

ARE YOU READY TO DIE?

by Roy H. Lanier Sr.
Deceased

“I AM READY NOT ONLY TO BE IMPRISONED BUT EVEN TO DIE IN JERUSALEM FOR THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS (Acts 21:13b).

The words of our text were spoken by Paul as he was going toward Jerusalem. A prophet said he was going to suffer at the hands of the Jews, and his friends had tried to dissuade him from going to Jerusalem. Why could Paul so confidently affirm that he was ready to die? Death is so serious that most of us dread the experience, but it held no fears for Paul. He had faced death so many times that he did not fear it. Furthermore, Paul had so prepared himself for death that he did not fear it. But how had he prepared himself for death?

Proper Relationship

Paul was ready to die because he had established the proper relationship with God. This relationship is expressed in the phrase “IN CHRIST.” If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). In Christ we have redemption (**Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14**). In Christ we have all spiritual blessings (**Ephesians 1:3**). Those who die in the Lord are blessed (**Revelation 14:13**). Those who die in the Lord and sleep in Jesus will rise to meet him when becomes (**1 Thessalonians 4:14-17**).

The question comes, how did Paul get into Christ? Paul answers that question by saying “WE WERE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST” (**Romans 6:3**), And he speaks of others being baptized into Christ (**Galatians 3:27**). So we conclude that when he believed in Jesus, repented of his sins (**Acts 2:38**) and acknowledged Jesus as his Lord (Romans 10:9-10), he was in a position to be baptized into Christ. Being in Christ where he enjoyed redemption through the blood, Paul was ready to die and sleep in Jesus until the Lord comes for him.

Divorced From the World

Paul could say that he was ready to die because he had so completely divorced himself from the world and the love of the world that he was ready for heaven. Many people who have been baptized into Christ still love the world and the works of the flesh to such an extent that they are not ready to die. Paul teaches that some people of his day, though in Christ, were walking after the flesh and warned that, if they continued to practice such things, they would not be permitted to enter heaven (**Romans 8:12-13; Galatians 5:19-21**). Paul said he had suffered the loss of all things worldly, and now counted them as refuse that he might gain Christ (**Philippians 3:3, 8-10**). John tells us to love not the world or the things of the world (**I John 2:15-17**). And Paul tells us to set our affections on things above (**Colossians 3:2**).

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Faithful In Service

Not only must those in Christ be heavenly minded to be ready to die, they must also be faithful in the service to the Lord. Paul said he had fought a good fight, finished the course, and kept the faith (**2 Timothy 4:7**). He also said that it was required of stewards that they be found faithful (**1 Corinthians 4:2**). The one talent man (**Matthew 25**) was punished in the day of accounts because he had refused to accept responsibility. He had not served his master. So if we fail to work for the Lord, we will be rejected in the Day of Judgment. We do not pay for our salvation by our service, but eternal life is promised to those who are faithful in their service [even to the point of death, DM] (**Revelation 2:10**). Eternal salvation is for those who obey (**Hebrews 5:9**). And one who has not obeyed the Lord's command to serve is not ready to die.

So we see that in order for one to be ready to die, one must believe in Jesus, repent of his sins, confess his faith and be baptized into Christ; he must divorce himself from the love of the world, set his affections on heavenly things, and be faithful in serving the Lord as long as he lives. Are you ready to die? Knowing not the day of our death, it behooves each one to be ready to die at any hour.