

STAYING POWER

Matthew 10:17, 22; 24:9; John 15:13; Revelation 2:10

Introduction: In this country of the United States of America it's military heroes are honored at various times and especially those who gave their lives in times of battle thus becoming "martyrs" in a sense. Not only this country has it's martyrs but every nation on earth has had and will continue to have those who have given and will give their all, their very lives, for a cause.

John the Baptist was the first martyr of the New Testament, then Jesus was crucified, Stephen was stoned to death, James (of Zebedee) was beheaded, Phillip was crucified, James (brother of Jesus) was beaten to death, Mattathias was stoned to death then beheaded, Andrew was crucified, Mark was dragged to pieces, Peter was crucified upside down, Paul was beheaded, Jude was crucified, Bartholomew was crucified, Thomas was run through with a spear, Luke was hung, Simon Zealotes was crucified and John died of old age.

God's Church has had and continues to have it's martyrs, here is how some of God's Children have died because they refused to give up their faith in Jesus:

Burned to death, Beheaded, Shot with arrows, Hung, Stoned, Boiled in oil or tar, Pulled apart on a rack, Pulled apart by horses, Hooked with hooks and hung from a pole, Crucified, Burned to death with hot irons, Hung by the feet with a heavy weight tied around the neck, Hands and feet cut off, Imprisoned in cells with broken glass on the floor in total darkness, Laid on an iron rack with spikes and with fire beneath, Fed alive to wild animals, Teeth knocked out and hair pulled out, Turned over a fire until burned to death, Beaten to death, Ground to death under mill stones, Thrown into the sea, bound with a heavy stone around the neck, Poisoned, Starved to death, Ears cut off, blinded, and arms and legs pulled off, Skinned alive, then salt rubbed on, Burned to death in ovens, Strangled to death, Impaled on stakes, Put into a bag filled with poisonous snakes and scorpions, Dressed in clothes covered with wax, then set afire, Animal skins sewn around the body and wild dogs turned loose on them, Hung by the hair and roasted by fire, Thrown from high walls, Shot with guns, Brains beaten out with a hammer, Gassed to death, Cut into pieces, Tongue pulled out with pliers, Buried alive, Whipped to death, Killed, then eaten, Imprisoned until dead.

STAYING POWER

1. Jesus forewarned believers: **Matthew 10:22; 24:9; John 16:2**
 - Do not be afraid to die for Him - **Matthew 10:28; Revelation 2:10**
 - Be prepared to die for Him - **Matthew 16:25**
 - The devil seeks to kill every believer - **Revelation 2:10**
2. Starting qualities of becoming a Christian don't always last:
 - Multitudes have started but quit, given up, however, many came back:
 - Peter, Judas, all the disciples, Demas, Mark

3. Why do some Christians give their lives for the gospel and some won't? **STAYING POWER!**
 - **Staying Power** has a **conscience** (what is right and what is wrong).
 - Keep one's honor, word, and faith in one's self.
 - **Staying Power** has a **cause** (a reason to stay).
 - A reason greater than one's own life (Christ and the things of God).
 - A reason which is great enough to be loyal to and even die for.
 - **Staying Power** has a **conviction** (persuasion).
 - Something so great one is persuaded to die for it.
4. Martyrs of the Christian faith have **Staying Power**.
 - In the past, today, and in the days to come, until Jesus comes back.

CONCLUSION:

1. Every believer starts the same way. Why are there so many "degrees" of faith among God's Children? Why are some active and so many inactive?
2. Every Christian martyr started exactly as any other Christian, believing in Jesus Christ and trusting Him for all things. They endured, they lasted, they even gave their lives before denying Jesus or recanting their faith in Him. Why, How? They had **Staying Power!**
3. Would/could you be a Christian martyr? How persuaded are you about the things of God? Is Christ and His cause great enough for you to die for?