

## **POWER OF PRAISE** by: Liz Wahl Andre'

### "Bearing the Reproach of Christ"

Isaiah prophesied thousands of years before the birth of Jesus that the Christ would be "despised and rejected by men...a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and that men would not esteem Him (Isaiah 53: 3). Although Jesus went about doing good: healing the sick, casting out devils, raising the dead, preaching the truth, and loving the unlovable, although the crowds thronged Him and hung on His every word, in the end He was abandoned by everyone, and died a criminal's death as a public spectacle. This was God's eternal plan, fulfilling the numerous Old Testament prophesies foretelling the suffering of Messiah. Jesus is "the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8).

Jesus came to earth with one purpose: to suffer and die on the cross as the payment for our sins so that we could escape the wrath and judgment of God and receive everlasting life. Because He never waivered from His mission, it resulted in millions being rescued from hell and death. The Bible teaches that we, too, are not to count our lives as precious, but to walk in Jesus' footsteps, looking forward to living forever in the eternal city "whose builder and maker is God." Believers are called to follow Jesus, losing their attraction for this sinful world and living for another world, that is, heaven. "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore, let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come" (Hebrews 13: 11-14).

Moses, the deliverer of the Israelites, was an Old Testament type of Christ. Raised up in the wealth and privilege of royalty in Pharaoh's household, he chose to suffer persecution with his kinsmen, the people of God, rather "than enjoy the passing pleasure of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater than the treasures in Egypt" (Hebrews 11:24-26).

The Apostle Paul had an encounter with the risen Christ on the road to Damascus, where he was traveling to persecute Christians. Paul's eyes were opened to the Truth. A man of breeding, religious position, reputation and learning declared that he counted all these things as "dung" so that he could

gain Christ (Philippians 3: 8). Paul suffered many things for the gospel, but He endured to the end, finishing the race: “For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe” (1 Timothy 4: 10). Paul overcame with faith and gratitude, declaring, “I have learned in whatever state I am to be content” (Philippians 4: 11).

Laying our lives down for the glory of God is the way to everlasting life and our eternal reward. Jesus said, “He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it” (Matthew 10: 39). This is not a contradiction; Jesus is showing us how to exchange the temporary for the eternal, the vile for the precious, the corrupt for the incorruptible. Because the world hates Jesus, it will also hate His followers. In modern day vernacular, we should wear the scorn the world has for Jesus as a “badge of honor.”

***“If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified” (1 Peter 4: 14).***

***“...Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of God” (Hebrews 12: 1-2).***