

**REJOICE IN HOPE; BE PATIENT IN SUFFERING;
BE IN CONSTANT PRAYER
(Romans 12)**

In the days of the early church, Christians suffered tremendous persecution. They worshipped God in caverns, and lived there, too. Their lives were always in danger of death. Those were the days when confusion of beliefs penetrated the churches, as we see today in the Catholic Churches. Constantine is partly responsible for that, when he made Christianity legal, interacting his pagan practices into the Christianity faith. Seemly, people followed the idea, leaving the Christian faith tainted with paganism to this day. When Paul wrote this, he had much to say concerning persecution and suffering for the faith, for he himself was one of those who suffered severe persecutions. A very difficult thing to do in suffering, is to be patient. I know that Paul took suffering well so that he could write what he wrote to the Romans. However, suffering due to persecution for the sake of the Gospel, it should be an honor to all Christians, as we see in Stephen's death. The Bible says that while they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, Lord YAHSHUA, receive and accept and welcome my spirit. And falling on his knees, he cried out loudly, Lord, fix not this sin upon them! (one of them was Paul). And when he had said this, he fell sleep (in death). (Acts 7:59-60). Paul said, Rejoice in hope. Hope that things will get better; rejoice in the hope that God will deliver us by answering our prayers, or rejoice in the outcome of our faith – eternal life with YAHSHUA. Peter said, For one is regarded favorably if, as in the sight of God, he endures the pain of unjust sufferings What kind of glory [is there] if, when you do wrong and are punished for it, you take it patiently? But if you be patiently with suffering when you do right and that is undeserved, it is acceptable and pleasing to God. For even to this were you called. For Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in His footsteps; He was guilty of no sin, neither was deceit ever found on His lips. When He was reviled and insulted, He did not revile or offer insult in return; [when] When He was abused and suffered, He made no threats; but He trusted to Him (God) Who judges fairly (I Peter w:19-23).

YAHSHUA said, Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me; (John 14:1a); In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but of good cheer! For I have overcome the world. (John 16:33b). The secret of being patient in suffering is found in faith and hope - hope in the written promises of God. Patient is a word that many of us have not grasped its true meaning. To be patient, is to be mistreated without retaliating, or complaining; it is waiting for God to show up and take vengeance on our enemies. The word patient means to bear or endure pain, trouble without complaining, losing self-control, refusing to be angry (Webster dictionary). The Patriarch Job in his sufferings, often showed to trust God. We do not know how long was his ordeal, but we understand that was long and terrible. In spite of been counselled to "curse God and die," he took a stand of faith and rebuked his wife for suggesting that, saying, You speak as one of the impious and foolish women would speak. What? Shall we accept good at the hand of God and shall we not accept also misfortune and what is of a bad nature? In [spite of] all this, Job did not sin with his lips (Job 2:9-10). That speaks to me of "patient in suffering." Job was not suffering for any evil doing of his own. God

put him to the test to show Satan how righteous he was. I do not know if he ever understood that, or even knew it, but patient in his suffering, he overcame and was blessed more than the first time. Suffering for the sake of our Lord and Savior, must be an honor. Although, very painful and difficult to keep the faith, our hope in Him will cause joy to flow, considering the outcome of our suffering for YAHSHUA will be heaven. As Paul said, I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth being compared with the glory that is about to be revealed to us and in us and for us and conferred on us! (Rom. 8:18). Paul, a faithful minister of YAHSHUA suffered much persecution for the love and hope and faith in God. He was amazing in his stability of faith, and died as a martyr for the cause of the Gospel of YAHSHUA Messiah. In the letter to the Romans, he wrote: For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Messiah, or it is God's power working unto salvation to everyone who believes with a personal trust and a confident surrender and firm reliance, to the Jew first and also to the Greek (Rom. 1:16).

Rejoice in hope; be patient in suffering; be in constant prayer. This was the advice of Paul to all of us. Knowing that we all suffer in one way or other. Hope, patient, and constant prayer will elevate us to the throne of God. Prayer is the most important action we must take in our sufferings and trials. It connects us to God faster than a telephone, for He knows even before we pray. Prayer is also part of the armor of God, mentioned in Ephesians 6:18: [Pray] at all times, in the Spirit with all [manner of] prayer and entreaty. To that end, keep alert and watch with strong purpose and perseverance, interceding in behalf of all the saints. "The earnest prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available" (James 5:16b). For not praying, we are voided of power to face our situations. Prayers should never be overlooked in times of needs. Before we go to a friend, with our problems, we should consider going to our heavenly Father first. He is ever willing to hear from us. He said, Call to Me and I will answer you I will show you mighty things that you do not know (Jer. 33:3).

I have not met a person with the perfect characteristics of patient in challenging times. Apart from the Lord, who suffered horribly in the hands of His own people and the Romans. The Bible says, He was oppressed, He was afflicted, He was submissive and opened not His mouth; like a sheep led to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth (Isaiah 53:7); Let this same attitude' and purpose and [humble] mind be in you which was in Messiah YAHSHUA, Who, although being essentially one with God and in the form of God, did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained, but stripped Himself [of all privileges and rightful dignity], so as to assume the guise of a servant in that He became like men and was born a human being, and after He had appeared in human form, He abased and humbled Himself [still further] and carried His obedience to the extreme of death, even the death of the cross! (Phil. 2:5-8). Just think of Him Who endured from sinners such grievous opposition and bitter hostility against Himself, so that you may not grow weary or exhausted, losing heart and relaxing and fainting in your minds. You have not yet struggled and fought agonizingly against sin, not have you yet resisted and withstood to the point of pouring out your [own] blood (Heb. 12:3-4).

YAHSHUA lived among men, living an exemplar life for all of us to follow. YAHSHUA, the Source of our faith and also its Finisher, "He for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross,

despising and ignoring the shame, and is not seated at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb.12:3). In our troubles, we too have reason to endure with patient the trials we go through, because the hope we have is the eternal salvation we are waiting for, if we do not faint and give up. YAHSHUA said, If you belonged to the world, the world would treat you with affection and would love you as its own, but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, the world hates you. (John 15:19); YAHSHUA suffered and died outside the [city’s] gate in order that He might purify and consecrate the people through His own blood and set them apart as holy; let us then go forth to Him outside the camp, bearing the contempt and abuse and shame with Him, for here we have no permanent city, but we are looking for the one which is to come (Heb. 13: 12-14). Paul wrote in the letter to the Philippians 3:20: But we are citizens of the state which is in heaven and from it also we earnestly and patiently await the Lord YAHSHUA the Messiah, Savior, Who will transform and fashion a new the body of our humiliation to conform to and be like the body of His glory and majesty, by exerting that power which enables Him even to subject everything to Himself (Phil. 3:20-21).

So, it is that we have supernatural hope by faith in that we are not of this world; that should compel us to be patient in suffering, by looking ahead to the realization of our hope someday. Meanwhile, focusing in Him, Who is able to transform this body of decay into a glorious and immortal body; “He Who promised is faithful and He will do it.” Right now, we are in this mortal and frail and prone to disease body, but that is not the end for us even after we die. So, while we suffer, we rejoice in the hope of our salvation in constant prayer to the end, until we will meet our Lord YAHSHUA face to face! And that will be a glorious encounter that will last for eternity!