

Willing To Die For Christ

(appropriate for Mid Schoolers and older)

Michael R. Daily November 2016

Other youth bible studies by Michael Daily available at: <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

You are on a tourist trip somewhere in the Middle East. Its evening and you are on a bus traveling down some city streets.

All of a sudden a large group of men come out of a 20 story building, dressed in black, with coverings over their heads and faces, and surround the bus. Each one is carrying a machine gun and is shouting "Allahu Akbar".

They tell everyone to get off the bus and line up. One man starts questioning people, one at a time.

He asks a person well ahead of you, "Are you Muslim?" The person says, "Yes". The man then says, "Quote the verses you have memorized from the Koran!" But the person doesn't know any. So, two of the other gunmen take the person away, out of your site.

Its getting dark now and as the first gunman starts questioning the next person, you hear a gunshot in the distance. Then the next ten people in front of you are able to successfully quote verses from the Koran.

Now its your turn. "Are you Muslim?" What do you say? "No, I am a follower of Jesus Christ". As four of the gunmen grab you, you hear some yelling from the building. It's the group's leader. He's telling the gunmen not to waste bullets. Bullets are expensive.

The four gunmen push and pull you into the building and start walking you up the steps. While they are taking you up the steps they tell you not to worry, you will be OK, because today you will become a Muslim.

At the top of the stairs they open a door and now you are standing on the roof of the 20 story building. As you look over the edge of the roof you can see that it is a straight drop 20 stories down to the concrete street below.

"Now, you must become a Muslim." The gunman says. "Renounce Christ and worship Allah and we will be your brothers."

You say, "No. Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior and He can also save you from your sins".

"If you don't become Muslim you must die. We don't want to kill you, my brother. Turn to Allah and he will forgive you, for Allah is great and merciful".

"No. Jesus Christ is God. He came from heaven to pay for your sins by dying on the cross as a man. Ask Him and He will give you eternal life as a free gift."

Two of the gunmen seemed stunned, but another one pulls out a large knife and presses it to your throat. "If you don't worship Allah right now we must throw you off the roof. What is your decision?"

What would you do in this situation? What kinds of thoughts would be going through your mind?

Isn't Allah just a different name for the same God we worship? No. It's not.

What about Peter. He denied Christ and still went to heaven. Why don't you do what Peter did?

Deny Christ. You will still go to heaven.

(Matthew 26:31-35, 69-75)

Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, ‘I WILL STRIKE DOWN THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP OF THE FLOCK SHALL BE SCATTERED.’”³² But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.”³³ But Peter said to Him, “Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away.”³⁴ Jesus said to him, “Truly I say to you that this very night, before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.”³⁵ Peter said to Him, “Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You.” All the disciples said the same thing too.

⁶⁹ Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came to him and said, “You too were with Jesus the Galilean.”⁷⁰ But he denied *it* before them all, saying, “I do not know what you are talking about.”⁷¹ When he had gone out to the gateway, another *servant-girl* saw him and said to those who were there, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.”⁷² And again he denied *it* with an oath, “I do not know the man.”⁷³ A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Surely you too are one of them; for even the way you talk gives you away.”⁷⁴ Then he began to curse and swear, “I do not know the man!” And immediately a rooster crowed.⁷⁵ And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, “Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.

(John 21:15-19)

So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus *said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?” He *said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Tend My lambs.”¹⁶ He said to him again a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Shepherd My sheep.”¹⁷ He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me?” Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?” And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said to him, “Tend My sheep.¹⁸ Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go.”¹⁹ Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, “Follow Me!”

Are we willing to die for Christ? Its easy to say we would but how do we know for sure? What can we do now to prepare for such a situation? We will look at some of these questions in our study tonight.

John 16:1-2

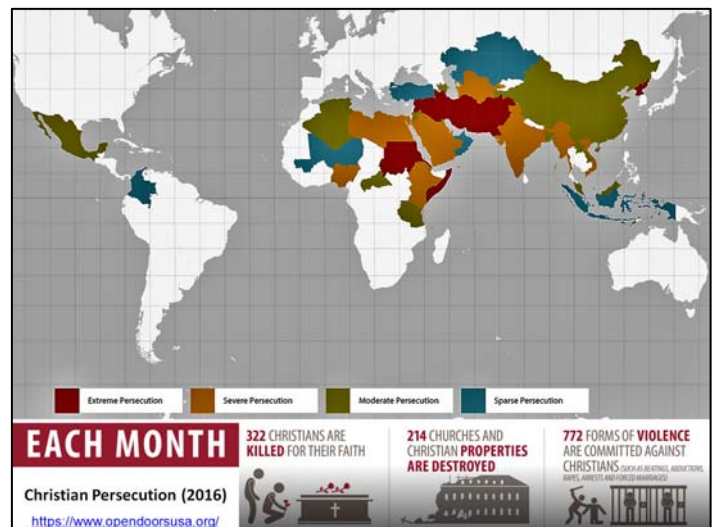
“These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling.² They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God.

This prophecy made by Jesus 2,000 years ago is now being fulfilled. There are people in the world today who believe that the best way to serve God is to kill you! They believe that God will give them rewards in heaven for killing you. That’s a powerful motivation.

According to Open Doors Ministry, somewhere in the world, every month 322 Christians are killed for their faith, 214 churches are destroyed, and 772 Christians are attacked and injured because they are Christians.

The map on the right shows the countries where the more severe persecution of Christians is occurring.

<https://www.opendoorsusa.org/>



Matthew 24:9-10

“Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. ¹⁰ At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another.

Not everyone is going to remain faithful to Christ in these situations. Many will fall away and renounce Christ. And then they will give your name to the killers so they can come and get you too.

Matthew 10:28

Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

But some will remain faithful unto death because they fear God more than men, and they love God more than their own lives.

Revelation 12:10-11

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. ¹¹ And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

As we die, God wants us to be His witnesses. It is not a time to cower or beg for our lives or to try to fight back. What kind of testimony would that be? Before we die we are to share the gospel with our killers.

Romans 14:7-8

For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; ⁸ for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s.

Revelation 6:9-11

When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; ¹⁰ and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” ¹¹ And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.

God has ordained that some of us Christians will die for Him. Why? Because it has a purpose. It may be that the only way a radical Muslim or other person who kills Christians will ever hear the gospel is from you, during the few minutes before they kill you. You are going to be OK. You will die and go to heaven. But they are not OK. They are destined to spend eternity in the Lake of Fire without Christ. This short time with you may be a rare chance for them to hear about salvation in Christ.

How can we become people who are willing to die for Christ? We have to believe its worth it – because it is.

(Philippians 1:20-21)

according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹ For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Dying for Christ is much better for us than living with the shame of renouncing Him.

Revelation 2:10

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

There is a special “Medal of Honor” for those who persevere under trial, which includes dying for Christ. It is one of the 5 Eternal Crowns. These are special awards for faithful service in 5 areas of life. Each crown has a name. The one we are talking about tonight is called the “Crown of Life”.

For a detailed study on Eternal Rewards and the Five Crowns please see the study, “Eternal Rewards – Compilation”, available at: <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

James 1:12

Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him.

Every soldier has medals, some have a few and some have a lot. But there is one type of medal that is far above every other medal. That is the Congressional Medal of Honor. Very few soldiers receive these. Every Christian will receive eternal rewards, some a few and some a lot. But there is a type of reward far above the other types of rewards. These are the 5 Eternal Crowns. One of these crowns is the Crown of Life. Not every Christian will receive a crown. Wouldn't you like to be called forward by God when you are in heaven to be awarded His equivalent of the Medal of Honor? Wouldn't you like to enter into heaven as a hero of the faith?

Revelation 3:11

I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown.

The crown of life is not referring to eternal life. This verse makes that clear because eternal life cannot be lost or taken away so the crown of life cannot be referring to eternal life. It is a special award given for exceptional perseverance under trial.

So, how do we know if we will be faithful unto death or not?

Luke 16:10

“He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.

Dying for Christ is a very big thing. But the Bible tells us that if we have not been faithful in little things, we will not be faithful when the big things come along.

I John 2:28

Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

If we aren't faithful to spend time with God now, praying and reading the Bible, why would we think we will be faithful to die for Him later? Because praying and reading the Bible are a lot easier than dying.

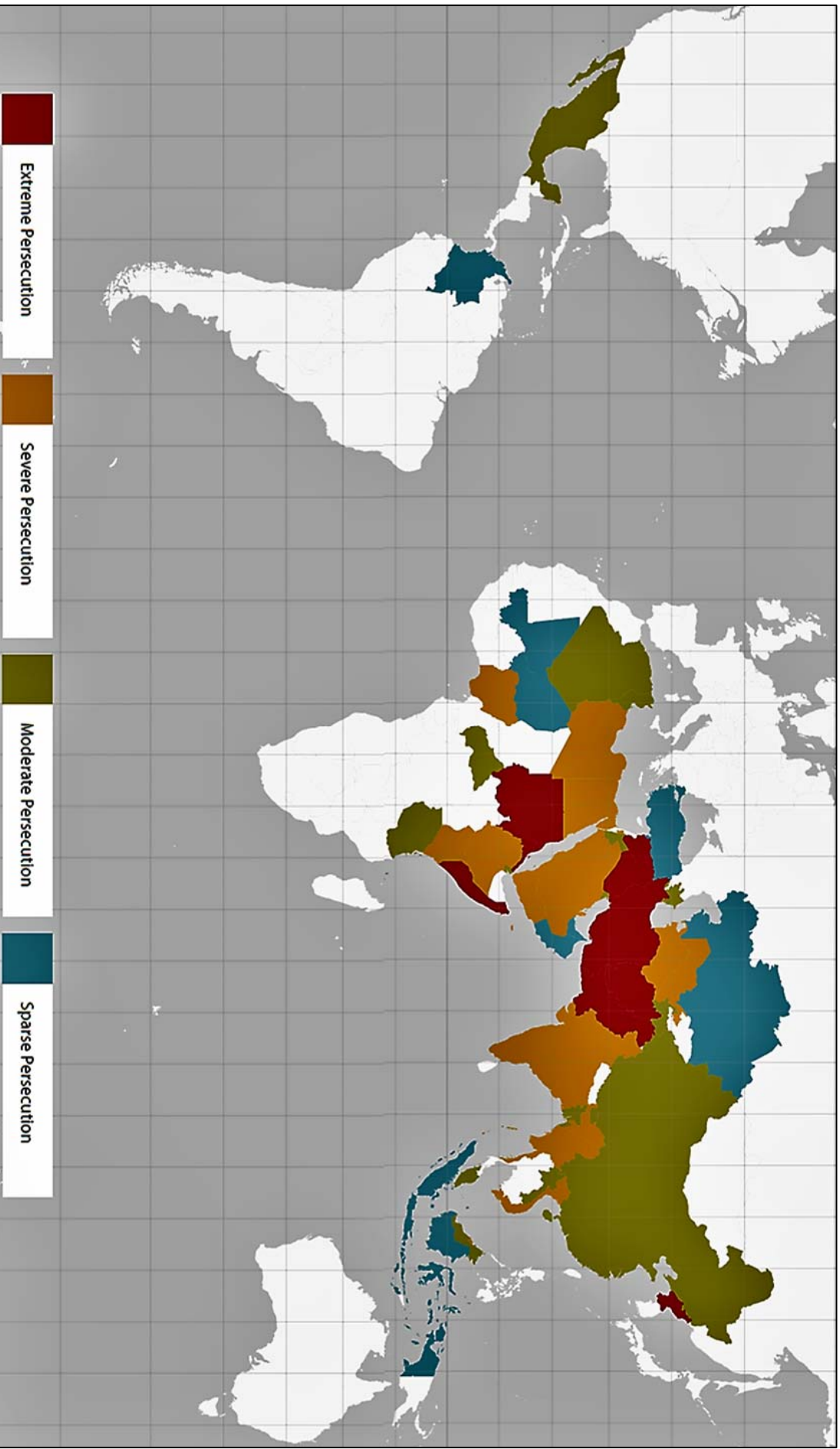
I John 3:24

The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

If we aren't faithful now to put into practice the things God teaches us from the Bible, what makes us think we will be able to faithfully die for Him later? Because obeying God now is a lot easier than dying is going to be.

Conclusion

Our obedience in small things will ultimately determine how we respond to the bigger tests of life that are coming our way. We can be faithful unto death if we prepare by developing our relationship with God and putting Him and His Kingdom first in our lives now as demonstrated by our actions and decisions.



Extreme Persecution

Severe Persecution

Moderate Persecution

Sparse Persecution

EACH MONTH

Christian Persecution (2016)

<https://www.opendoorsusa.org/>

322 CHRISTIANS ARE
KILLED FOR THEIR FAITH



214 CHURCHES AND
CHRISTIAN **PROPERTIES**
ARE DESTROYED



772 FORMS OF **VIOLENCE**
ARE COMMITTED AGAINST
CHRISTIANS (SUCH AS BEATINGS, ABDUCTIONS,
RAPES, ARRESTS AND FORCED MARRIAGES)



Appendix – Additional Verses on Dying For Christ

Hebrews 11:32-40

And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, 33 who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. 35 Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; 36 and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated 38 (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. 39 And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, 40 because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.

Acts 12:1-2

Now about that time Herod the king laid hands on some who belonged to the church in order to mistreat them. ² And he had James the brother of John put to death with a sword.

Romans 8:35-39

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 Just as it is written, “For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” 37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Hebrews 10:34-38

For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. 35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. 37 For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay. 38 But My righteous one shall live by faith; And if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him.

Matthew 10:32-33

“Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. ³³ But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

Revelation 2:12-13

“And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this: 13 ‘I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

Revelation 13:6-7

And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. 7 It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.

Revelation 16:4-6

Then the third *angel* poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of waters; and they became blood. ⁵ And I heard the angel of the waters saying, "Righteous are You, who are and who were, O Holy One, because You judged these things; ⁶ for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. They deserve it."

Revelation 20:4

Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Willing To Die For Christ*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Mathew 26:31-35, 69-75*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *John 21:15-19*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *John 16:1-2, Matthew 24:9-10*

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JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Willing To Die For Christ*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 10:28, Revelation 12:10-11*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 14:7-8, Revelation 6:9-11*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Philippians 1:20-21*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Revelation 2:10, James 1:12, Revelation 3:11*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Luke 16:10*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I John 2:28, I John 3:24*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Hebrews 11:32-40*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Revelation 2:12-13*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Revelation 16:4-6*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Revelation 20:4*

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