

Future Story A

Bill's Story

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A Tale Of Grave Significance

While this story deals with future concerns, it also addresses contemporary, eschatological (end-time) deceptions of our day. The following is a fictitious story bringing a narrative word-picture of an upcoming, real-life problem situation for many. Although it's fiction, thousands, if not millions, of similar accounts will actually end up taking place in the not-so-distant future.

There was a young man named Bill. He was a *smart* one, this Bill – a real thinker! The following was Bill's experience ...

Things were changing all around him! Just five years ago it was considered okay to be a Christian; but now, WOW, it was sure a different story. What bothered him most was seeing some of his close friends really persecuted for their faith – a few actually never to be heard from again following their abduction. Bill was concerned, to say the least.

It had been almost two months since Bill decided to be a little more careful about identifying himself as a Christian. "Too risky; too many consequences," he thought, especially having seen how some of his Christian acquaintances had been treated – even beat up on a number of occasions! While Bill believed in God, he felt wisdom would lead him to pick only the most essential battles for which to fight. Thus, for him, identifying himself as a follower of Jesus Christ was not one of those battles, at least not at this juncture anyway. Yet, the day he feared, came.

One pleasant evening while Bill was finishing up some work in his home office, he heard a vehicle approach rather quickly. Seconds after the Hummer doors slammed, intruders were in the house – HIS house! Moments later, Bill was surrounded by three big guys and one petite woman who quietly escorted him over to the couch. Firmly encouraging him to take a seat, they started in. "Bill," the leader of the pack said, "it has come to our attention that you, too, are one of these followers of Jesus Christ. Well, is it true!? And if not, you know it's well past the time to join our global peace society. ... And NO, the rumors you may have heard aren't true. This mark doesn't hurt a bit!"

Bill's mind raced to find an answer he thought would best appease them. Discerning these were the very types who had been a part of the collective which took part in hauling off his friends months ago, he realized his next response would have a major bearing on the rest of his life. He knew if he confessed Christ, he too would suffer similar experiences of what some of his friends had called the "wrath of the antichrist." (By the way, it was during the past few weeks prior to this unwelcomed visit that Bill heard horror stories about those who had been picked up!) "NO WAY!" he said to himself. Given the severity of the situation at hand, it was clear he had only two options: 1. Take a stand as a Christian and suffer greatly; or, 2. Join the world peace movement that was well under way and continue living the quality

of life he was currently enjoying. He couldn't do it. He couldn't trade what he had gotten so used to the past two decades for the faith he also professed.

With Bill's permission, the unwelcomed group administered the mark, issued a soft-spoken warning, and left abruptly.

"Good," said Bill when they quickly drove off – as if they had someone else to visit, "I didn't invite you here in the first place. **Be gone with you.**" Bill was relieved! For months he dreamed about the suffering he would have incurred had he taken a stand for God and rejected the mark. He was glad, so glad, he had made the decision he had ... at first anyway. But all that was in the process of changing in ways far exceeding his worst nightmares. You see, the story has another chapter.

The Trumpets of the Book of Revelation had already begun sounding and the righteous judgment of God through the pouring out of the Bowls of Wrath as written about in the sixteenth chapter of John's Apocalypse were beginning to be realized all around him, yes, even UPON him – stuff which Bill never even considered in his wildest imagination would be his lot as a result of giving in to the pressure of those unwelcomed visitors months and months ago. Due to the degree of violence involved, the next few weeks of Bill's life will not be chronicled here. Suffice it to say he would have chosen the opposite path had he realized the wrath of the antichrist was child's play when compared with the intensity of the Bowls of Wrath. But it was too late!

A week passed and Bill now realized he was about to meet his death. This had actually grown to be his number one prayer. He longed for death in order to be relieved of his current afflictions under the just wrath of Almighty God. But just prior to his final breath, an overwhelming truth came to his mind, one that brought a cry like few others. Bill realized that while he was finally going to be relieved of his misery through death, the endless days of eternity were actually only beginning. He remembered from his reading of Revelation 14 that eternal torment was also required of him because he had decided to reject the clear warning of Scripture and take the mark. It was that final thought which ushered Bill into an eternity separate from the Lord Jesus.

Perhaps Bill was not as smart as he would have liked to think. For you see, he rejected the clear admonitions of Scripture to endure to the end (in order to avoid only moments of the antichrist's wrath) and, as a result, will actually end up suffering an infinitely greater wrath due to his decision to reject staying true by receiving the mark. Indeed, Bill wasn't as wise as many thought.

Commentary, for further clarification of this grave problem:

Have you ever wondered how many "Bills" there are in the world today? We believe there are many more than what we'd ever care to think. Those who fail to see (or believe) the big-picture and who would go on to give in to the wicked world leader in order to avoid his wrath will pay the greatest price one could. Those who do so will actually suffer a great deal more – not only the Bowls of the Wrath of God as they are poured out upon the inhabitants of the earth who receive the mark, but an **eternity** of "everlasting punishment." We must remember, given Revelation 14:9-11, everyone – even those who go by the name *Christian* – who accepts the "mark of the beast" will be eternally damned. Have you discerned how close we are to these days?

While it is our sincere hope and prayer that this experience would not happen to anyone, it just so happens that this very thing will come about – for Scripture teaches so – even amidst the many

warnings God has graciously given His people along these lines. Passages clearly foretelling similar apostasy during the years of tribulation are of great import for us today. The warning is clear: All those who receive the mark of the beast will be thrown into the Lake of Fire, including some who would call themselves “Christians,” “followers of God,” “born-again believers,” etc.

We must ADD one thought to this story. The setting of this story of grave significance is obviously future in scope. Some refer to this type of literature as *historical future* – that is, while the story is titled to be a true story (and is indeed so), it is yet to happen. Although it is future, it’s *a done deal* (it will unfold) due to the accuracy of God’s promised Word. To this some might respond, “Are you casting a prophetic statement here?” Our answer: No, we are not. We’re simply accepting many passages of Scripture which clearly teach there will be those who fall prey to the great deceptions of the end times, even many who claim to be followers of Christ – pseudo-Christians if you would.

We’re also stating, as biblical passages clearly do, that those who receive the mark, even though they say they are Christians, will suffer an eternal judgment in separation from God. While we dare not sit on the judgment seat, we are called to sit on the witness stand in light of God’s standards. So we state with biblical authority, there is no such thing as a true follower of God – who has been born from above by God – who receives the mark of the beast (Rev. 13 & 14). Those who are truly His will not compromise on this issue; those who do compromise and receive the mark are not of God but of their father, the devil. Harsh words, yes, but biblically accurate ones! While most of us would confidently say at this juncture that we’d give up everything for God if need be, we must never take this commitment lightly. If we do, we may possibly be included in that group whose end actually unfolds like Bill’s did. For those who endure, Romans 8:18 brings sweet comfort and helpful perspective. Please see Matthew 13:1-23, for it speaks to those who take commitment to Jesus Christ lightly. Take special note of who it is who is described in verses 5, 6, 20 & 21.

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