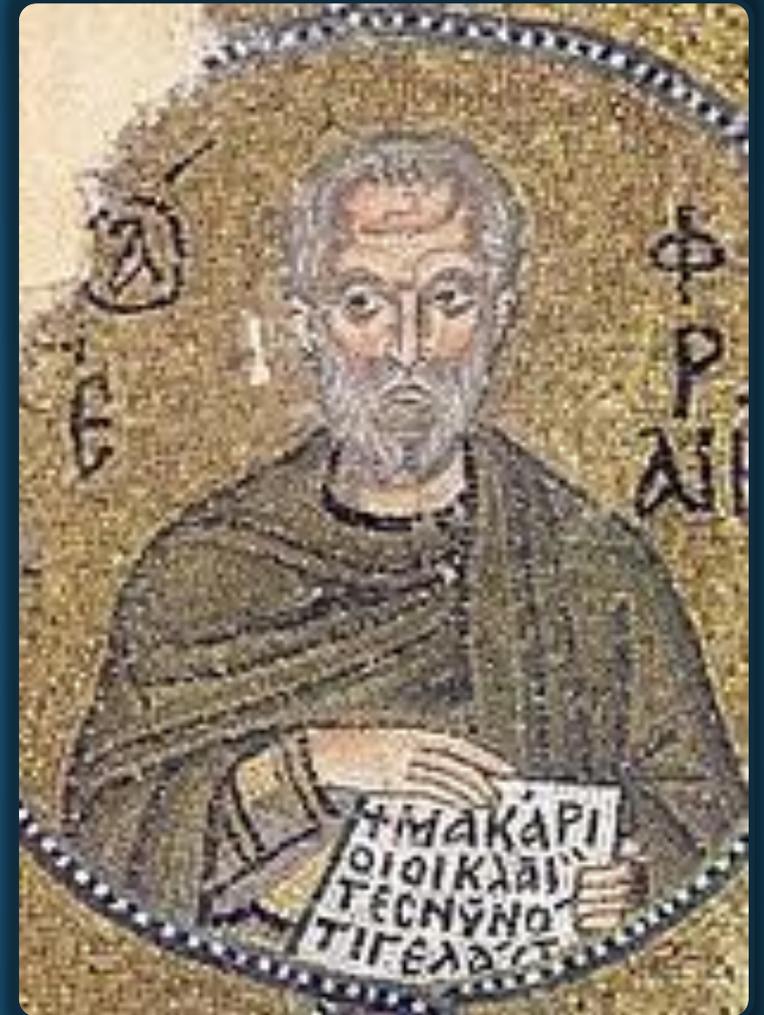


EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

- aka Ephraem or Ephrem
- born in 306 in Nisibis and died in 373 in Edessa
- most important and prolific Syrian father in 4th cent.
- maintained pretribulational testimony
- wrote 3 million lines hymns, poetry, sermons, prose
- wrote in Syriac, many works translated into Greek in his lifetime (Sozomen)
- Greek translations were admired and accurate (Sozomen)
- admired and read for centuries after his death



*Blessed is he who unceasingly remembers the fear of Gehenna and hastens to sincerely repent ... for he shall be **delivered from the great tribulation.***

Ephraim the Syrian
Fifty-Five Beatitudes

*For the elect shall be gathered **prior to the tribulation**, so they shall not see the confusion and the great tribulation coming upon the unrighteous world.*

Ephraim the Syrian

Sermon on Repentance & Judgment

*The righteous ... shall be seized up in the clouds
to meet him. While those who are lazy and
timid like me shall remain on earth trembling.*

Ephraim the Syrian
On the Second Coming of Our Lord

*When we see **the saints in glory flying off** in light in the clouds of the air to meet Christ, the king of glory, but see **ourselves in the great tribulation**, who shall be able to bear that shame and terrible reproach?*

Ephraim the Syrian

On the Fathers who have Completed their Course

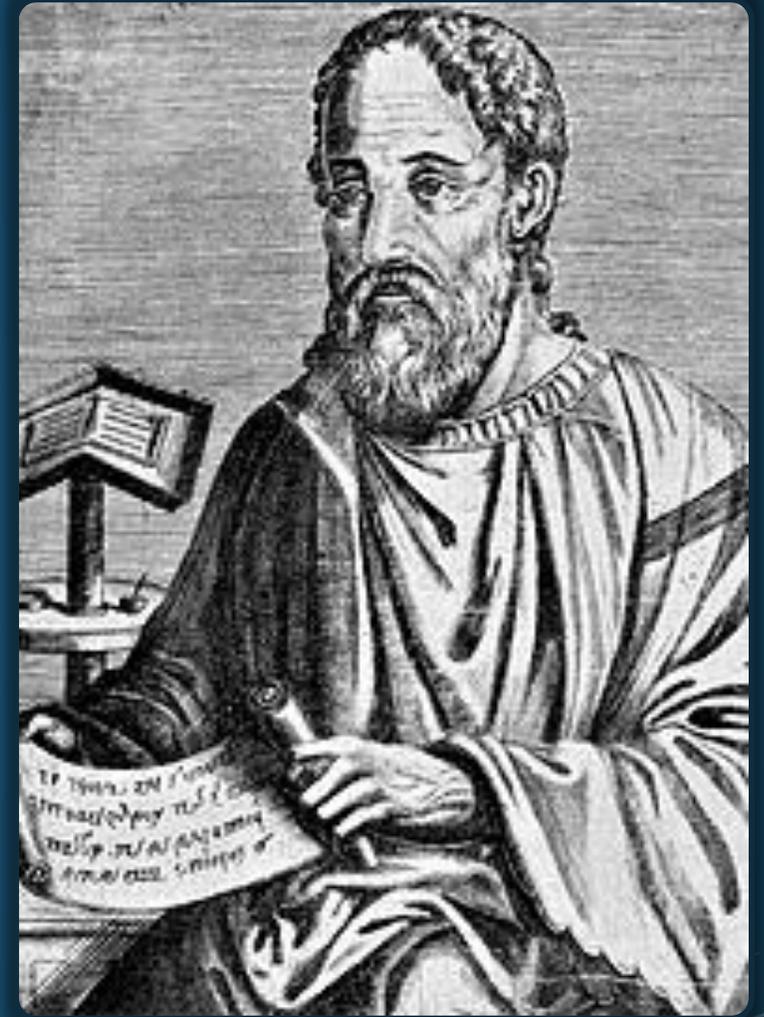
*Watch always, praying continually, that you may be worthy to **escape the tribulation** ... if anyone has tears and compunction, let him pray the Lord that he might be **delivered from the tribulation** which is about to come upon the earth, that he might **not see it all, nor the beast himself, nor even hear of its terrors.***

Ephraim the Syrian

Sermon on the Advent, the End, and the Antichrist

EUSEBIUS

- born 260-265 and died 339-340
- bishop of Caesarea by the Sea
- influential scholar, very learned
- best-known work is *Ecclesiastical History*
- suspected of Arianism, influenced by Origen
- enjoyed the favor of Constantine
- allegorical method, amillennial



FRAGMENTS IN DANIEL, FRAG. ε

- “The apostle Paul was moved to write in this manner on the second coming of Christ. «For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a command, with the call of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God,» and so forth. But the same apostle also **set forth in order** in his prophetic writings the **ultimate** coming of the antichrist and his depravity, and **after this** the glorious appearing of our Saviour.” ~ Eusebius
- Notice Paul **set forth in order**:
 - the rapture, the antichrist, the glorious appearance
- Notice the **ultimate** coming of the antichrist:
 - antichrist follows the rapture, is the endgame of mystery of iniquity

FRAGMENTS IN LUKE, LUKE 17:26 ff

- As all perished then except those gathered with Noah in the ark, so also at his coming, the ungodly in the season of apostasy ... shall perish ... while ... according to the pattern of Noah ... all the righteous and godly are to be separated from the ungodly and **gathered into the heavenly ark of God**. For in this way [comes the time] when not even one righteous man will be found any more among mankind. And when all the ungodly have been made atheists by the antichrist, and the whole world is overcome by apostasy, the wrath of God shall come upon the ungodly. ~ Eusebius
- Gathered into the ark! Not one righteous man left! Season of apostasy. Wrath.

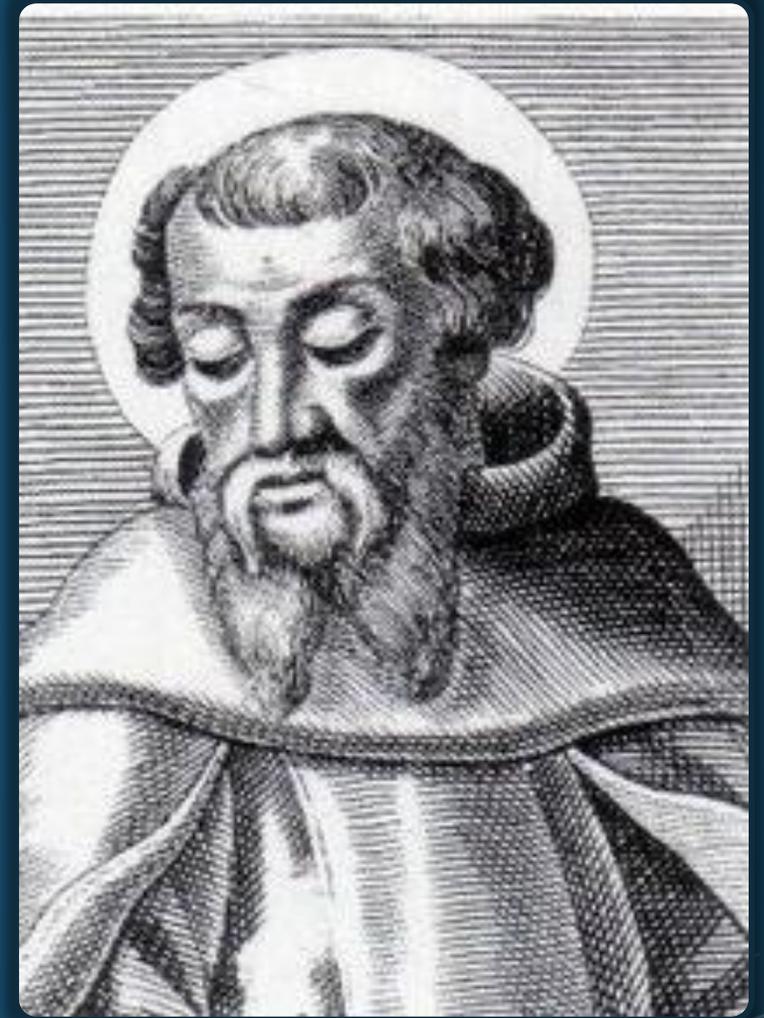
COMMENTARY IN PSALMS, 75



- Then they shall be exalted when they shall reign with their own king according to the apostle who said, «For the **first fruits** is Christ, **then** those who are Christ's in his parousia, **then the end**, when he shall deliver the kingdom to his God and Father, when he shall destroy all authority and power.” ~ Eusebius
- Note Eusebius' near verbatim citation of Paul, God's prophetic order — Christ first fruits, then Christ's church at his coming, then the end
- Factor in Eusebius is amillennial — general resurrection at second coming
- Bible order + Amillennialism = pretrib rapture distinct from second coming

IRENÆUS

- born c. 130 and died c. 202
- born in Smyrna (Izmir, Turkey)
- bishop of Lugdunum (Lyon, France)
- premillennial and pretribulational
- knew Polycarp, Polycarp disciple of John
- premier work was *Against Heresies*
- most of his works have not survived
— most chiliast works suppressed



PROBLEMATIC PASSAGE: THE CHURCH IN THE TRIBULATION

“It is manifest, therefore, that of these [the ten kings], he who is to come shall slay three, and subject the remainder to his power, and that he shall be himself the eighth among them. And they shall lay Babylon waste, and burn her with fire, and shall give their kingdom to the beast, and **put the CHURCH to flight**. After that they shall be destroyed by the coming of our Lord.”

Against Heresies, 5.26.1

RULE OF SELF-INTERPRETATION

- **AS** the Bible must be allowed to **DEFINE** its own terms
SO authors must be allowed to **DEFINE** their own terms
- importing contemporary definitions is anachronistic
- patristic terms typically show *close affinity* to modern usage
patristic terms often show *differences* with modern usage
- failure to recognize this is common stumbling block in patristic exegesis

IRENÆUS' HANDLING OF "CHURCH"

"The church is the seed of Abraham ... He who in the **New Testament** "raises up from the stones children unto Abraham," is he who will gather, according to the **Old Testament**, those that shall be saved from all the nations, Jeremiah says: "Behold, the days come, says the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord **lives, [who** brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, the Lord **lives] who** led the children of Israel from the north, and from every region where they had been driven; He will restore them to their own land which he gave to their fathers." (citing Jeremiah 23:7-8)

Against Heresies, 5.34.1

IRENÆUS' HANDLING OF "CHURCH"

HE DEFINES "CHURCH"

- **"The church is the seed of Abraham"**

HIS "CHURCH" INCLUDES NT AND OT SAINTS

- God "in the **New Testament** «raises up from the stones children unto Abraham»"
- God "will gather, according to the **Old Testament**, those that shall be saved from all the nations ... «will restore them to their own land which he gave to their fathers»."
- this is the spiritual and physical seed of Abraham, both saved by faith

IRENÆUS' HAS TWO CHURCHES

As says the Scripture: "And that night the elder went in and lay with her father; and Lot knew not when she lay down, nor when she arose." And the same thing took place in the case of the younger... the arrangement [designed by God] was carried out, by which the two daughters (that is, **the two synagogues**), who gave birth to children begotten of one and the same father, were pointed out ... **the elder and younger synagogues ... the two synagogues—that is, the two churches**, produced from their own father living sons to the living God.

Against Heresies, 4.31.1-2

IRENÆUS' HAS TWO CHURCHES

- Irenaeus regarded Israel and the Gentiles of this age as **distinct churches or synagogues**
- the **elder synagogue (church)** = Israel
- the **younger synagogue (church)** = the Gentiles of this age
- his terminology is different than contemporary dispensationalism but his concept is exactly the same — two distinct bodies of saints

SUMMARY OF IRENAEUS' VIEW OF CHURCH

- Irenaeus includes OT Israel and NT Gentiles under heading **church**
- Irenaeus regards OT Israel and NT Gentiles as **distinct churches**
- Irenaeus plainly states that **the OT church, the people and nation of Israel**, has a distinct future with God in the last days
- Irenaeus mentioning **church** in tribulation isn't proof he believed that **the Gentile church** of this age would be in the tribulation
- Irenaeus' understanding of **church** allows **the Gentile church** to be gone prior to the tribulation and **the Jewish church** to go through it

GOD'S RETURN TO ISRAEL

He who will GATHER, according to the Old Testament, **those that shall be SAVED from all the nations**, Jeremiah says: «Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, [who brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, the Lord liveth] who led the children of Israel from the north, and from every region whither they had been driven; **He will RESTORE them to their own land which He gave to their fathers.**»

Against Heresies, 5.34.1

GOD'S RETURN TO ISRAEL

Ezekiel also says: «Behold, I will open your tombs and bring you forth out of your graves ... and I will put breath in you, and you shall live; and I will place you on your own land, and you shall know that I am the Lord ... **I will GATHER Israel from all nations where they have been driven**, and I shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the sons of the nations: and **they shall dwell in their own land, which I gave to my servant Jacob**. ... I shall cause judgment to fall among all who have dishonoured them, among those who encircle them round about.»

Against Heresies, 5.34.1

IRENÆUS REJECTS ALLEGORICAL METHOD

“If, however, any shall endeavor to **ALLEGORIZE** [prophecies] of this kind, they shall not be found consistent ... in all points, and shall be confuted by the teaching of the very expressions.”

- this is the first line of chapter 35
- passages just covered on God’s return to Israel were in chap. 34
- the chief point of chapter 34 is God’s literal return to literal Israel
- SO this comment spec. addresses error of allegorizing Israel
- Irenaeus **already contending** with allegorizing methodology

Against Heresies, 5.35.1

TEMPLE OBSERVANT JEWS IN THE TRIBULATION

«A king of a most fierce countenance shall arise ... he shall ... put strong men down, the holy people likewise» ... then he points out the time that his tyranny shall last, when **the SAINTS shall be put to flight, THEY WHO offer a PURE SACRIFICE unto God**: «And in the midst of the week,» he says, **«the SACRIFICE and the libation shall be taken away, and the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION [shall be brought] into the TEMPLE: even unto the consummation of the time shall the desolation be complete.»** Now three years and six months constitute the half-week.

Against Heresies, 5.25.4

TEMPLE OBSERVANT JEWS IN THE TRIBULATION

“the **SAINTS** shall be put to flight, **THEY WHO** offer a **PURE SACRIFICE unto God**: «And in the midst of the week,» he says, «the SACRIFICE and libation shall be taken away, and the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION [shall be brought] into the TEMPLE».”

- **saints** qualified by “they who offer a pure sacrifice to God”
- **sacrifice** clarified as the sacrifice in the literal temple
- **temple** clarified as literal by removal of the sacrifice and placement of the abomination of desolation in the middle of the week

Against Heresies, 5.24.4

TWO CLASSES OF SAINTS IN MILLENNIUM

“and [with respect to] those whom the Lord shall find **IN THE FLESH**, awaiting Him from heaven, who have suffered tribulation and escaped the hands of the wicked one. For it is in reference to them that the prophet says: «And the remnant shall multiply upon the earth.» And as many believers as God has prepared for this purpose, for **a remnant multiplying upon earth, shall also be UNDER the rule of the saints** to serve this Jerusalem.”

- first = trib saints in the flesh, a remnant who multiply on earth
- second = resurrection saints who reign on earth

Against Heresies, 5.35.1

#1 PRETRIB RAPTURE PASSAGE

“And therefore, in the end **WHEN the Church is suddenly caught up** from this, it is said, «**THERE SHALL BE tribulation** such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be.» For this is the last contest of the righteous, in which, when they overcome, they are crowned with incorruption.”

- **“when the church is suddenly caught up”** = circumstantial clause
- **“there shall be tribulation”** = main clause, future tense
- the grammar → rapture precedes tribulation
- not last contest of saints this age, last contest of saints period

#2 PRETRIB RAPTURE PASSAGE

“For Enoch ... was translated ... thus pointing out by anticipation the **TRANSLATION** of the righteous ... Wherefore also the elders who were disciples of the apostles tell us that those who are translated are **TRANSLATED to that place [heaven]**... (where Paul the apostle, when he was caught up, heard words which are unspeakable) ... and that those who have been **TRANSLATED shall remain there until the consummation [the end]**, as a **prelude to incorruptability**.”

- those rapture translated go to heaven and stay there until the end
- the rapture translation is a prelude to incorruptibility at 2nd coming

Against Heresies, 5.5.1

#3 PRETRIB RAPTURE PASSAGE

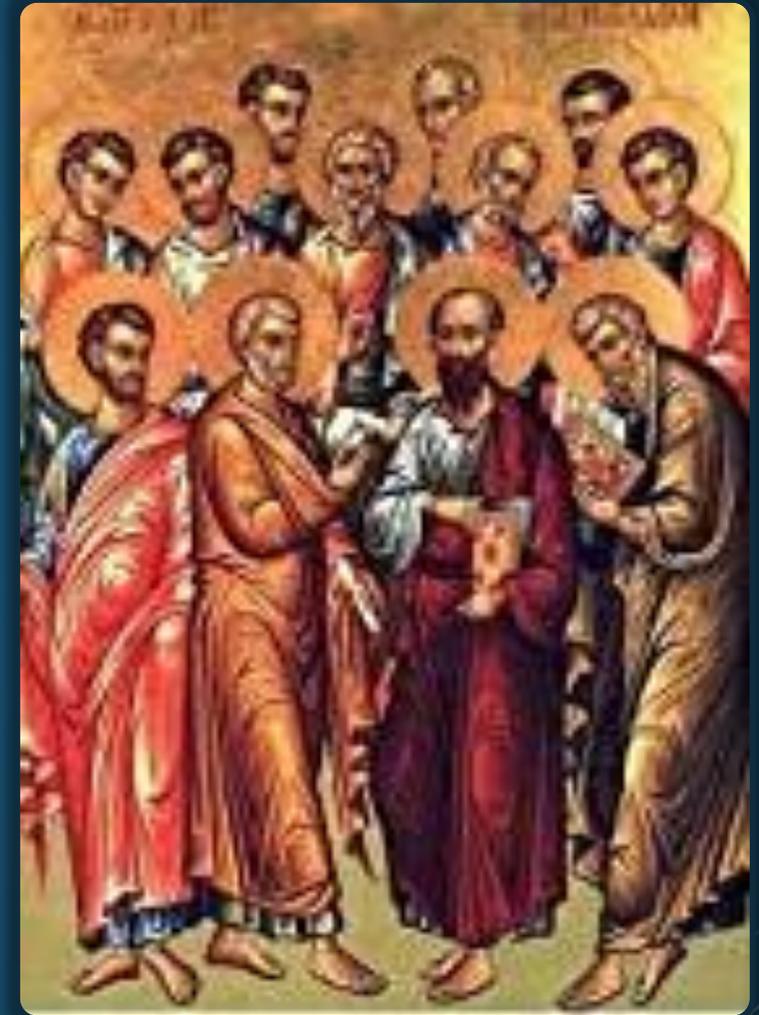
“But it is necessary to say on these things, that it behooves the righteous to be **the FIRST in this condition which is being renewed**, rising up to the appearance (visible observation) of God to receive the promise of inheritance which God promised to the fathers ... **AFTERWARD to be a judge.**”

- the church is the **FIRST** to receive the renewal (implies stages)
- the church **AFTERWARDS** engages in her work as judge
- **THE ORDER**: renewal, rise (rapture), inheritance, work as judge

Against Heresies, 5.32.1

THE DIDACHE

- aka *The Teaching of the Twelve*
- short document whose final section (16) covers eschatology
- written between AD 70 and 120
- authors interacted with apostolic associates, if not apostles
- possibly written while John alive and canon not yet completed
- premillennial, pretribulational



#1 PRETRIB RAPTURE PASSAGE

CLASSIC IMMINENCE

“Watch for your life’s sake. Let not your lamps be quenched, nor your loins unloosed; but be ready, for **you know not the hour** in which our Lord will come.”

- here — hour is unknown and unknowable (can’t be determined)
- 2nd coming — everyone knows the hour and day, they count from start or midpoint of 70th week, the world intentionally gathers for Armageddon at Megiddo at the appointed time
- rapture — date can’t be forecasted, predicted, or determined

#2 PRETRIB RAPTURE PASSAGE GLORIFICATION OR TRIBULATION

PASSAGE

“The whole time of your faith will not profit you, if you are not **MADE PERFECT** in the last time. **FOR** in the last days [there will be] false prophets ... wolves ... lawlessness ... the world-deceiver ... the fiery trial.”

PARAPHRASE

"The whole time of your **church going** will not profit you if you are not **GLORIFIED IN THE RAPTURE** in the last days. For the next thing on the slate is the tribulation.”

MADE PERFECT = τελειωω (teleioō), various senses of *completion*

#2 PRETRIB RAPTURE PASSAGE

“The whole time of your faith will not profit you, if you are not **MADE PERFECT** in the last time. **FOR** in the last days [there will be] false prophets ... wolves ... lawlessness ... the world-deceiver ... the fiery trial.”

- WARNING — make sure you don't miss the **glorification** (the rapture)
 - **FOR** the next thing on the slate is the tribulation
- CHRISTIANS — real Christians enjoy **glorification** (going up)
 - pretenders will face the tribulation (going through)

#3 PRETRIB RAPTURE PASSAGE

CHURCH RETURNS WITH CHRIST

“And then shall appear the signs of the truth: first, the sign of an outspreading in heaven, then the sign of the sound of the trumpet. And third, **the resurrection of the dead —YET NOT ALL**, indeed as it is said: **‘The Lord shall come and ALL HIS SAINTS WITH HIM.’** Then shall the world see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven.”

- Notice **limiting statement** — “**not all**” saints raised at the 2nd coming
- Notice **explanatory (qualifying) statement** — “The Lord shall come and **all his saints with him**”
- early church believed the raptured church would return at 2nd coming

HIGHLIGHTS OF DISPENSATIONALISM IN THE DIDACHE

POINTS

- three pretrib arguments:
 imminence, trib warning, coming with the Lord
- rapture and 2nd coming distinguished
- distinction between church saints and tribulation saints
- two-stage resurrection of the righteous



One short life
to be a good soldier;
One long eternity
to be a fulfilled human being.
— LWB

“endure hardship as a good
soldier”

(2 Tim. 2:3)

“do exploits”
(Dan. 11:32)

EYES WIDE OPEN, BRAIN ENGAGED, HEART ON FIRE!