



“The trials of life are God’s workmen, to remove the impurities and roughness from our character. Their hewing, squaring, and chiseling, their burnishing and polishing, is a painful process; it is hard to be pressed down to the grinding wheel. But the stone is brought forth prepared to fill its place in the heavenly temple. Upon no useless material does the Master bestow such careful, thorough work. Only His precious stones are polished after the similitude of a palace.”

What a beautiful diamond! Cut to perfection and revealing the light within in such a majestic revelation, it is truly a delight for the eyes! I find it interesting that the reflected light is not only blue (towards the front), but white as well. Is it me, or does that larger patch of white light at the back left form a cross? Maybe or maybe not; you decide.

The paragraph below the diamond sheds further light on the character of the diamond as well, for we all know that this stone was cut, shaped, polished and ground to a perfection that was envisioned by the jeweler’s imagination.

For Christians, it is a reminder that God is working in and through us to proclaim the Gospel. For as the world sees the sufferings we go through for the cause of Christ the world is given pause to stop and think of their own relationship with the God of the whole universe. These things naturally give rise to our own self-examination, questions like: Am I doing all I can for the cause of Christ and how is my own relationship with God faring, come to mind. Face it, being a Christian is not easy, it means having a faith that will not wither when confronted by evil or back down in the face of severe persecution.

With all this in mind, I thought of two great chapters from the Bible that will encourage and strengthen us in the upcoming expected persecution by a new communist government...

Hebrews 11 ([World English Bible](#))

1 Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, proof of things not seen.

2 For by this, the elders obtained testimony.

3 By faith, we understand that the universe has been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen has not been made out of things which are visible.

4 By faith, Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had testimony given to him that he was righteous, God

testifying with respect to his gifts; and through it he, being dead, still speaks.

5 By faith, Enoch was taken away, so that he wouldn't see death, and he was not found, because God translated him. For he has had testimony given to him that before his translation he had been well pleasing to God.

6 Without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to him, for he who comes to God must believe that he exists, and that he is a rewarder of those who seek him.

7 By faith, Noah, being warned about things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared a ship for the saving of his house, through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

8 By faith, Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out to the place which he was to receive for an inheritance. He went out, not knowing where he went.

9 By faith, he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.

10 For he looked for the city which has the foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

11 By faith, even Sarah herself received power to conceive, and she bore a child when she was past age, since she counted him faithful who had promised.

12 Therefore as many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as innumerable as the sand which is by the sea shore, were fathered by one man, and him as good as dead.

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and embraced them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own.

15 If indeed they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had enough time to return.

16 But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

17 By faith, Abraham, being tested, offered up Isaac. Yes, he who had gladly received the promises was offering up his one and only son;

18 even he to whom it was said, "In Isaac will your seed be called;"

19 concluding that God is able to raise up even from the dead. Figuratively speaking, he also did receive him back from the dead.

20 By faith, Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even concerning things to come.

21 By faith, Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.

22 By faith, Joseph, when his end was near, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel; and gave instructions concerning his bones.

23 By faith, Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that he was a beautiful child, and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

24 By faith, Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,

25 choosing rather to share ill treatment with God's people, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a time;

26 accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

27 By faith, he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

28 By faith, he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of the blood, that the destroyer of the firstborn should not touch them.

29 By faith, they passed through the Red Sea as on dry land. When the Egyptians tried to do so, they were swallowed up.

30 By faith, the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been encircled for seven days.

31 By faith, Rahab the prostitute, didn't perish with those who were disobedient, having received the spies in peace.

32 What more shall I say? For the time would fail me if I told of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets;

33 who, through faith subdued kingdoms, worked out righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, grew mighty in war, and caused foreign armies to flee.

35 Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

36 Others were tried by mocking and scourging, yes, moreover by bonds and imprisonment.

37 They were stoned. They were sawn apart. They were tempted. They were slain with the sword. They went around in sheep skins and in goat skins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated

38 (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts, mountains, caves, and the holes of the earth.

39 These all, having had testimony given to them through their faith, didn't receive the promise,

40 God having provided some better thing concerning us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

1 Peter 2 (WEB)

1 Putting away therefore all wickedness, all deceit, hypocrisies, envies, and all evil speaking,

2 as newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby,

3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious:

4 coming to him, a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God, precious.

5 You also, as living stones, are built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

6 Because it is contained in Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, chosen, and precious: He who believes in him will not be disappointed."

7 For you who believe therefore is the honor, but for those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected, has become the chief cornerstone,"

8 and, "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." For they stumble at the word, being disobedient, to which also they were appointed.

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:

10 who in time past were no people, but now are God's people, who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

11 Beloved, I beg you as foreigners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

12 having good behavior among the nations, so in that of which they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they see, glorify God in the day of visitation.

13 Therefore subject yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether to the king, as supreme;

14 or to governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evildoers and for praise to those who do well.

15 For this is the will of God, that by well-doing you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

16 as free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bondservants of God.

17 Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

18 Servants, be in subjection to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the wicked.

19 For it is commendable if someone endures pain, suffering unjustly, because of conscience toward God.

20 For what glory is it if, when you sin, you patiently endure beating? But if, when you do well, you patiently endure suffering, this is commendable with God.

21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example, that you should follow his steps,

22 who did not sin, “neither was deceit found in his mouth.”

23 Who, when he was cursed, didn’t curse back. When he suffered, didn’t threaten, but committed himself to him who judges righteously;

24 who his own self bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose stripes you were healed.

25 For you were going astray like sheep; but now have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Over the millennia, an untold number of people have suffered because they have faith in God. Merciless governments have done unspeakable things to followers of the God of the heavens. In spite of these things, they overcame; enduring hardship after hardship- even death! Are we in this 21st century any better than those who have gone before us? Aren’t we hated by the world and especially by the Prince of Demons and his hoard of fallen angels?

The signs of the hatred of Christians is all around us. During the next few years, expect persecution, hardship and the ire of a government that hates all Christians stand for. But, stand fast in your faith, knowing that your faith will be ultimately rewarded and others will ultimately be converted as

they see the suffering you faithfully endure. This is our calling- to be like Christ, in everything- which of course includes suffering.

Jesus said:

Matthew 5 (Darby's Translation)

13 *Ye* are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have become insipid, wherewith shall it be salted? It is no longer fit for anything but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot by men.

14 *Ye* are the light of the world: a city situated on the top of a mountain cannot be hid.

15 Nor do men light a lamp and put it under the bushel, but upon the lamp-stand, and it shines for all who are in the house.

16 Let your light thus shine before men, so that they may see your upright works, and glorify your Father who is in the heavens.

Listen to Jesus; Be the salt and light that he exhorts us to be! And you will be blessed!

