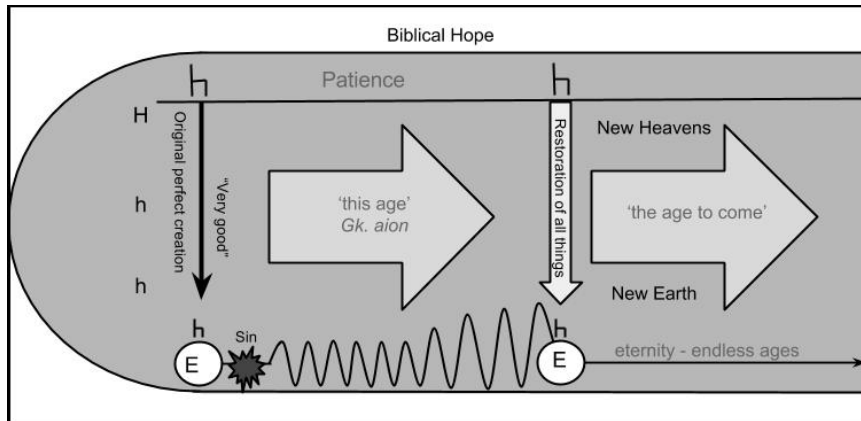


The Witness of the Gospel

I. REVIEW – THE TWO-AGE FRAMEWORK OF THE BIBLE

A. This age and the age to come



³² **Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come...** ³⁶ **But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken.** (Mt 12:32-36 NIV)

³⁴ **And Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, ³⁵ but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, ³⁶ for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.** (Lk 20:34–36 ESV)

²⁰ **God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come.** (Eph 1:20–21 NRSV)

B. Life in the Present Age/present world

³ **Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,** (Ga 1:3–4 NIV)

¹⁷ **Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸ Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. ¹⁹ In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.** (1 Ti 6:17–19 NIV)

³³ **I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world.”** (Jn 16:33 HCSB)

¹¹ **For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹² teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,** (Tt 2:11–13 NKJV)

⁸ for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. (1 Ti 4:8 NASB95)

C. Temporal/present troubles vs. unending/future glory

¹⁶ Therefore, we do not lose heart. Yes, even though our outer man keeps being utterly devastated, nevertheless our inner man goes on being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our momentary, slight affliction is accomplishing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we fix our attention not on the things that are presently being experienced, but rather on the things that are not yet being beheld. For the things that are presently being experienced are temporary, whereas the things that are not yet being beheld are eternal. (2 Cor. 4:16-18 BHT)

¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. ¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us... ²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. (Ro 8:17–25 NIV)

D. Ages divided by the Day of the Lord

³² Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come... ³⁶ But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. (Mt 12:32-36 NIV)

⁹ They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might ¹⁰ on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you. (2 Th 1:9–10 NIV)

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats... ⁴⁶ “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.” (Mt 25:31–46 NIV)

II. THE WITNESS OF THE MERCY OF GOD IN THE PRESENT AGE

A. The patience and mercy of God in the present age

³⁰ In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. ³¹ For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.” (Ac 17:30–31 NIV)

⁴ Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? ⁵ But because of

your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. (Ro 2:4–5 NIV)

³ Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, ⁴ and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation"... ⁸ But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief... (2 Pe 3:8–10 NASB95)

III. THE MESSIANIC PATTERN

A. The Mystery: Messiah had to suffer in the present age

²⁵ He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" (Lk 24:25–26 NIV)

²¹ From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. ²² Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You." ²³ But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's." (Mt 16:21–23 NASB95)

³⁰ They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, ³¹ because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." ³² But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it. (Mk 9:30–32 NIV)

²⁷ Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, ²⁸ so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. (Heb 9:27–28 NIV)

B. Messiah's suffering as an example

⁹ God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent His One and Only Son into the world so that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, if God loved us in this way, we also must love one another. (1 Jn 4:9–11 HCSB)

¹³ Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, ¹⁴ or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. ¹⁵ For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people... ¹⁸ Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. ¹⁹ For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. ²⁰ But how is it

to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. ²¹ To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. ²² “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” ²³ When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. (1 Pe 2:13–23 NIV)

⁵ and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, (Re 1:5 NIV)

- ¹³ I know where you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, not even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives. (Re 2:13 NIV)*

¹ Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, ² so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. (1 Pe 4:1–2 NASB95)

¹⁷ Therefore, He had to be like His brothers in every way, so that He could become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For since He Himself was tested and has suffered, He is able to help those who are tested. (Heb 2:17–18 HCSB)

³⁴ Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. (Mk 8:34–35 NIV)

IV. APOSTOLIC EXAMPLE

- A. Bearing witness to the mercy of God, while testifying of the coming Kingdom

¹⁵ Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. ¹⁶ But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. (1 Ti 1:15–16 NIV)

¹⁶ Therefore I urge you to imitate me. ¹⁷ For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church. (1 Co 4:16–17 NIV)

²⁴ Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions. (Col 1:24 NASB95)

¹¹ And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. ¹² That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until

that day...^{2:2} And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.³ Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus...⁸ Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel,⁹ for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained.¹⁰ Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.¹¹ It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him;¹² If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us;¹³ If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.¹⁴ Remind them of these things,...^{3:10} Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance,¹¹ persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me!¹² Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted ...⁶ For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;⁸ in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2 Ti 1:11-4:8 NASB95)

- ¹⁹ But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and after winning the crowds over, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, presuming him to be dead.²⁰ But after the disciples had surrounded him, he got up and went back into the city. On the next day he left with Barnabas for Derbe.²¹ After they had proclaimed the good news in that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, to Iconium, and to Antioch.²² They strengthened the souls of the disciples and encouraged them to continue in the faith, saying, "We must enter the kingdom of God through many persecutions." (Ac 14:19-22 NET)

⁵ because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake.⁶ You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.⁷ And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.⁸ The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere...⁹ They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath...¹⁴ For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own people the same things those churches suffered from the Jews (1 Th 1:5-2:14 NIV)

²² But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—²³ if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.²⁴ Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. (Col 1:22-24 NIV)

²⁷ Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;²⁸ in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God.²⁹ For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,³⁰ experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me. (Php 1:27–30 NASB95)

V. THE CHALLENGE OF LIVING IN LIGHT OF THE DAY OF THE LORD

A. The pattern of this age vs the Messianic example

³⁰ As you once disobeyed God, but now have received mercy through their disobedience,³¹ so they too have now disobeyed, resulting in mercy to you, so that they also now may receive mercy.³² For God has imprisoned all in disobedience, so that He may have mercy on all...¹ Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship.² Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God. (Ro 11:30–12:2 HCSB)

- ⁴ The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2 Co 4:4 NIV)***

³ Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires.⁴ They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.” (2 Pe 3:3–4 NIV)

²⁰ Wisdom calls out in the street; she raises her voice in the public squares.²¹ She cries out above the commotion; she speaks at the entrance of the city gates:²² “How long, foolish ones, will you love ignorance? How long will you mockers enjoy mocking and you fools hate knowledge?”²³ If you respond to my warning, then I will pour out my spirit on you and teach you my words.²⁴ Since I called out and you refused, extended my hand and no one paid attention,²⁵ since you neglected all my counsel and did not accept my correction,²⁶ I, in turn, will laugh at your calamity. I will mock when terror strikes you,²⁷ when terror strikes you like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when trouble and stress overcome you.²⁸ Then they will call me, but I won’t answer; they will search for me, but won’t find me.²⁹ Because they hated knowledge, didn’t choose to fear the LORD, (Pr 1:20–29 HCSB)

- ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.¹¹ Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. (2 Co 5:10–11 NIV)***

B. The Day of the Lord is at hand

² **“Son of man, prophesy and say: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: “ ‘Wail and say, ‘Alas for that day!’”** ³ **For the day is near, the day of the LORD is near— a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations. (Eze 30:2–3 NIV)**

¹⁵ **“The day of the LORD is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head. (Ob 15 NIV)**

¹⁵ **Alas for that day! For the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty. (Joe 1:15 NIV)**

¹⁴ **Now after John was imprisoned, Jesus went into Galilee and proclaimed the gospel of God.** ¹⁵ **He said, “The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the gospel!” (Mk 1:14–15 NET)**

C. The assembly and the Day of the Lord

⁶ **Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”** ⁷ **He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.** ⁸ **But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Ac 1:6–8 NIV)**

¹⁶ **No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:** ¹⁷ **“ ‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.** ¹⁸ **Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy...** ⁴¹ **Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.** ⁴² **They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.** ⁴³ **Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. (Ac 2:16–43 NIV)**

- ¹ **Blow a trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, For the day of the LORD is coming; Surely it is near ...** ¹⁵ **Blow a trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly,** ¹⁶ **Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, Gather the children and the nursing infants. Let the bridegroom come out of his room And the bride out of her bridal chamber. (Joe 2:1–16 NASB95)**

²³ **Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.** ²⁴ **And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds,** ²⁵ **not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Heb 10:23–25 NIV)**

D. Corporate prayer and the life of the assembly

⁴ **...he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about...** ¹² **Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk from the city.** ¹³ **When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying...** ¹⁴ **They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. (Ac 1:4–14 NIV)**

- ³⁴ **“Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. ³⁵ For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.” (Lk 21:34–36 NIV)**

⁴¹ **Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. ⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. (Ac 2:41–43 NIV)**

²⁹ **Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. ³⁰ Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” ³¹ After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. (Ac 4:29–31 NIV)**

¹³ **Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand... ¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people. (Eph 6:13–18 NIV)**

⁷ **The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. (1 Pe 4:7 NIV)**

VI. ESCHATOLOGICAL WITNESS

A. Time of Jacob’s trouble

⁷ **It was also given to him (the Man of Lawlessness) to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. (Rev 13:7 NASB)**

¹⁷ **Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God’s commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus. (Re 12:17 NIV)**

⁹ **“You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them... ¹² “Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. ¹³ Everyone will hate you because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. (Mk 13:9–13 NIV)**

⁹ **“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. (Mt 24:9 NKJV)**

¹¹ **They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. (Re 12:11 NIV)**

B. Man of Lawlessness

²⁵ 'He (the Man of Lawlessness) will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. ²⁶ 'But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. ²⁷ 'Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.' (Dan 7:25-27 NASB)

² not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. ³ Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. (2 Th 2:2–3 NIV)

¹⁰ "If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity they will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed." This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God's people. (Re 13:10 NIV)

- ¹⁰ Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. (Re 3:10 NIV)

VII. THE WITNESS OF THE GOSPEL

A. The Testimony of the Prophets and Patriarchs

²³ Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching... ³² Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering. ³³ Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. ³⁴ You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. ³⁵ So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. ³⁶ You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. ³⁷ For, "In just a little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay." ³⁸ And, "But my righteous one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back." ³⁹ But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved. ^{11:1} Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. ² This is what the ancients were commended for... ⁷ By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith. ⁸ By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. ⁹ By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he

was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God...¹³ All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.¹⁴ People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own...³⁵ Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection...³⁹ These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised,⁴⁰ since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.^{12:1} Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, (Heb 10:23-12:1 NIV)

² during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.³ He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins...⁷ John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?" The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah.¹⁶ John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."¹⁸ And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news (NASB 'Gospel') to them. (Lk 3:2-18 NIV)

²² Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.²³ "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets."²⁴ "But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.²⁵ Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep.²⁶ Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets. (Lk 6:22-26 NIV)

B. Consistency of the Apostolic witness

³ I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day...⁸ Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God...¹¹ for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.¹² For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day. (2 Ti 1:3-12 NASB95)

¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.¹⁷ For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-

pleased”—¹⁸ and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.¹⁹ So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. (2 Pe 1:16–19 NASB95)

²² But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—²³ if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.²⁴ Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. (Col 1:22–24 NIV)

¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. (Ro 8:17–18 NIV)

⁸ We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair;⁹ persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.¹⁰ We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.¹¹ For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body.¹² So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.¹³ It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak,¹⁴ because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself.¹⁵ All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (2 Co 4:8–18 NIV)

⁸ More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. (Php 3:8–11 NASB95)

⁸ We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself.⁹ Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. (2 Co 1:8–9 NIV)