

Bishops Burned at the Stake

Queen Mary ascended the throne of England in 1553. In subsequent years, she had at least 200 people put to death (often by fire) for their religious convictions. To history, she became known as “Bloody Mary,” although, in truth, she killed far fewer people per year than her brutal father, King Henry VIII, who separated the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church.

When Mary became Queen of England, she worked to bring England back to the Roman Catholic Church. One of her first acts as queen was to order the arrests of Nicholas Ridley, who had been Bishop of London, and Hugh Latimer, Bishop of Worcester. These two men had been leaders in an effort to move the English church in the direction of a more Bible-based Christianity.

Both Ridley and Latimer were burned at the stake on Oct. 16, 1555, for failing to conform to the ruling of the Catholic church.

As the flames consumed them, Latimer called out, “Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle by God’s grace in England as I trust shall never be put out!”

Referring to this incident in Christian history, Dr. David Jeremiah, senior pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church in El Cajon, California, wrote in his book *Turning Points*:

“God didn’t deliver Latimer and Ridley from the flames on earth, but He did deliver them from the flames of eternal judgment by their faith in Christ. These two martyrs were imitating the faith of the three who came before them in the Old Testament – Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They were thrown into a fiery furnace for refusing to worship a golden image; but God delivered them, though they didn’t know His plan.

“Their faith had prepared them to die or be delivered – the choice was God’s, and they were fine with that,” Dr. Jeremiah said. “Has your faith prepared you to be fine with the choices God is making in your life today?”

Our journey on this earth – in fact, every day of it – is filled with many choices. God has a plan for you; He created you with a purpose in mind. And He gave you the talents to accomplish what He desires for you to do.

I’m thankful to our Lord that associates of Life Care and Century Park have responded to His call – surrendering their lives in the cause of serving others. Such actions have eternal significance as we exercise our faith in Christ.

If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up (Daniel 3:17-18 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter