸ For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring you to God, after being put to death in the fleshly realm but made alive in the spiritual realm.

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1 Peter 4:1-5 - Therefore, since Christ **SUFFERED** in the flesh, **equip yourselves** also with the same **RESOLVE** - because the one who **suffered** in the flesh has finished with sin - ²in order to live the remaining time in the flesh, no longer for human desires, but for God's will. ³For there has already been enough time spent in doing what the pagans choose to do: carrying on in unrestrained behavior, evil desires, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and lawless idolatry. ⁴So, they are **SURPRISED** that you don't plunge with them into the same flood of wild living - and they **SLANDER** you. ⁵They will give an account to the One who stands ready to judge the living and the dead.

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1 Peter 4:12-14

¹² Dear friends, don't be **SURPRISED** when the **FIERY** ordeal comes among you to test you as if something unusual were happening to you. ¹³ Instead, rejoice as you **SHARE** in the **SUFFERINGS** of the Messiah, so that you may also **REJOICE** with great joy at the revelation of His glory. ¹⁴ If you are **RIDICULED** for the **NAME** of **Christ**, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

This parallels Matthew 5 & Romans 8:17-25

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Matthew 24:9-14

⁹ “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be **HATED** by all nations for **My Name's sake**. ¹⁰ And then many will be **OFFENDED**, will betray one another, and will **HATE** one another. ¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹² And because **LAWLESSNESS** will abound, the **LOVE OF MANY WILL GROW COLD**. ¹³ But he who **ENDURES** to the end shall be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the **END** will come.

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Jesus also said in Mark 8:35-38:

³⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My Sake and the Gospel's Sake will save it. ³⁶ For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? ³⁷ Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? ³⁸ For whoever is ASHAMED of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ASHAMED when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

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These days were Prophesied in many passages, including: 2 Timothy 3:1-9, Romans 1:18-32; and 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12.

- 1. The Great Apostasy (massive falling away)**
- 2. Strong Delusion because folks don't want Truth**
- 3. Exponential Increase of God Haters and Despisers of those who do good.**
- 4. Massive Intimidation & Forcing of Approval of Evil LifeStyles by Sinners upon large populations**
- 5. Final Stage of corruption before the END**

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What should our Response be, based upon these Scriptures to what has happened in these recent days?

1. Make sure you are Genuinely Saved.

Christ is coming back very soon (2 Cor. 13:5)

Examine yourselves as to whether you are IN THE FAITH. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? — UNLESS indeed you are disqualified. (i.e.: Fail the Test)

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2. Know God's Word before speaking ... study it, memorize it, live according to it, share it with others around you. In the New Covenant, live according to what applies to us in the Bible to us in Christ

2 Timothy 2:15:

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

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3. Pray ... pray for these lost sinners: Pray that God will save them, open their eyes, ears and hearts to Repent and Receive Christ.

1 Cor. 6:9-11 - Don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit God's kingdom? **DO NOT BE DECEIVED:** No sexually immoral people, idolaters, adulterers, or anyone practicing homosexuality, ¹⁰ no thieves, greedy people, drunkards, verbally abusive people, or swindlers will inherit God's kingdom. ¹¹ **AND SOME OF YOU USED TO BE LIKE THIS.** But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the **NAME** of the LORD Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

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4. Prayerfully speak and share God's Word with the lost. We cannot shy away from them. But, we must seek God on how we can approach them with God's LOVE AND TRUTH ... yes, we must be motivated by God's Love to Share His Truth ... We must share the Gospel with them, regardless. We must be loving, gentle AND BOLD and not fearful.

Matthew 28:18-20 ; Mark 16:15

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**Today if you don't know if you are truly Born Again ...
please today ... Get right with God ...**

REPENT of your Sins (admit that you are a sinner) ...

Believe in Christ ... (this is not "play pretend")

Trust in Him personally.... He is Real ...

That He Died on the Cross for your sins...

That He was buried ...

That He Rose from the Dead ...

**And that God punished Jesus in your place, instead
of you ... Believe in God that He loves you and Paid
for your sins, you sinner... Repent and Believe**

See y'all Next Time we Gather...
@ LIFE Group and/or Here Next Week



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