

The Patient Possessing of Your Soul

Text: Luke 21:19: "In your patience possess ye your souls."

This verse came just before the Lord prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place approximately 40 years later from these words in AD 70. One ancient source said that 1.1 million people were slaughtered and over 100,000 were captured during the destruction of the Holy City, which included the destruction of the majestic Temple. In the fourth-century, Eusebius and Epiphanius of Salamis cite a tradition that before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 the Jerusalem Christians had been miraculously warned to flee to Pella. Thankfully, many obeyed the prophecy of their Master and were delivered to extend the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth. Extensive ruins of Pella lie near the modern village Tabaqat Fahl in the northern foothills of the Jordan Valley – perhaps the "mountains" Jesus referred to – 53 miles north of Amman and two and a half miles east of the Jordan River.

There is also a future application of the end times just before the return of our Lord. In whatever time we are living, the time of the first century church, the time of the Great Tribulation or the time in which we are living right now, this is a royal command that should be obeyed, i.e., "In patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21:19). Remember, you are not a body that has a soul, you are a soul and you have a body. When your body has turned to dust, your soul will live on forever. This is the real you. God is saying, don't panic, be patient and get yourself under control. A good parallel verse to Luke 21:19 is James 5:8: "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

Patience has been defined as the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without getting angry or upset. God says in Hebrews 10:36a, "For ye have need of patience...." James 1:1-4 reads, "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." There is so much in life that God will only teach us through patience.

1. CONSIDER THE PATIENCE OF JOB.

James 5:11: "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." To understand the patience of Job, James gives us insight in the next verse, when he says in James 5:12, "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation." The command not to swear during times of trial reminds us of what Job's wife said to him when their whole world collapsed: "Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die" (Job 2:9). Here's the patience of Job, as evidenced by his reply: "But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of

the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips" (Job 2:10).

From this response we learn that the patience of Job is to leave the outcome to God, no matter what He brings to your life or allows in your life. Psalm 39:7: "And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee." Psalm 62:5: "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him."

2. PATIENCE IS OBTAINED THROUGH CHRIST-LIKE PACING.

Hebrews 12:1, 2: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. 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."

Compare these verses that speak to us of the patience of Jesus: Revelation 1:9; 3:10; 14:12.

3. PATIENCE GIVES VALIDITY TO MINISTRY.

Romans 16:10: "Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household." The Greek word for "approved" is *dokimos*. In contrast, we bring to your attention I Corinthians 9:27: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." The word "castaway" is the same word with a simple prefix added, *adokimos*, meaning disapproved.

Notice two verses that teach us that patience is going to grant to the one who obtains it the approval or validity to their ministry. II Corinthians 6:4: "But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses." II Corinthians 12:12: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."

4. PATIENCE ENDS WELL.

Isaiah 40:31: "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Lamentations 3:25: "The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him."

Hebrews 6:12: "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

Hebrews 10:36: "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."

James 5:7: "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain."

When James Garfield (later President of the U.S.) was principal of Hiram College in Ohio, a father asked him if the course of study could be simplified so that his son might be able to go through by a shorter route. "Certainly," Garfield replied. "But it all depends on what you want to make of your boy. When God wants to make an oak tree, He takes a hundred years. When He wants to make a squash he requires only two months."

-Pastor Pope-