



## LESSON #18 - THE PATIENCE OF THE SAINTS

### Introduction and context

**Revelation 15:2, 3:** *“And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God.”*

These verses describe the last generation of **living saints** who will gain the victory over the beast, his image, his mark and the number of His name. **How** did they gain the victory?

The expression “**patience of the saints**” is found **immediately before** the description of the trial of God’s people as they face the beast, his image and his mark

**Revelation 13:10:** *“He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.”*

The expression “**patience of the saints**” is also found **Immediately after** the mention of the beast, his image and his mark

**Revelation 14:12:** *“Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”*

### Definition of Terms

First we want to define what is meant by the word “**patience**”

The Greek word is *hupomone* which means “to **persevere**, to **hang in there at all and every cost**, to **endure**, to be **steadfast**, it is an **independent, unyielding, defiant perseverance** in the face of aggressive misfortune”. The word is very **frequently linked** with the word **faith**.

Next we want to discover what is meant by the word “**saints.**” **Who are they?**

In the context of **Daniel** and **Revelation** the saints are God's faithful people who have endured persecution by the little horn, the beast and the harlot (**Daniel 7:21, 25; Revelation 13:7, 10; 16:6; 17:6; 18:24**)

**Daniel 7:21-22:** *"I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them."*

**Revelation 13:7:** *"It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them."*

**Revelation 17:6:** *"I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement."*

The **saints** are to be identified as the **woman** of **Revelation 12**. Whereas in **Daniel 7:25** and **Revelation 13:5** the **saints** are persecuted by the **beast** and the **little horn** for 1260 years, in **Revelation 12:6** it is the **woman** who is persecuted by the **dragon** for the **same period**. Thus the **saints** are the same as the **woman**—the faithful church of Jesus Christ.

The "patience of the saints" must be understood in the context of the trial the church will suffer when the land beast raises up an image of the first beast and enforces on pain of death the mark of the beast. I believe that the best way to comprehend the expression is to go to the parable of Jesus about the **persistent widow** which is found in **Luke 18:1-8**

### The Two Lessons of the parable

**Luke 18:1:** *"Then He spoke a parable to them that men always ought to pray and not lose heart. . . [never give up]"*

### The Judge

**Luke 18:2:** *" . . . saying: 'There was in a certain city a **judge** who did not fear God nor regard man.'"*

According to **Luke 18:7** the **judge** in the parable represents **God**. But the **comparison** between God and the judge is by way of **contrast**. Both the judge and God **delay** the meting out of justice but finally they both avenge the pliant but for **contrasting reasons**.

### The Widow

**Luke 18:3A:** *" Now there was a widow in that city. . . "*

The **Woman** represents the **church**. But this is not the church under **ordinary circumstances**—it is the church **totally destitute** of any earthly support.

In the book of **Revelation** the woman is employed as a **symbol** of the **Church** that is **persecuted** by the **dragon** (**Revelation 12:1, 6, 13, 14**).

This is not an **ordinary** woman; she is a **widow—destitute of all human support**. She has been “cleaned out” by her adversary and her **only hope** against him lies in the intervention of the **judge**.

According to the parable itself (**Luke 18:7**) the **widow** represents **God’s elect** [or saints] who cry out to Him **day and night** for **justice** against the **adversary**.

Scholars who have studied this parable agree that the widow’s husband most likely owed a **large sum of money** to a certain **creditor**. Upon his death, the creditor **repossessed all his belongings** and left the widow **totally destitute**. She had no **children**, no **home**, no **money** and no **friends**—she was alone, forsaken!!

### The Widow’s Persistence

**Luke 18:3B (NIV):** “. . . and she came [kept coming] to him, saying, ‘Get justice for me from my *adversary*.’

The verb “came” here is better translated (as in most modern versions) “**kept coming**” or “**continued coming**.”

The sense of the verb is seen in **verse 5** where the judge says: “*I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.*”

The widow did not come **only once** and then **give up**. She had an **independent, unyielding, defiant** perseverance in the face of **aggressive misfortune**.

### The Adversary (antidikōn)

The **adversary or enemy** in the parable represents **Satan**

**I Peter 5:8:** “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary [antidikōn] the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”

### The Delay

**Luke 18:4, 5:** “And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man,<sup>5</sup> yet because this widow troubles me I will *avenge* her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’”

The judge **delayed** in answering the widow’s pleas. We are told that “he would not for a while.”

Likewise, **God will delay** in answering the pleas of His elect during the **time of trouble**:

**Luke 18:7:** *“And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?”*

The expression, “though he bear long with them” is variously translated.

The **New International Version** says: “Will he keep **putting them off?**”

The **Jerusalem Bible** has it: “even when he **delays** to help them?”

The **Weymouth** translation states: “although he **delays** vengeance on their behalf?”

It is clear that **God will delay** the deliverance of His people!! Yet the **contrast** between God and the judge is clear. Whereas the judge **capriciously delays** to answer the widow but in the end give her what she asks to **get her off his back**, **God delays to answer** his elect because **He loves them**.

### **The Punch Line**

**Luke 18:6-8:** *“Then the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge said. <sup>7</sup> And shall **God** [the judge] not **avenge** [over the adversary] His own **elect** [the widow] who **cry out day and night** to Him, though He **bears long** [the delay] with them?” <sup>8</sup> I tell you that He will **avenge them speedily**. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He **really find faith** [the kind of faith the widow had] on the earth?”*

### **The Time Frame**

**To what particular time in human history does this parable apply to?**

***Preceding Context:***

**Luke 17:26-37:** The second coming of Jesus

***Succeeding Context:***

**Luke 18:8:** The second coming of Jesus

We have seen that the **judge** represents **God**, the **adversary** represents **Satan**, the **widow** symbolizes the **church in dire straits** and the **delay** represents the time **God delays** in answering the prayers of His people.

### **Special End Time Application**

Christ describes **the elect** as living especially in the midst of the **final time of trouble** when they will be **persecuted** and have to **flee and leave everything behind**.

Those who are expecting to go to heaven in a **pre-tribulation rapture** will find themselves in the midst of the tribulation without the necessary faith to withstand the loss of all. We must learn to **pray** and to **trust** God now in the easy times.

**Matthew 24:22, 24:** *“And except those days [the final time of trouble and tribulation] should be shortened there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened. .<sup>24</sup> For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets and shall shew great signs and wonders insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”*

There is a **time of trouble** coming that is so great that the **most fertile imagination** cannot begin to grasp it. Jesus spoke of this time:

### **The Widow**

The Elect represents the **144,000 living saints** who will go **victoriously** through the tribulation. They will with **unflinching perseverance** face the **beast** and his **image** and they will **refuse the mark** even on pain of death

### **The Adversary**

The adversary represents Satan who will totally strip God’s people of every human support. In this way God will disconnect His people from everything that binds them to planet earth.

### **Crying Out**

The expression “cry out” in the parable translates the Greek word *boao*. This is a **very intense word** which describes a person crying out in **agony** and **anguish**.

**This word is used in Matthew 27:46 to describe the agony of Jesus on the cross:** *“My God, My God, Why have you forsaken Me?”*

### **The Delay**

God’s people will not be delivered immediately. They will go through the time of trouble and **feel forsaken** of God and yet they will still cling to Him with an unyielding faith. This will be the **Gethsemane** experience of God’s people. It will also be their **Calvary**. They will **feel forsaken** of God but they will **commend themselves** to Him

This period of delay during the terrible outpouring of God’s wrath is described in **Isaiah 54:7, 8:**

*“For a mere moment I have forsaken you, but with great mercies I will gather you.<sup>8</sup> With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you,” says the LORD, your Redeemer.”*

## Old Testament Examples

### The experience of Jacob:

- The story is found in **Genesis 32**
- His brother [the antidikon] was coming with 400 armed men to destroy Jacob
- Jacob and his family were totally defenseless
- Jacob feared that his brother would destroy him and his family
- Jacob alone poured out his heart to God in prayer
- He struggled with Jesus all night
- He refused to let Jesus go until Jesus blessed him
- Jesus blessed him and changed his name
- Crying Out
- **Genesis 32:24-30:** *"Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. <sup>25</sup> Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. <sup>26</sup> And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!" <sup>27</sup> So He said to him, "What is your name?"*

*"He said, "Jacob." <sup>28</sup> And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed." <sup>29</sup> Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there. <sup>30</sup> So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."*

- **Daniel 12:1** picks up on this: *"At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time [same expression in **Matthew 24**]. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book."*

**Job:** There are all the elements of the parable in the story of Job. There is the widow who has lost all [Job], the adversary who takes all from the widow [Satan], the crying out day and night [Job], the delay [God does not immediately deliver Job], and the final deliverance and rewarding of Job.

- Job **lost everything** he had: Children, wife, friends, possessions, health.
- He was **accused by Satan** before the heavenly courts.
- He **pleaded with God** for an explanation of his sufferings.

- **God delayed** His answer until **chapter 38**. Yet Job did not let go of the hand of God: *“Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” (Job 13:15).*
- In the end, Job’s **prayers were answered** and his cause was vindicated!

### The Three young men in the fiery furnace

- **The widow:** The three young men stand before the beast, His image and his number and mark
- **The adversary:**
- **The delay and time of trouble:** They had to go through the tribulation. God did not deliver them before they went through the furnace
- **The judge:** Jesus who delivers them
- **Their faith:** Willing to go even to death for Jesus

### New Testament Examples

Perseverant prayer is also illustrated by the story of the **woman of Canaan** who **pleaded** with Jesus to heal her daughter (**Matthew 15:21-28**).

- In spite of the fact that Jesus kept **putting her off**
- Ignoring her
- Hearing the disciples chastise her
- Saying he was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel,
- Apparently calling her a dog
- She **boldly continued** coming
- Jesus **rewarded** her by healing her daughter and saying to her: *“O woman, great is thy faith.” (Matthew 15:28)*

**All the elements** of this parable are present in the passion of Jesus in the **Garden** and on the **Cross**.

The **adversary who tortured** Jesus was Satan. (**Luke 22:53**)

Jesus had **nothing on earth to lean upon**. His **disciples** forsook him (**Matthew. 26:56**). He did not even have any **clothes** on His back. (**Matthew. 27:35**)

He **pleaded with His Father** to take away the cup if it were possible. (**Matthew. 26:39-44**) Yet the answer did not appear to come, it was **delayed**. Jesus **felt forsaken** of His own Father. (**Matthew. 27:46**)

But on the glorious **resurrection morning** He was vindicated and the hosts of darkness fled. **Hebrews 5:7** describes the perseverant faith of Jesus: “. . . who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear. . .”

### **Why the Delay with Jesus?**

**Hebrews 5:8:** “. . . though He was a Son, yet He **learned obedience** by the things which He suffered.”

**Job 23:10:** “When he [God] has tried me, I shall come forth as gold.”

**Isaiah 48:10** “Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.”

**I Peter 5:6-8:** “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time”<sup>7</sup> casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.<sup>8</sup> Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”

“The Lord permits trials in order that we may be cleansed from earthliness, from selfishness, from harsh, unchristlike traits of character. He suffers the deep waters of affliction to go over our souls in order that we may know Him and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, in order that we may have deep heart longings to be cleansed from defilement, and may come forth from the trial purer, holier, happier. Often we enter the furnace of trial with our souls darkened with selfishness; but if patient under the crucial test, we shall come forth reflecting the divine character.” (**Christ Object Lessons** p. 175)

### **The Unanswered Question is Answered**

**Luke 18:8:** “...Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, will he really find faith on the earth?”

This question is answered in **Revelation 13: 10** and **14:12:** “Here is the **patience** [better, “perseverance”] of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the **faith** of Jesus.”