



World Christian Fellowship

www.wcflondon.com
wcflondon@gmail.com

Revelation 54 Blessed are the Dead Revelation 14:12-13

Revelation 14:12-13, *Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. ¹³ Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labours, and their works follow them."*

The idea of "blessed are the dead" is a bit unique. Frankly, even in our culture we find that an objectionable perspective.

Our culture wants to avoid death. In fact, our motto might be, "Cursed are the dead."

But hardly could we hold up a flag for "blessed are the dead" and expect to start much of a movement.

But the text of Scripture says, "Blessed are the dead."

Happy are the dead. That reality sounds exactly opposite what people would commonly believe. Blessed are the living sounds more reasonable and more appealing.

Now the word “blessed,” very common word in the New Testament, **Makarios**, means happy.

It refers to religious joy or spiritual joy, bliss, deep-down fulfilment, and satisfaction. It refers to an inner joy that is the fulfilment of every longing, a serene, untouchable, unassailable contentment and peace.

There are numerous times in Scripture when the word blessed is used to describe many different conditions.

Psalms 1:1, *Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;*

Psalm 2:12, *Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.*

Psalm 32:1-2, *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. ²Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit.*

Romans 4:7-8. Repeats the same.

Psalm 40:4, *Blessed is that man who makes the Lord his trust,
And does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.*

Psalm 41:1, *Blessed is he who considers the poor; The Lord will
deliver him in time of trouble.*

Psalm 65:4, *Blessed is the man You choose, And cause to
approach You, That he may dwell in Your courts. We shall be
satisfied with the goodness of Your house, Of Your holy temple.*

Psalm 84:4-5, *Blessed are those who dwell in Your house; They
will still be praising You. Selah ⁵Blessed is the man whose
strength is in You, Whose heart is set on pilgrimage.*

Psalm 106:3, *Blessed are those who keep justice, And he
who does righteousness at all times!*

Psalm 112:1, *Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears
the Lord, Who delights greatly in His commandments.*

Psalm 119:2, *Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who
seek Him with the whole heart!*

Proverbs 8:32, *“Now therefore, listen to me, my children,
For blessed are those who keep my ways.*

Proverbs 8:34, *Blessed is the man who listens to me, Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at the posts of my doors.*

When we come into the New Testament, there are many more blessings, benedictions, or beatitudes.

Matthew 5:3-11, *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. ⁵ Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. ⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. ⁷ Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy. ⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. ⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.*

There are other beatitudes scattered around Matthew and Luke and John.

James 1: 12, *Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

There are several uses of this word that basically design a life of happiness, deep down abiding contentment, joy, tranquillity, peace, satisfaction, fulfilment.

There are seven such beatitudes in the book of Revelation.

First,

Revelation 1:3, *Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.*

Second,

Revelation 14:13, *Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' " "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labours, and their works follow them."*

There are five more to come, and we will see them unfolding in chapter **16, 19, 20 and 22**.

They do compositely is define for us a happy life, a contented life, a satisfied, fulfilled, and blissful life.

But the most startling one of all, the one that might raise eyebrows above all the rest, is this one here in chapter 14.

"Blessed are the dead."

The question immediately comes, "Why is it such a blessing to be dead?"

Two reasons are given in this text.

- First reason, because of how they lived.
- Second reason, because of how they died.

- Verse 12 discusses how they live,
- Verse 13 discusses how they died.

- They live with perseverance and
- They die with promise.

Blessed are the dead because of how they lived.

1. The perseverance of the saints.

V 12, *“Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.”*

That is a classical theological phrase.

A phrase that finds its way into the most common expression of reformed theology. The perseverance of the saints is the classic doctrine that provides assurance and hope and joy to every true believer in Jesus Christ.

It ends fear and doubt because the perseverance of the saints is that great doctrinal truth that says the elect and the called and the justified will never lose their faith, they will persevere in faith unto death.

That's why their death is blessed, because they lived never abandoning their faith.

V 12, *"They keep the commandments of God and they keep their faith in Christ."*

Those who have saving faith never lose it.
Those who believe will never stop believing.

Their faith and their salvation will endure, no matter what assaults may come against it.

Some call this eternal security.

Once saved, always saved. While those are true statements, they do not express this reality as well as this biblical phrase, *"the perseverance of the saints."*

Because what it emphasizes is the reality that regenerated people will continue in their faith to the very end, no matter what may come against them. The character of true faith is enduring.

Undying perseverance is never ever more clearly and powerfully seen than in the context of this passage.

If you want to know whether true faith perseveres, this is the best place in the Bible to see it.

Why?

Because the persecution against believers is greater than any other time in human history.

It is the worst of times because we are looking in the book of Revelation at the future. We are looking at a time called the tribulation. A latter part of that seven-year period called the great tribulation.

We are looking at Satan running rampant over the earth, the Antichrist, the false prophet, demons, sin, the judgment of God falling, wickedness on the earth that would exceed the accumulated wickedness of all prior human history, the worst of times.

If you want to prove the perseverance of the saints, then watch the saints who are in the worst of times that becomes the greatest evidence.

The character of saving faith, the undying perseverance is never more clearly and powerfully seen than in the context of this passage.

As we have been going through the book of Revelation, that saints are being massacred.

- Gentile Christians are being slaughtered.
- Jewish Christians are being killed.

The fury of Satan is unleashed in a level never before known in human experience.

Those who name the name of Jesus Christ are living under the worst assaults of Satan in all human history.

The deadly persecution of demons,
The deadly persecution of men under the power of Antichrist,
and no group of Christians has ever or will ever have their faith assaulted more drastically than this group.

Matthew 24:21-22, *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²² And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.*

The Lord must shorten those days or even the elect would be devastated. It is so severe that it must be shortened or the elect would be overwhelmed and defect.

But they won't.

Why?

Because God is always faithful who will never allow you to be tempted above that you are able.

Always with the temptation will make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it, even then.

It is the classic evidence of persevering faith in the worst of times.

Here we have this beautiful little respite in verse 12 which introduces us to the most tested believers in history, under the most powerful assaults of hell's host during the most troubled and wicked time ever. Satan's last effort to destroy the work of Christ.

No matter what Satan gives them, how strong it is, they persevere.

Is that encouraging?

The nature of saving faith, you can't kill it.

Satan couldn't kill it in Job no matter what he did can't kill it.

That's the perseverance of the saints.

What came just before verse 12?

It talked about those who worshiped the beast having to drink of the wine of the wrath of God in verse 10.

V 10, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His

indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

A cup of His anger being tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and the presence of the Lamb. The smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever. They have no rest day and night. The horrible damning torment of the ungodly.

V 14- 20, we are going to see some more of it as it runs all the way.

We see the angel in **verse 19** swinging a sickle to the earth. The great winepress of the wrath of God, blood comes out from the winepress up to the horses' bridles for a distance of two hundred miles. As God comes in great judgment and destroys the ungodly and the wicked of the earth.

The whole world is going to take the mark of the beast, as we have seen. They are going to identify with this false world ruler called the Antichrist.

But the saved in the middle of all this disaster will remain true and loyal to Christ, even to a terrifying martyrdom.

Those who truly belong to Christ will remain loyal. They will not fall prey to the lies and deceptions of Satan's forces.

They will be the blessed dead because of how they lived. Their faith never died, they lived believing to the end. These are the ones, who were saved because they heard the preaching of the two witnesses.

In **chapter 11** they are described for us. They heard the preaching of a **144,000 evangelists**. They heard the preaching of an angel in the sky preaching the eternal gospel. They believed, both Jew and Gentile.

A massive number of people.

Revelation 7:9-10, *After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"*

This massive group of people who are in heaven.

Who are they?

Revelation 7:13-17, *Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?"¹⁴ And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.¹⁵ Therefore they are before the throne of God, and*

serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. ¹⁶They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; ¹⁷for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

They are the blessed dead because of how they lived.

Their faith persevered.

Their faith endured.

In **Revelation chapter 7** described in heaven, a huge **congregation of martyred Gentile Christians**, converts, believers, who are in the presence of God who have come out of the tribulation having been massacred by Satan and the Antichrist.

In **Revelation chapter 12**, We see they will not just be Gentiles **but Jews**. We see how the Jews will be protected by God.

The end of **Revelation chapter 12**, the dragon was enraged with the women, referring to Israel. Went off to make war with the rest of her offspring who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Here we have got faithful Jews who remain obedient and who remain faithful to Jesus Christ. These are the martyrs.

They were first seen in **chapter 6** under the altar, slain because of **the Word of God** and because of **the testimony** they maintained.

These are the saints in this text.

These are the saints who persevere.

This is just a tremendous truth. If ever you have true saving faith, you will always have it. There may be times when you are tempted to doubt, times when you struggle with questions, times when Satan assaults you and tries to create doubt.

But your true faith will never die, not even in the worst of times.

Because of that you can never lose your saving faith that you will die and be blessed. The perseverance of the saints is such a powerful doctrine.

a) God promises it.

God promises that the faith that saves lasts.

Psalm 37:23-34, *The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way. ²⁴Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the Lord upholds him with His hand. ²⁵I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread.*

²⁶ He is ever merciful, and lends; And his descendants are blessed. ²⁷ Depart from evil, and do good; And dwell forevermore. ²⁸ For the Lord loves justice, And does not forsake His saints; They are preserved forever, But the descendants of the wicked shall be cut off. ²⁹ The righteous shall inherit the land, And dwell in it forever. ³⁰ The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, And his tongue talks of justice. ³¹ The law of his God is in his heart; None of his steps shall slide. ³² The wicked watches the righteous, And seeks to slay him. ³³ The Lord will not leave him in his hand, Nor condemn him when he is judged. ³⁴ Wait on the Lord, And keep His way, And He shall exalt you to inherit the land; When the wicked are cut off, you shall see it.

The psalmist is saying God holds on to His own. He sustains their faith all the way to the end, even to death.

Isaiah 43:1-7, *But now, thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine. ² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you. ³ For I am the Lord your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in your place. ⁴ Since you were precious in My sight, You have been honoured, And I have loved you; Therefore I will give men for you, And people for your life. ⁵ Fear not, for I am with you; I will*

bring your descendants from the east, And gather you from the west; ⁶I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not keep them back!' Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth— ⁷Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him."

All that is simply saying God holds on to His own.
Several times Isaiah celebrates this great truth.

Isaiah 45:17, *But Israel shall be saved by the Lord With an everlasting salvation; You shall not be ashamed or disgraced Forever and ever.*

Isaiah 49:14-16, *But Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me, And my Lord has forgotten me." ¹⁵ "Can a woman forget her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you. ¹⁶ See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me.*

God will never forget His own, always be faithful.

Isaiah 51:6, *Lift up your eyes to the heavens, And look on the earth beneath. For the heavens will vanish away like smoke, The earth will grow old like a garment, And those who dwell in it will die in like manner; But My salvation will be forever, And My righteousness will not be abolished.*

God's promise that establishes the perseverance of the saints.
God's promise establishes it.

b) God's purpose assures it.

John 6:37-39, *All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.* ³⁸ *For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.* ³⁹ *This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.*

In other words, there is not only the promise of God that He will sustain His own, but there is the plan of God or the purpose of God to call out a redeemed humanity elected before the world began, and Jesus is saying I will bring that to pass.

John 6:44, *No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.*

Nobody is going to fall through the cracks.

John 6:51, *I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."*

Once you eat, you live Forever!

Romans 8:28, *“We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”*

God has a purpose in electing, a purpose in saving, to bring His own to glory and He will make everything that happens in life work together for that good purpose.

Romans 8:29-31, *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.³⁰ Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?*

Romans 11:29, *“The gifts and callings of God the purposes of God are without repentance.”*

God does not change His mind.

Paul said to the Corinthians that the Lord will confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, God is faithful through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son.

The God who called you into fellowship will sustain you there. His purpose. God has promised. God’s promise establishes perseverance. God’s purpose assures it.

c) God's power guarantees it.

John 10:27-30, *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. ²⁸And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. ³⁰I and My Father are one."*

The power of God will see to it that anyone who believes will always believe.

God's power sustains it.

When you were saved you became a new creation. The power of God is expressed in that new creation. It is a keeping power, a sustaining power that cannot be broken.

1 John 4:4, *"Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world."*

2 Thessalonians 3:3, *"The Lord is faithful and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one."*

God will do it.

God has the power to do it.

God will not fail you.

What a tremendous and wonderful promise.

Jude 1:24, *“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy.”*

God has the power to guarantee your continuing salvation, that’s part of His purpose and promise.

All of this is provided by grace.

We don’t earn it. We didn’t earn it in the first place so we can’t keep it by earning it.

It’s all of grace.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, *Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.*

There is no such thing as having saving faith and losing it. That violates God’s promise, God’s purpose, God’s power and God’s grace.

d) Human side.

But along with all of that which is God’s side, there is our side.

This is the reason why it’s called the perseverance of the saints.

Throughout the Scripture, believers are exhorted to endure, to persevere.

We see that all throughout the New Testament. It's the human side of this. We cooperate in this wonderful work of God.

Matthew 10:22, *“And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.”*

We must endure.

Matthew 24:13, *“The one who endures to the end, he will be saved.”*

There is plenty of exhortation throughout the New Testament to us.

Colossians 1:21-23, *And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled²² in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—²³ if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.*

One of these wonderful and mysterious apparent paradoxes in Scripture where we are kept by the power of God and yet at the same time we are exhorted repeatedly again to endure.

We have a part to play.

Hebrews 3:14, *“We have become partakers of Christ if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance, firm until the end.”*

We have a part to play.

All throughout **Revelation 2 and 3** there is a common **designation of a Christian, as “overcomer.”**

The true Christian is the one who overcomes.

1 John 5:4-5, *For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵ Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*

We overcome by faith, by trusting God no matter what’s going on. We overcome even by fear. That’s a healthy kind of fear.

Jeremiah 32:40, *And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me.*

God gives us the faith, and He gives us the fear to hold on.

God gives us the love. Love also holds us to the Lord. It holds us to Christ.

The apostle Paul talks about the fact that God grants us love that holds on.

1 Thessalonians 4:9, *But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;*

John 8:31, *Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.*

By those means of faith, fear, love, and obedience, we continue in the faith.

This is the great truth of the perseverance of the saints.

They survive to the end because God gives them the faith, he gives them the fear, he gives them the love, he gives them the obedience.

Yet at the same time exhorts them to manifest all of that. That's the incredible mystery of how we cooperate in the purposes of God.

Every true Christian will survive with his faith intact to the end. The greatest evidence of that is in the book of Revelation, in the worst of times they survived.

Hebrews 11 talks about sustained faith or faith that endures.

Hebrews 11:13, *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

The reason death is so blessed for believers is they die in faith, right to the end. Their faith never dies. They all die in faith.

By faith Isaac and Jacob and Joseph and Moses and so forth.

Hebrews 11:31-34, *By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace. ³² And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: ³³ who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.*

.

Nothing could kill their faith.

- They overcame death.
- They endured torture.
- They outlasted imprisonment.
- They defeated lions.
- They conquered chains.
- They withstood fierce temptation.
- They underwent martyrdom.
- They survived with their faith intact to the very end.

Hebrews 11:36-38, *Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— ³⁸ of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.*

Their faith never died. You can't kill it.

That is the message of this great chapter.

Hebrews 12:1, *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,*

It can endure anything, absolutely anything.

True faith can't be killed.

This is the message of Hebrews 11.

True faith is relentless. It endures anything and everything.

If you ever got in where you were threatened with death or somebody is going to burn you at the stake or chop off your hands or run a spear in your side, you don't know what you would do yet, you would endure.

In faith, in reverence, in love to Christ you would endure because you can't kill true faith.

- ✓ The promise of God guarantees it,
- ✓ The purposes of God guarantee it,
- ✓ The power of God guarantees it.

Wonderfully encouraging.

This doctrine does not say that believers will be eternally saved regardless of their belief or behaviour.

It says believers will be eternally saved because their faith will continue.

What about those people who once named the name of Christ and don't anymore?

What about those people who said they were Christians and bailed out?

What about those people who made a confession of Christ at some point and now they don't?

Mark 4:5-6, *Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. ⁶ But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away.*

Jesus described that they are just temporary.

When affliction or persecution arises, they fall away.

What does that prove?

They never were saved.

1 John 2:19, *"They went out from us, because they were not of us; if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; they went out from us that it might be made manifest they were not of us."*

No matter what may come in the world, if you are a true Christian your faith will persevere by God's grace.

Because we are getting into this thing of Antichrist and demons all over the place and hell burping out all its powers and the sky collapsing and the earth disintegrating and massacres going on all over the face of the earth and the horrors of this period of time.

The question that's going to come is:

What is going to happen to Christians?

Are they going to be able to survive this?

The answer is Yes.

Because of the perseverance of the saints.

The tribulation saints will take all that the beast can give, and they will remain under it and endure it with patience, sustained, persistent faithfulness under the most relentless and vicious persecution and martyrdom.

They will die painful deaths but blessed are the dead because of how they lived.

2. How did they live?

V 12, *“Who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.”*

They keep the commandments of God. That's the first evidence of true salvation!

John 8:31, *Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.*

John 14:21, *He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."*

The obedient who demonstrate true salvation.

1 John 5:3, *"This is the love of God that we keep His commandments."*

That's characteristic of true believers.

The perseverance of the saints is demonstrated in, first, obedience.

They keep the commandments.

Demonstrated in trust.

V 12, *and the faith of Jesus.*

They not only keep the commandments of God, but they keep their faith in Jesus.

Trust, loyalty to Christ, loyalty to Jesus even under the deadly reign of Antichrist who demands loyalty to himself and kills those who refuse.

The true believer continues to believe. He continues to trust in Jesus through it all.

The only kind of faith the Lord would give us anyway.

What is the point of God giving us a faith that couldn't endure?

After all, whatever faith we have comes from Him.

Why would God want to give us a faith that didn't endure?

Inconsistent with His promise, His eternal purpose in electing, His power which is able to keep us.

People in **Hebrews 11** never lost their faith. They endured to the end, believing and obeying.

If your faith is real, you would any circumstance.

Why are these dead blessed?

Because they lived life most purely, nobly, purposefully, fully, richly, joyously, happily, and exemplary.

Why?

Because they lived life the best it can be lived, they lived it in faith in Christ and obedience to God.

If there was no heaven, that's the best of life.

The righteous life is the best life if there was no heaven.

Blessed are the dead if there is nothing beyond the grave, because of how they lived life in obedience to the commandments of God and trust, and they are the happy and the blessed.

They are also blessed not only because of how they live, but how they died.

They lived with perseverance, they died with promise.

V 13, *Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' " "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labours, and their works follow them."*

Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: " Four times earlier in the book of Revelation there is such a heavenly voice.

- Twice in chapter 10,
- Once in chapter 11 and
- Once in chapter 14:2.

It could be Christ, as the voice in **Revelation 1:11-19**. Or it could be God.

There are two more voices from heaven, one is in **Revelation 18:4**, the other in **Revelation 21:3**. They are obviously God.

Very likely a word from the Lord rather than an angel.

There are so many angels mentioned in this chapter, as we pointed out last time, lots of angels.

Starting in verse 6 you have three angels,
Starting down in verse 15 you have several more angels.

The fact that it doesn't say this was an angel indicates it probably wasn't. Very likely a word from the Lord.

The word is this, *"Write."*

John is told to write.

John is under divine mandate to record the word from God.

"Blessed are the dead."

Revelation 2:13, Blessed are the martyrs like Antipas.

Revelation 6:9-11, Blessed are the martyrs under the altar.

Revelation 7 blessed is that innumerable congregation in heaven who have come out of the tribulation, not only because they lived life to the fullest in obedience and trust because they die in the Lord.

Psalm 116:15, *Precious in the sight of the Lord Is the death of His saints.*

No wonder the apostle Paul in

1 Corinthians 15:55, *"O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"*

Death doesn't frighten the believer at all.

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, who die with a relationship to the living God through Jesus Christ.

Not only because they lived life to the fullest in obedience and trust, but because they will experience in death the fullest reward and promise.

“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.”

What does that mean?

Through the rest of the great tribulation, to the very end when Jesus Christ returns to destroy the wicked and set up His Kingdom.

You don't have to fear.

You don't have to worry.

You are going to be blessed right on out to the end.

“Yes,” says the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit saying that.

The Holy Spirit only speaks here and in **Revelation 22:17**.

This is affirmation. This is the Holy Spirit saying, “Yes! I want them dead.”

Why?

- ✓ He has got all the work of sustaining them.
- ✓ He loves them.
- ✓ He wants to see them out of all that pain.

- ✓ He adores His own.
- ✓ He has sustained the saints and strengthened the saints who have suffered all the way to martyrdom.
- ✓ He is on their side.
- ✓ He is excited about their pain being over.
- ✓ He is excited about their tears and sorrows being wiped away.

3. How they die.

They are blessed for two reasons.

i) Rest.

“Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours.”

The Holy Spirit loves believers perfectly. He longs for them to enter their eternal rest. He longs for them to be delivered from their labours.

Life for these dear saints during the time of the tribulation will be filled with the worst trouble, the deepest sorrow as those they love are killed, children, parents, and spouses. They will have to demonstrate the greatest exertion of strength to survive.

They will have no ability to buy or sell in that economy.
They will be on the brink of starvation.

They will be hunted to death.
But when they die, they will rest.

Does the Spirit of God loves us and longs for us to enjoy the best?

The damned never ever forever will rest.
Their torment goes up forever and ever and they have no rest.
But Christians rest.

ii) Reward.

“For their deeds follow with them.”

It means their service to the Lord.

What does this mean?

When you go to heaven, when these believers go to heaven, the things they have done for the Lord are going to follow right to heaven with them.

Hebrews 6:10, *“For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.”*

God’s not going to forget your service.
When you go to heaven the record of your service is going with you.

You will not only have rest but have reward.

A wonderful, glorious promise it is that the Lord someday will grant to us a crown of life, an incorruptible crown.

The apostle Paul anticipated that!

2 Timothy 4:7-8, *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

Our works will be tested and rewarded.

Revelation 20:12, *And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.*

God not only has a book with a record of the sins of unbelievers, but He has a book with the record of the service of saints. He will reward the righteous.

Blessed are the dead. Not just any dead. Those who live in obedience and trust, those who die in rest and reward.

The rest are damned. How tragic.