

Ukraine-A Foreshadowing of The End Time?
Part 6 (Balance Continued From Previous Week)
The Coming Christian Massacre
Revelation 6:9-11

(Ukraine a Foreshadowing: Remainder and Carryover of Part 5 notes into Part 6)

Last week we opened the fifth seal as described in the 6th chapter of the book of Revelation. Those who are, by many bible scholars' reckoning, those who have been martyred during the first year and a half of the Great Tribulation (the final three years before Christ's Second Advent).

This morning, I hope to conclude this series as well as tie in a correlation between the "Great Christian Massacre" and today's recognition of Memorial Day. Let's read the passage to refresh our collective memories:

Revelation 6:9-11 Holman Christian Standard Bible

The Fifth Seal

9 When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the people slaughtered because of God's word and the testimony they had. 10 They cried out with a loud voice: "Lord, the One who is holy and true, how long until You judge and avenge our blood from those who live on the earth?" 11 So a white robe was given to each of them, and they were told to rest a little while longer until the number would be completed of their fellow slaves and their brothers, who were going to be killed just as they had been.

Now continuing from last week's message, as well as concluding the series we see that in verse 11 that the slain martyrs are given white robes. these white robes stand for purity and righteousness. Believers are made pure and righteous in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. These martyrs are wearing the robes that all believers upon the earth will wear, the white robes of the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Also, in verse 11 the slain martyrs are assured of justice. As we close this portion of Scripture out today, we do so with a beautiful picture and a challenge.

The slain martyrs are said to be waiting or resting in heaven.

- They are waiting in the peace of Christ, free from all struggles. I am reminded of the writings of the Book of Hebrews 4:9 which says, "There remains, then, a Sabbath—rest from all struggle."

- They are resting from all their exhausting labor upon earth. Later on, in Rev. 14:13 we will read, "Then I heard a voice from heaven say, 'Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them.'"

- They are resting from the wicked of the earth. In Job 3:17 we are told, "There the wicked cease from turmoil, and there the weary are at rest."

- They are resting from all the trials and temptations of life; they are to be freed from all tears and sorrow and crying and pain and death. Again later on in Rev 21:4 we will read, "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old has passed away."

- They are resting in the perfection of a new life, even in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Isaiah prophesied in Is. 57:2, "Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death."

Note what the Lord tells the martyrs. It will still be a little while before the end of the world comes. It is not a question of if it will come but when. But the martyrs are told it is not yet time.

The name of Jesus Christ has not been proclaimed enough to the world, not yet. And some believers are still to be martyred for the name of Christ. The number of martyrs is not yet fulfilled.

You see, that is where we are now waiting. This is a challenge for us. To be on fire for God and to be proclaiming Jesus Christ. We shouldn't be afraid. We must be willing to witness for Him even if it means that we must die for Him and His cause of eternal salvation.

When I recall the words of Ukrainian President when he was offered a flight out, he famously said, "I don't need a ride. I need ammo." Would that we had such resolve in our battles against sin, death, and the devil!

With regard to Ukraine, would that we were as determined to protect, to cherish, to fight for, and yes, even to die for the freedoms that countless millions have shed their blood to purchase for the freedom that the American dream offers...a freedom that countless other millions take so easily for granted while the subversive forces of the greatest experiment in democracy this world has ever known malignantly eat away at our patriotism, our devotion to God and country and our commitment to not only its success, but indeed its very survival.

With regard to the war that rages between good and evil. This past week we caught but a glimpse of what unbridled evil is capable of. As twenty-one lives were swiftly dispatched into eternity, oh so long before their time. They, though now safe sheltered in the arms of God, leave behind the collective millions of our broken hearts and the anguish of parents and families that have experienced their smiles, their voices, and their embraces for the last time.

And what of those scarcely two weeks ago, shopping for a few groceries, who never made it home to partake of the things that they had placed into their grocery carts, never realizing that they would never even make it to the checkout line.

And what of those elderly Christians worshipping in their church, doing harm to no one, only to be slain at the hands of a Chinese national who brought the terror and evil of the tensions between China and Taiwan into what should be the protected environment of the United States of America.

When Noah and his sons were building the ark, the sound of their hammers could be heard for 120 years. But the time came when the hammers were silent, and the rains began to fall. There was that final moment when God shut the door of the ark. The opportunity to be saved no longer existed.

When the Roman soldiers nailed my Jesus to his cross, the sound of their hammers driving the spikes into His hands and His feet, pierced through the heart, the very soul of Mary.

So many don't believe. So many do believe Satan's lies. "You'll never be good enough to be a Christian". "You'll never be able to give up your life of sinful pursuits". You'll never be able to enjoy life as you know it". REALLY? "What" you might ask them, "Is your legacy now?" "Don't you realize that ALL of your sins, past, present and future are cleansed by the blood that flowed from Jesus' body that day now covers ALL of your imperfections?"

Imagine going into a circus and being told to do the trapeze without a net. You'd be scared to death of slipping and dying. But if the net was underneath you, you'd at least know that if you slipped up you wouldn't die. Isn't that a part of the courage that we can have in fighting temptation? Jesus already defeated the devil ON OUR BEHALF. He already paid for our sins. He did this for sinners like us, who fail against temptation on a regular basis. If He already WON the battle, then we don't have to fear our failures so much. Our failures and sins are forgiven ("...our

sins and shortcomings”) Our salvation doesn’t depend on whether we slip or not. It depends on the fact that JESUS DIDN’T SLIP. We can go into battle knowing that our salvation is already won. So, do hesitate to reach out to those who so desperately need to be caught in the safety net of salvation.

There’s a couple of clips from the movie “Saving Private Ryan” that I have shared with you before, but which make for a powerful final statement to the closing of this message this morning.

In the movie: In Washington, D.C, at the U.S. War Department, General George Marshall is informed that three of the four brothers of the Ryan family were killed in action and that their mother is to receive all three telegrams in the same day. He learns that the fourth son, Private First-Class James Francis Ryan, is a paratrooper and is missing in action somewhere in Normandy. So, the General orders that Ryan be found and sent home immediately. A special forces group is assembled led by Tom Hanks as their captain. They go searching for private Ryan through Normandy facing one tragedy after another. When they finally find him, Ryan is told of his brothers' deaths, the mission to bring him home, and that two men had been lost in the quest to find him. He is distressed at the loss of his brothers but does not feel it is fair to go home, asking the Captain to tell his mother that he intends to stay "with the only brothers [he has] left." The captain decides to take command and defend a certain bridge Ryan has been assigned to defend with what little manpower and resources are available. The Germans come. In the ensuing battle, while inflicting heavy German casualties, most of the Americans—and all the paratroopers—are killed. While attempting to blow the bridge, the captain is shot and mortally wounded. Just before a Tiger tank reaches the bridge, an American P-51 Mustang flies over and destroys it, followed by American reinforcements who rout the remaining Germans.

(Play VIDEO)

Ryan is with the captain who, as he dies says to Ryan these last words, "James ... earn this. Earn it." Today as we contemplate the great and terrible price that has been paid over the last nearly 250 years to not only secure our freedom, but keep it secure, I want us to pause and each of us individually become that Private James Francis Ryan and we hear the words of Captain Miller as he pays that “last full measure” of devotion, “Earn this”, are we doing so? And then, I believe that we, as a nation, should hear the nearly one and a half million voices of the men and women who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for the freedom we exercise this morning, who collectively say to us, “Earn this!”

Philippians 1:27-29 (HCSB)

27 Just one thing: Live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or am absent, I will hear about you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, working side by side for the faith that comes from the gospel, 28 not being frightened in any way by your opponents. This is a sign of destruction for them, but of your deliverance—and this is from God. 29 For it has been given to you on Christ's behalf not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for Him,

I love the way the Apostle Paul begins verse 27, ***“Just one thing”***. Don’t let that little, almost inconspicuous phrase get past you. It’s there for a reason! Paul is saying that over and above everything else he has just said, there is this ONE THING that must never be overshadowed by all our understanding of theology or biblical knowledge. If you capture that phrase in the Phillip’s New Testament translation it goes like this, ***“But whatever happens, make sure that your everyday life is worthy of the Gospel of Christ.”***

It is as if Christ Himself is looking down at us from the Cross of Calvary as HE is dying and says, “EARN THIS”.

One of the fears that I have as a Pastor is that we're not "EARNING THIS!" I know you're thinking, "But you said we could never EARN SALVATION!" That is absolutely right YOU COULD NEVER "EARN SALVATION!" BUT I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT "EARNING SALVATION!" I'M TALKING ABOUT "LIVING A LIFE WORTHY" OF THE CALLING! "LIVING A LIFE WORTHY" OF THE "GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST!" THAT IS WHAT PAUL WAS STATING IN PHILIPPIANS 1:27-29!

PAUL SAYS TO "EARN THIS!" HE SAYS "LIVE A LIFE WORTHY" OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST! THINK ABOUT THAT FOR A MOMENT: "LIVING A LIFE WORTHY" OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST!

(PLAY VIDEO)

As we gather here this morning there is NOTHING, we can do to ever EARN the blood shed for our freedom, either the freedoms we enjoy as Americans, but especially the eternal freedom from sin and the guarantee of eternal life in Heaven as Christians. But just because that's an unachievable pursuit, doesn't mean we shouldn't pursue it! Jesus knew He would never achieve His Father's desire to save the whole world, some would always reject His best efforts. But, Jesus came ANYWAY! Jesus poured His all into making the effort. Shouldn't we do all we can to pour ourselves into honoring His sacrifice? In what better way can we express our gratitude than to, as Paul puts it to "walk worthy" of the gospel, of the life, of the sacrifice, of the suffering, of the shed blood, of the cross!

I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK IF OUR FOREFATHERS AND PATRIOTS WERE ABLE TO SEE WHAT WE'VE, IN MANY WAYS BECOME, WOULD HAVE TO WONDER, "IS THIS WHAT I DIED FOR?" I THINK, IN MANY WAYS, JESUS WOULD BE ABLE TO SAY THAT SAME THING: "THIS IS NOT WHAT I DIED FOR?"

HE DIED THAT WE MIGHT HAVE "FREEDOM & LIFE MORE ABUNDANTLY!" NOT THAT WE COULD EVER "EARN IT" IN ITS TOTAL FULL MEASURE, BUT THAT WE COULD STRIVE TO DO ALL WE CAN TO "LIVE IT!" ...TO LIVE IN SUCH A WAY THAT WE ARE HONORING THE VALUES AND THE PRINCIPLES AND THE PATTERN FOR LIFE THAT THE GOSPEL TEACHES AND THAT CHRIST EXEMPLIFIED.

It was a great sacrifice for Captain Miller's team to finally locate Private Ryan. It took a far greater sacrifice for Jesus to come and locate you and me.

FOR IT IS IN THE "LIVING" & THRU THE "BLOOD" OF JESUS CHRIST THAT WE ARE "WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST!" WE ARE TOLD TO BE "WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST!"

WHEN WE LET (OTHER THINGS) BECOME MORE IMPORTANT TO US THAN "LIVING" THE LIFE "WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST!" THEN HOW CAN WE EXPECT THE BLESSINGS THAT COME WITH IT?

The people of Ukraine, for four months and counting, have captured the hearts of the world with their courage and determination that their freedom will not be stolen from them by a madman. Would that we were so dedicated to and devoted to and determined to freedom at every level that has been paid for by someone who has gone before.

“Earning” the blood of Jesus will be an eternal effort, and it is an effort that should begin today.

I am reminded of what Paul wrote in his second letter to Timothy

2 Timothy 1:8.

“So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.”

I close with Peter’s and John’s words in

Acts 4:20,

“For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”