



"There is scarcely anything that is right that we cannot hope to accomplish by labor and perseverance. But the first must be earnest and the second unremitting."

—Robert E. Lee

**27-Feb-09**

## *Persevering to the End*

Jeremiah 30:5-7 alerts us to consider that the time of the end will be unique and horrific to experience, but it concludes with a comforting [hope](#) that we can persevere through it:

For thus says the LORD: "We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of [peace](#). Ask now, and see, whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale? Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it."

Though broad, this declaration forces us to realize that in all of man's history no other time can fully compare to "the time of Jacob's trouble" and the universal and intense fear it will cause. In His Olivet Prophecy (Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21), Jesus provides greater detail concerning specific events of that same period, leaving no doubt that His [second coming](#) will be preceded by frightening and tumultuous events.

On a general worldwide basis, a multitude of wars, earthquakes, famines, and disease epidemics will occur with increasing frequency as events approach their climax at His return. These will be accompanied by heart-breaking, fear-driven betrayals of one Christian by another and by outright hateful persecutions of Christians from [the world](#). It

will be an intensified, larger-scale repetition of what happened before the [Noachian Flood](#). God's pledge to deliver Jacob from it promises that He will oversee events just as He did with Noah, his family, and the animals in the ark ([Genesis 8:1](#)).

Noah is surely the Bible's most outstanding example of persevering through a long and dreadful experience. The Flood was also unique, universal, and devastating to the earth and everyone caught in it except for those on the ark. Not only did Noah have to persevere through the Flood itself, but also through 120 years of events during his preparations for its arrival. We need to be fully aware that Noah's salvation was ultimately God's doing, but we should also thoroughly and thoughtfully consider that Noah was fully involved with [God](#) in carrying out all that God told him to do for that 120-year period ([Genesis 6:22](#); [7:5](#)).

The English word "perseverance" is rare in the Bible. In the King James Version, it does not appear at all in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament it appears only once ([Ephesians 6:18](#)). However, though the term is missing, the thought it conveys is most certainly present. This is not an oversight by the translators; it frequently takes more than a one-word translation to convey in English what the Greek word for "persevere" implies.

It is easy to assume that enduring and persevering are synonymous. There are similarities, but they are not an exact match. In English, *endurance* can indicate "putting up with," "bearing up under," or merely "tolerating" a demanding circumstance, implying a definite passive quality to it in common usage. Jesus says in [Matthew 24:13](#), "But he who endures to the end shall be saved." "Endures" is translated from the Greek *hupomeno* (Strong's #5278), and can easily be translated as "persevere," yet it, too, can indicate merely "bearing up under." Jesus uses this word because situations will arise in the time of the end when nothing can be done except to put up with them and hold onto one's [faith](#) for dear life!

However, the English word "perseverance" and its Greek counterpart, *prokarteresis* (Strong's #4343) suggest more than mere toleration of a circumstance because they have definite proactive characteristics. Their verb forms mean "to be earnest or strong toward; to be constantly diligent; to attend assiduously; to adhere closely to; to continue instant in; to be steadfast with a person or thing." Both contain a strong sense of continuous persistence toward achieving some activity. The Greek verb *proskartereo* (Strong's #4342) is most frequently translated into English as "continue in." Its closest English synonym is "persistent."

[Acts 1:14](#) uses it like this immediately after the ascension of [Jesus Christ](#) to heaven:

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"These all *continued* with one accord in prayer and supplication. . . ." [Acts 2:42](#), 46 states, "And they *continued steadfastly* in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. . . . So *continuing* daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart." Paul writes in [Romans 12:12](#), "Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, *continuing steadfastly in prayer*."

In context of performing duties, the apostle says in [Romans 13:6](#), "For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers *attending continually* to this very thing." Duties are responsibilities assigned by a superior such as a parent, teacher, or supervisor. They are obligations of services to be performed or a course of action required by custom, law, or religion. God has called us and opened a great hope before us, but this is not without cost to us. Since we accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior, He has become our Lord and Master. We are His bond slave, obligated to serve Him through our loving obedience. [1 Corinthians 7:23](#) tells us we have been bought at a price.

The duties imposed on us are those having to do with fulfilling His great creative purpose of which we are now a part:

- Glorifying Him by our willing obedience to His instructions and laws.
- Fulfilling our responsibilities to the church, for which He has given us gifts to enable our performance.
- Making every effort not to allow the world to squeeze us into its mold.
- Loving one another, even our enemies.
- Willingly persevering through whatever trial He has given us to work our way through.

It is our duty to sacrifice ourselves to the glory of God in all things, including praying without ceasing and consistently studying to show ourselves approved to God.

Our calling has become our vocation, and it is filled with duties to perform. However, like every vocation, even this one, despite its inspiring and awesome hope, has times when boredom creeps in, weariness assails us, or fears produce occasions of doubt. It is then that we must buckle down and persist in moving forward to overcome those challenges. Merely enduring may hinder our reaching this great hope.

[Romans 4:18](#) tells us that Abraham hoped against hope. His hope was in God's promise of a son and thus of a family that would follow him in inheriting the [Kingdom of God](#). When God delayed in giving him a son, long past when his aged body could produce one, Abraham nonetheless persisted to believe in God's promise and continued to act to accomplish his part in fulfilling what God required of him. He persevered. He did not

merely patiently endure but actively continued forward, and he was rewarded for his diligent faith.

This example from the father of the faithful provides a pattern for us. We must follow it when, in the midst of our trials, our hopes for the fulfillment of God's promises are assailed by boredom, weariness, doubts, or fears. Persevere, push on, be persistent, continue moving forward against the challenges before us. God is faithful.

- John W. Ritenbaugh

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## *From the Archives: Featured Sermon*

### Persistence

by John O. Reid (1930-2016)

John Reid, focusing upon a diary excerpt of a pioneer woman on the Oregon Trail, asserts that the trait of persistence is impossible without a transcendent and ardent vision (Proverbs 29:18). Having vision prevents us from casting off life-saving restraint and gives us the will to keep on. The Father and Jesus Christ have provided us sterling examples of persistence, continuing to work with people when they stumble in disbelief or weakness. God's vision is to see us perfected with His righteous, holy character. Having this same vision and following our Trailblazer will enable us to exercise the same kind of perseverance, patience, and persistence, enduring ever-increasing trials such as the pioneers (as well as the spiritual pioneers, Hebrews 11:4-40) had to endure en route to the Promised Land.

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## *From the Archives: Featured Article*

### The Fruit of the Spirit: Patience

by John W. Ritenbaugh

From the Bible's perspective, patience is far more than simple endurance or longsuffering. The patience that God has shown man collectively and individually gives us an example of what true, godly patience is. It is this kind of patience that Paul urges us to put on as part of the new man.

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