

Near the end of the First Century, Christians and Jews refused to worship Rome's Emperor, and they were beaten, removed from their homes, imprisoned and put to death by the thousands.

When we are trying to live for God and some horrible pain comes into our lives, we want to know where God is. Did he send it? Did he allow it? Who knows? All we know is that it hurts. It would be so nice if God just took it away. Sometimes He does and sometimes He doesn't and that is what drives us crazy.

What God did was let them know *he knew what they were going through*. He said, "I was dead but now I am alive." When Rome butchered Him they were sending Him home to the Father's house. (Jn. 14)

An eight-year-old boy was in the hospital dying from cancer. He heard the doctor in the hall say, it wouldn't be long. When the parents came in, he was crying and said, "I'm scared, what is it like to die?"

The dad said, son, you know how you often fall asleep on the living room floor watching television and wake up in your bed wondering how you got there. Well, either your mom or I, picked you up; carried you into your bedroom; put you in your bed, tucked you in and kissed you on the forehead. That is what death is. Your heavenly Father picks you up and carries you to His house.

In the darkness of the catacombs, in the filth of underground sewers, in the shadows of a thousand Roman nights, these pages were held in the trembling hands of Pastors, reading them to their people. The words sent the light of hope into the devil's darkness.

What is heaven? It is being *set free* from *sin*. First John 3 says we will be like Jesus and He was sinless. This means he was 100% love. It is being set free from *suffering*. Jesus did not go *to* the cross. He went *through* the cross to His home in heaven. Christians do not go *into* the hell of cancer and chemotherapy, they go *through* it to Heaven and Jesus is our inspiration and example [Hebrews 12]

"Run with endurance the race God has set before you. We can do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus. Our faith depends on Him from start to finish. He endured the shame of dying on a cross because He knew the joy that lay ahead. Now, He is seated in the place of highest honor, beside God's throne. Think about all He endured at the hands of sinful people who did terrible things to him. Don't get weary and give up."

**Suffering for Jesus, like these people were called on to do, means we are doing for him what He has already done for us.**

Worry is wrong, but I worry (sometimes). Godless people are holding nuclear and biological weapons they would love to bring down on us to destroy the American way of life they envy, but do not have. I worried for my grandchildren but God set me free. If they kill us, they are sending us home to our home on high. If they destroy our way of life and we are like Christians in the Ukraine, our job description does not change. We are to tell people how to be saved and tell saved people how to live. [Matt. 28:18-20]

**"It is not death to die  
To leave the weary road we trod  
To enjoy fellowship on high  
And be at home with God."**