

BE THOU FAITHFUL

By Keith Greer

“Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” {Revelation 2:10} At the time John wrote this passage, the first-century Christians were under intense persecution from Rome. Many of them lost their lives standing firm for their faith. In our own time, Christians should remain faithful when they suffer:

Persecution. *“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” {2 Timothy 3:12}* Christians need to understand that we WILL face persecution. Thankfully, we are not being imprisoned and deprived of our property, or facing the threat of death; but that doesn’t mean we will face no persecution. Absolutely not! When God’s people stand for the truth when they are faced with issues on which the world has differing—or no—standards, though they think we are off-key, we must stand! *“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you.” {1 Peter 4:12}*

Disappointment. *“For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica--Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia.” {2 Timothy 4:10}* Unfortunately, other people often bring disappointment into our lives. No doubt, Paul was disappointed when Demas decided to return to the world. Jesus also was disappointed in some of His disciples when, after hearing some “tough sayings,” they no longer walked with Him. *{John 6:66-69}* God chose Saul to be Israel’s first king, but Saul didn’t trust God completely. *{1 Samuel 12:15-23}* Rather than following these examples, we need always to place full confidence in God and not men! God will never disappoint us. Let us strive to do the same for Him.

Temptation. *“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” {1 Corinthians 10:13}* No one is immune from temptation. God’s people need to understand that being God’s children does not mean the devil has given up on us. In fact, just the opposite is true; he is going to turn up the heat! He places many pitfalls and snares in our way, but God has promised to provide a means of escape; we must look for and use it!

Prosperity. *“And He said to them, ‘Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.’” {Luke 12:15}* Thanks to God, we are truly blessed people. Many material blessings come our way, and there’s nothing wrong with material blessings—as long as we remember who gave them to us. Materialism is an ever-present danger that can destroy our faithfulness. Let us use our blessings to glorify God and help the needy.

Stewardship. *“Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.” {1 Corinthians 4:2}* Everything we have belongs to God; we are really little more than managers of God’s blessings. Each of us will give an account to God of how we handled our material blessings. We need to develop the kinds of mindsets that men such as Paul and Job had. *{1 Timothy 6:8-10; Job 1:20-22}*

God's people will have many things that seek to destroy their faith. Satan will do his best to derail the Christian's goal of attaining heaven. Let us not forget that the reward for faithfulness is a crown of life. Yes, the way can become difficult and the devil will use every unpleasant experience of our lives to discourage us from serving and loving Christ. Just remember dear friends, Satan cannot win and defeat us unless we let him in to do so. God's people must continue our march to spiritual Zion and not let anything get in the way of spending eternity in heaven! What say ye? ***