

Somebody says, How can you get East out of Fire? He says, You get up in the morning and look out and (the sunrise) looks like fire. So it must stand for east! Well, I don't know of any other place where I've ever seen where there were fires in the east. But what sense does it make? Glorify the Lord in the fires, even the Lord God of Israel. And in the islands of the sea. What sense does it make? Well, God knew the future. He knew what would happen. He knew the Word of God would be carried, but it would be carried in the midst of difficulties. All of this could be expressed figuratively by the word fire and much of it literally by the word fire.

Remember the three in Babylon who were thrown into the fiery furnace because they would not bow before the idols. Remember the early Christians whom Nero put up around the paletine gardens and poured oil over them and set them on fire. Remember the fires of the Inquisition! Remember the sufferings of those whom suffering, misery, and danger have not deterred from the preaching the truth and giving their lives for Christ. I have recently been reaching the book by Popov who was 13 years in prison in Bulgaria for nothing else but for preaching the Word of Christ. Not the slightest evidence of even the slightest overt opposition to the communist regime. He was simply a preacher of the Gospel. So they submitted him to the most terrible torture for 13 years. But he is only one of thousands who today are glorifying the Lord in the fires.

So this passage, I believe it is very clearly brought out in it where it is predicted and given us in exhortation as well that we should of glorifying the Lord even in the midst of the fires, even in the midst of the dangers and difficulties that may come to us. So we have here the specter of God's wrath upon sin. We have the picture of those who are true to God glorifying God and praising His Name. We see them going on and carrying His message to the most distant lands, Presenting God's truth, presenting the Gospel We find it will be done in the midst of fires, in the midst of tribulation, in the midst of troubles.

We continue with the predictions he gives and we find some new note in v. 16, and its strange that whoever put the vv. in the OT made a v. 16 which is as long as vv. 14, 15 put together. It -- I don't know how they came to make the v. divisions they did, but I think they are very good v. divisions, because they put together two thoughts that really belong together. So we read v. 16, and we find that (I'll read it from KJV) "From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs even glory to the righteous.?" "NDV has "From the end of the earth have we heard singing: Glory to the righteous one. What a presentation of the extension of the Gospel.

I attended a seminar at the U. of PA a few years ago where people with different specialties told of the results of their work. There was a young man there who was to tell about anthropological studies in Fiji. He said I went to Fiji and spent a couple of years there trying to study the old customs and traditions of worship of the people there and how disappointed I was! Because in the previous 60 years there had been Methodist missionaries all over that land and and practically all the people had become Christians and they had given up their old customs. They've abandoned their old buildings.