

Why The Lord Has Not Yet Returned

‘You must know this; that scoffers will come in the last days who walk after their own desires and say, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the forefathers died, all things have continued exactly as they did from the beginning of creation.” The Lord does not delay about what He promises, according to some people’s concept of slowness, but He is patient toward you, not desiring that any should perish, but that all should turn to repentance. Consider that the patience of our Lord is salvation’ (2 Peter 3:3, 4, 9 & 15).

So what is the delay? There are three main reasons actually. The easiest of the three to explain is; God does not want any person to perish, that is to go to hell. In His wisdom and foreknowledge, God knows exactly who will accept Him and who will reject Him – and He is waiting until the very last Gentile person, that He knows will accept salvation and be saved, has come into the Kingdom of God. ‘A hardening has befallen part of Israel that will last until the full number of the ingathering of the Gentiles has come in (to the Kingdom of God). And so all Israel will be saved ...’ (Romans 11:25 & 26).

The Lord is going to return to earth as our King – one day. When Jesus was on earth, even He didn’t know the day He would return. ‘Of that exact day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father’ (Matthew 24:36). Of course Jesus would now know the exact day of His return, but He didn’t know then. We don’t know the exact day Jesus is coming, but He did warn us to be ready. ‘You must be ready therefore, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not expect Him’ (Matthew 24:44). So He is waiting for the last of the Gentiles to be saved, and we must be ready for His sudden appearance.

The second reason He is delaying His return, is He is waiting in heaven until the complete restoration of all things that the prophets foretold. That literally means all things. ‘And that He may send the Messiah Who before was appointed for you, even Jesus, Whom heaven must receive and retain until the time for the complete restoration of all things that God spoke by the mouth of all His holy prophets for ages past; from the most ancient time in the memory of man’ (Acts 3:20 & 21).

The two ‘things’ to be restored is Israel and also the Christian church. When we look at Israel, we can see that the Jews are returning home in droves, so the nation of Israel has already been given back to the Jewish people, but according to Acts 3:20 & 21, Jesus can’t return until Israel is completely restored, not just populated and governed by Jews. The scriptures tell us that Israel will be one nation instead of two, that is it won’t be Israel and Judah; just Israel (Ezekiel 37:22). However there is much to do, to restore Israel to its former glory. Israel has irrigated the desolate places and as a result has thriving agriculture and settlements for new arrivals. However, the completely restored Israel is yet be the large populous, prosperous, peaceful nation as it was in the days of Joshua, after the Israelites had conquered their enemies; ‘The Lord had given Israel rest from all their enemies round about’ (Joshua 23:1). They had livestock and goods, silver, gold and precious stones, all initially taken from Egypt, and the livestock obviously continued to breed while the Israelites were in the wilderness. ‘The Israelites did according to the word of Moses, and they asked of the Egyptians jewels of silver and of gold, and clothing. The Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they gave them what they asked, and they stripped the Egyptians of those things. A mixed multitude went also with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds’ (Exodus 12:35 to 38). At this point in time, Israel is not as prosperous as this, and it would take some time to reach that level of prosperity, so the aforementioned complete restoration could be a long way off.

Let us look at these attributes one by one. Large: Before the Lord returns, Israel will include all the land God promised to Abraham. 'On that same day the Lord made a covenant, a promise, a pledge with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates' (Genesis 15:18). So far, the land of Israel has never been this vast, so it will have to come in the future. The Lord will bring judgement on the nations that have divided Israel. As long as the Israeli government is being pressured by unsaved earthly rulers to carve up the Lord's land – which is also fulfilling prophecy (Joel 3:2) – the Lord can't return, because then Abraham's promise would be negated. God made the promise to Abraham, and God will fulfil His promise, no matter how many people try to stop it.

Populous: 'I will make your (Abraham's) descendants like the dust of the earth, so that if a man could count the dust of the earth, then could your descendants also be counted' (Genesis 13:16). 'And your offspring shall be as countless as the dust on the ground ... and by you and your Offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed' (Genesis 28:14). 'I will give blessings to them and multiply them' (Ezekiel 37:26). 'Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea which cannot be measured or numbered' (Hosea 1:10). Israel will be very well populated and it is clear the population are the children of Israel, not Arabs or any other race.

Prosperous: Wicked nations will attack Israel to; 'take spoil and prey, to turn your (evil) hand upon the desolate places now inhabited (new settlements) and assail the (Jewish) people gathered out of the nations, who have obtained livestock and goods, who dwell in the centre of the earth'. 'And you ... will say, "Have you come to take spoil? Have you gathered your hosts to take the prey? To carry away silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to take great spoil?"' (Ezekiel 38:12 & 13). Israel will have great prosperity before the Lord returns.

Peaceful: The wicked will say: "I will go up against an open country; I will fall upon those who are at rest, who dwell securely, all of them dwelling without walls and having neither bars nor gates' 'Thus says the Lord God; in that day when My people Israel dwell securely, will you not know it and be aroused?' (Ezekiel 38:11 & 14). We see that Israel will feel secure, the wall will come down and their enemies will feel jealous and aroused to anger because of their prosperity, and many nations will group together to attack Israel, but the Lord Himself will fight against Israel's enemies, and so many soldiers will be killed, it will take seven months to bury all their bodies (Ezekiel 39:12). The dead will not be Israeli's, they will be those who have come to attack Israel (Ezekiel 39:1 to 5). Those nations that do not actually come against Israel, will be complicit in the attacks by doing nothing to help them. The Lord Jesus, as the Angel of the Lord, will give Israel total victory over their enemies, both in Israel and in Jerusalem (Zechariah chapter 12). Once we see Israel as a large, populous, prosperous and peaceful nation, we know they will be ready for the Lord's return.

Once the Lord Himself comes to fight on behalf of Israel, then all Israel will see the Lord Jesus as their Messiah and they will be shocked to say the least. They will grieve and mourn. We will explain the reason for their mourning; Jerusalem is the capital of God's chosen land and is loved by God and was lamented over by Jesus. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, murdering the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a mother fowl gathers her chicks under her wings, and you refused! You would not! You were not willing! Behold, your house is

forsaken. For I declare to you, you will not see Me again until you say, 'Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord'" (Matthew 23:37 to 39).

When Jesus said the house is forsaken, He meant the temple. The Hebrew word for temple is 'bayit' (pronounced by-eet) which translates as house. He said their 'bayit' would be destroyed and in 70 AD, the temple was totally destroyed. Not one stone was left upon another when the Romans came in with battle-axes and crowbars and pulled the temple to pieces. All that was left standing is what we see now – the Western Wall. Jesus said He would not come back until the Jewish people could say of Him 'Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord'. In other words – to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah. The Jewish people have to be made ready to welcome Him back, and God is at present preparing Israel for that great event. The way the Lord gave the land of Israel back to the Jews, and the ongoing gathering of the exiled Jewish people back to their own land is nothing short of a miracle. Our Jewish Messiah will one day return to the Jewish capital Jerusalem, and note: Jerusalem does not and never ever did belong to the Arabs. Moslems do not want the Messiah to come again because He would prove their religion to be false, and so they are resisting the return of Jews to Israel, and they are resisting the return of Jesus. Anybody who resists the regathering of the Lord's people, resists the return of the Messiah. (This is God the Father speaking); "For behold, the days are coming when I will release from captivity (exile) My people Israel and Judah, and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they will possess it" (Jeremiah 30:3). All of Jeremiah chapters 30 & 31 tell us all about the return of the Jews to Israel, which precedes the return of the Lord Jesus.

The Jews have been exiled into dozens of different nations around the world for over 2,000 years, yet by a miracle, they have remained Jews. If we took a Minoan family and exiled them to far away lands for only two hundred years, their bloodline, culture, religion and beliefs would assimilate into the countries where they lived, which is probably what happened to the Minoans and other ancient races of people. However, the Lord has kept His chosen people, the Jews, as they are and they have always remained Jews in spite of terrible persecutions and vast distances. They are still a distinct people with their own customs, language, culture and music. That in itself is an amazing miracle. Another amazing miracle is their return to the land promised to Abraham about 4,000 years ago. Israel is like a melting pot, blending the new arrivals into one people with one culture, one language with their own unique holidays, feasts and celebrations.

When God set Israel apart, He set them apart as a people, not as individuals. When God forgave them and reconciled with them, He reconciled with them as a people (Jeremiah 31:34). God has reconciled with them in the exact same land as He once disowned them, then once in their own land, they will appoint themselves a head, or in modern language, a Prime Minister, which they have done. 'Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea which cannot be measured or numbered; and instead of it being said to them, "You are not My people" it shall be said to them "You are sons of the Living God." Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together and appoint themselves one head, for they shall go up out of the land, and great shall be the day for the reborn Israel' (Hosea 1:10 & 11; Romans 9:26). In Jeremiah 30:24 the Lord says in the last part of verse 24; "In the latter days, you will understand this." That makes it clear, that this prophecy is about the latter days, which is now. Then in Jeremiah 31:10 it says; 'Hear the word of the Lord, O you nations, and declare it in the isles and coastlands far away and say: He Who scattered Israel will gather him and will guard him as a shepherd guards his flock'. That verse is a message from God to all nations, islands and people all over the earth. God is telling the whole earth that He is gathering His people to

Israel. This prophetic scripture is being fulfilled in our time. Despite all the pressure, opposition, wars and struggles, Israel will continue to be populated by Jews in their own land. God has decreed it, spoken it, and is performing it, and there is nothing anyone can do to stop God's plan for His people. 'Jerusalem shall not be plucked up or overthrown any more to the end of the age' (Jeremiah 31:40).

The regathering of Israel is one of the main themes of Biblical prophecy. The above scriptures are just a few, but there are at least twenty more following the same theme. In order for the Jews to receive the Messiah, they have to have the Gospel preached to them. At this present time in Israel, there are hundreds of dedicated, born-again, Spirit-filled Christians, working tirelessly to share the Gospel and show God's love to His people. When we speak of sharing the Gospel, we need to bear in mind, the centre of God's salvation is Israel, where the salvation message began. Our salvation has come from the Jews (John 4:22).

Zechariah talks about what will happen to Israel when they finally realise they once rejected their Messiah. For 2,000 years God has blinded the eyes of the majority of the Jews to the truth about Who Jesus really is, so the Gospel could go out to the Gentiles (Romans 11:25). After the Lord pours out a Spirit of grace and supplication, the whole of Israel and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will wake up to what they did by agreeing to Jesus' crucifixion by the Romans, and they will grieve and mourn with overwhelming sorrow. "They will look earnestly upon Me, Whom they have pierced," and they (Israel and Jerusalem) will mourn for Him as one mourns for their only child and will grieve for Him as one grieves for his firstborn (Zechariah 12:10 to 14; John 19:37; Revelation 1:7). That is when they will say, "Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord." Israel will realise they were complicit in the crucifixion of their Messiah, and that will cause much mourning – overwhelming grief, family by family, but it will also reconcile Jesus with His people forever. All of this is one big 'picture' that brings together the restoration of Israel that ushers in the return of our Messiah.

We must stress one important fact: the Jews did not crucify Jesus – the Romans did. It was illegal in the Roman Empire in those days, for any nation to crucify anyone without the expressed permission of the authorities. However, the Jews were complicit in the murderous act – the Pharisees and the Sanhedrin wanted Jesus out of the way because too many Jews wanted Him to be their King; but it was before His time. Even Pilate knew Jesus was innocent and washed his hands of Him. But Jesus had to die so salvation could come, and He used the Romans to do it with the Jews' knowledge and permission. Jesus was crucified by both Jews and Gentiles and with His blood, He has saved both Jews and Gentiles.

We can see how much has yet to be done in Israel before all of the scriptures have been fulfilled, but the church will also have to be restored to its former glory. If we read about the early church, we can see the modern church falls far short of the activities and the commitment of the early church. The early church was wholly Jewish, and when the Gentiles came into the Kingdom, they fully embraced the Jewish people, something few Christian people do today. In fact the overall attitude of most Christians, ranges from being indifferent and passively anti-Semitic to openly hostile towards the Jews. That puts their very salvation at risk and that is something some Christians refuse to heed.

We'll take a look at how much the church has to improve before the Lord returns and that is a huge challenge! It is a challenge, mostly because Christians have hardened their hearts and don't like to be reminded, that if their righteousness is not more than the

religious people (modern day Pharisees), they will never enter the Kingdom of God (Matthew 5:20). If we study Matthew chapter 25, we can clearly see that Jesus was speaking to believers. The ten virgins were all believers. Five were wise and were filled with the Holy Spirit. Five were foolish enough to refuse to be filled with the Holy Spirit even though they knew about it, and they were shut out of the Kingdom of God. The three men with the talents were Christians who knew the Lord. Two of the three were welcomed into the Kingdom and the Christian who refused to serve the Lord was cast out. Then there are the Christians who will be separated into the group of 'sheep' who loved and supported Israel, literally, "My brethren", that is the Lord's biological family, the Jews. The other group are the 'goats' who will be shut out because they refused to support Israel. They were thrown into the lake of fire! When we refuse to support the Jews, we are refusing to support Jesus Himself. When we help the Jews, we are helping Jesus Himself. That message is very, very clear; we will be judged according to our attitude to the Jewish people. In these three parables, the Christians who were rejected by God; the foolish virgins, the servant who did not use his talents and those who did not come to the aid of the Jews in their distress, were not wicked nor did they shake their fist at God. They committed the sin of not doing what they knew was right and that is enough to be rejected by God (James 4:17).

Read Matthew 22:12. That is another verse warning Christians they could lose their salvation if they remain carnal, that is to refuse to purify themselves by clothing themselves in righteousness, the appropriate wedding garment. Matthew chapter 13 speaks about Christians (wheat) growing up along side weeds (devil inspired believers; not true believers). They were in church right beside the 'wheat', yet were rejected because they refused to accept the whole truth and be made fit for the Kingdom. Matthew 7:15 to 27 is another passage of scripture that warns us, that not every church member will go to heaven. They will cry, "Lord, Lord, didn't we do these things in your name?" Jesus will reject them and say He never knew them, just as He did to the five foolish virgins, and He'll say that only those who do God's will, will enter the Kingdom of God. Doing the will of the Father, is embracing Israel and the Jewish people, just like the early church did. That cannot possibly be more clear, yet modern churches consistently refuse to heed the warning Jesus spoke out so clearly, so many times. In fact Jesus even calls those people who refuse to listen, "Stupid" and "Foolish" (Matthew 7:26; 25:2).

Most church leaders refuse to teach what Jesus said we have to do, just to 'get our foot in the door' of the Kingdom. Jesus said we must be repent and be born-again (John 3:7). Jesus said we must believe and be baptised (Mark 16:16). Jesus said we must be filled with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 25:1 to 12), or He will say He never knew us. After repenting, believing, being born-again, baptised in water, filled with the Holy Spirit, then we must listen to Him (Luke 10:39 & 42), we must use our talents to serve Him (Matthew 25:14 to 30) we must embrace, help, support and pray for Israel (Matthew 25:31 to 46), we must do the Lord's will (Matthew 7:21) and we must preach with signs following (Mark 16:17). Very few churches exercise all of the nine gifts of the spirit as clearly described in 1 Corinthians 12:7 to 11. They exercise some of them but not all. Very few churches accept the five ministry gifts as outlined in Ephesians 4:11 to 12, but major almost solely on having one head pastor or minister. Holiness, righteousness, purity, obedience to the directions written within the scriptures for Christian conduct are largely ignored, as is the command to love one another. We are told to bear one another's burdens, but most Christians care little about those who are suffering; the wealthy care little about the poor. Materialism takes precedence over giving. The sick and the elderly are not cared for by the church – but by the state, even though that is the responsibility of the church (James 1:27). Many modern Pentecostal churches care more about how much loud noise they can make with their rock

music and the amplification, than they care about how uncomfortable that noise makes the sick or elderly feel. The noise is literally driving, or keeping people out of the church. How can that be called good Christian behaviour? There really are Spirit-filled believers who go to a pub and get drunk on a Saturday night, then attend church on Sunday morning. That is not doing the Lord's will, and Jesus said hypocrites like that will not get into heaven (Matthew 24:48 to 51).

We need to see the huge difference between being involved in church as a member, just for the sake of social activities in a social organisation, and being a righteous disciple of the Lord Jesus. Church members, who are committed to the church, but are not committed to the Lord are the ones in danger of being rejected, as are the hypocrites. Church membership is outside of our assignment as born-again believers, and we were never instructed to make church members. They give a false impression to the unsaved, of what Christianity is supposed to be. Christianity is not being a religious church member. If we have a church full of members who are not disciples, then we try to make them disciples, they will not be accustomed to being disciplined and there will be problems. Many church denominations will not allow a person to serve in the church unless they sign a document of commitment first. That is totally unscriptural. There is a church group who will not accept new people unless they are prepared to financially support their church building program! That has nothing whatsoever to do with salvation. We all have to pay heed to the warnings Jesus gave to believers: He said to be disciples, not church members who attend church for social interaction. Sadly, many Christians who do not listen to the warnings Jesus spoke out so very clearly, will be lost. That is the challenge to church leaders; listen to the small voice of the Holy Spirit Who is telling people through the scriptures, that they need to teach the full Gospel of the Kingdom to the flock. It is a powerful Gospel message – not a weak one. Pastors need to explain to their flock, that there will be a divine judgement for carnal behaviour – even if it is unpopular.

So far we have looked at two reasons why the Lord has not yet returned; He is waiting until the last of the Gentiles have come into the Kingdom; He is waiting for both Israel and the church to be completely restored; and the third reason is: He is waiting for His people to obey His commands before He will bring about the end of this present age. 'This Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come' (Matthew 24:14).

When Jesus said 'This' Gospel, He meant the Gospel of power – not the watery, weak, wishy-washy, pious, humanistic, monetary-driven religion droned out of some churches today. We need to restore the message of the Gospel and teach what the full Gospel is: it is not just the Gospel; it is the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. It is a Spiritual message with Spiritual signs following. It is the message that God is going to take over the government of the whole human race and the appointed Governor is Jesus. We have tended to think of the Gospel as simply believing in the death and resurrection of Jesus and by believing, we will be forgiven, we will receive eternal life and go to heaven when we die. That is all true as long as we meet His conditions, and it is wonderful, but is only the first part of the Gospel and it is not the end of the message. The Gospel takes us out of the kingdom of darkness and places us into the Kingdom of God. The Gospel is designed to make us kings and priests; not just in heaven, but right now here on earth. Jesus said in Matthew 24:14; This Gospel of the Kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world as a witness to all the nations and then the end will come. He made very careful provision that we never water down or reduce the content of the Gospel, and right up to the end of this age, that same message is to be proclaimed and preached in all the world as a witness to all nations.

Jesus clearly and very decisively spelt out what He expected of us; 'And as you go, preach, saying, "The Kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons" (Matthew 10:7 & 8). That is the Gospel Jesus was talking about and that is the Gospel we should be preaching. 'Repent and believe the Gospel (Mark 1:15). 'Preach the Gospel to everyone (Mark 16:15). 'I'm not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the power of salvation for everyone' (Romans 1:16). 'Now let me remind you of the Gospel ... by which you are saved' (1 Corinthians 15:1 & 2). 'While you wait and eagerly long for the coming of the Lord Jesus, hastening the Lord's coming ...' (2 Peter 3:12). How can we hasten the Lord's coming? By diligently preaching the full Gospel of the Kingdom, not a watered down Gospel. During the days of the early church, the whole of Asia heard the Gospel (Acts 19:10). History has proven that to be correct. St Petersburg was so named after the apostle Peter, so we know that the Gospel went as far north as Russia. Christian graves containing Caucasian people have been found as far away as Mongolia. Scandinavian countries are all Christian nations. The Ethiopian who was baptised by Peter was obviously from central Africa, so the Gospel reached that far. We know well that the Gospel reached the UK. That generation heard the Gospel – and now we have to get the Gospel out to this generation in all nations all over again.

We are told to: 'Preach the Word! Keep your sense of urgency, whether the opportunity seems to be favourable or unfavourable, and convince them, warning them, urging them, being inexhaustible in patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not tolerate sound instruction, but having ears itching for something pleasing they will gather themselves one teacher, chosen to satisfy their own liking and to foster the errors they hold, and will turn aside from hearing the truth and wander off into myths or man-made false teachings. As for you ... do the work of an evangelist, fully perform all the duties of your ministry' (2 Timothy 4:2 to 5). Paul and Silas were beaten, chained up, put in stocks in a dungeon, then around midnight they began praying and praising God so loudly, the other prisoners could hear them (Acts 16:22 to 25). They weren't complaining about being in prison, in stocks and chains; they were praising God. If they could praise God in that situation, how much more should we praise God in our free countries, for the freedom we have to preach the Gospel!

'Jesus approached and said to them, "All authority, all power of rule in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go then and make disciples of all nations, baptising them into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you always, to the very close of this age"' (Matthew 28:18 to 20). 'And Jesus said to them, "Go into all the world and preach, publish openly the Gospel to every creature, that is the whole human race. He who believes and is baptised will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those that believe; in My name, they will drive out demons; they will speak in new languages; they will pick up (if they are accidentally bitten by) snakes and if they drink anything deadly it will not harm them; they will lay their hands on the sick and they will recover' (Mark 16:15 to 18). The obligation of the church is stated succinctly in the four Gospels and those are the orders of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are not recommendations, they are not suggestions, they are commands and these commands must be carried out until the Lord returns. The Lord will not accept the excuses, "I didn't know or understand" nor will He accept laziness on our part (Matthew 25:24 to 30). We are to prepare ourselves for action (1 Peter 1:13). When Jesus said to preach to all the world, He meant literally all the world. When He said to preach to everyone he meant everyone – with signs following.

An area we need to recognise is apostolic outreach. Elders were always appointed by apostles and the church was never intended to function without apostles. Jesus said to go into all the world, preach and publish the Gospel openly to the whole human race. An apostle is a man with a passion to go and spread the Gospel of the Kingdom. He is a man who cannot settle down into the standard procedures of modern Christianity because he has a vision outside of the church. A vision that goes beyond the boundaries of the local church, out to the outside world. Something deep within him says 'Go'. Church people don't understand him; he gives up privileges; he gives up positions; he gives up possessions; he gives up comforts; he has a deeper understanding of the scriptures which younger or weaker Christians find too much of a challenge, so they reject him, but something burning deep inside, keeps driving him on. He preaches This Gospel of the Kingdom. He goes to the people who haven't yet been reached even to the point of risking his life for the Gospel. He is a man who has the signs following (Mark 16:17 & 18). There are people who have followed God and given up their comfortable western lives, often to the ridicule and misunderstanding of the church. Many women have the same spiritual burning deep within, and they also go to reach the lost for Jesus; not being content to sit quietly and do nothing while the world perishes.

New Testament apostles always operated in teams, never as individuals. The only time we read about apostles being alone was when they were in prison. The apostolic teams, and the local church leaders, between them, share the God-given responsibility of the leadership of the church of Jesus. In the New Testament there was no human over those two types of leaders. They were directly answerable to Jesus Himself, as Head of the church. They were mutually responsible for one another and their well-being. Neither was independent of the other. God shares the responsibility between the two groups, not between two individuals. The first Apostle and High Priest was Jesus and He was very mobile; He is our pattern to follow. He is the Head of the church and the church was mobile before it was resident. We are not committed to residing in one place; we don't go to where the church is; we are the church. The church is where we are. This demands a mental revolution. It is time for the church to be what God has designed His church to be. Sometimes we have to break out of church constraints, so we can be free to do the will of God. We need to remember that we are serving the living God, not the church.

We need to look at the Old Testament for guidance. Whenever God sent a messenger, He always authenticated His involvement with supernatural signs following and that has not changed. The supernatural signs of the Gospel change people's attitude to the Gospel, so we can't give people a bland Gospel. It has to be accompanied with God's power. Our assignment is: All the world – every creature. Jesus has all authority so He can give the orders; He can clear the way and He can make sure we are able to do whatever He has commanded us to do. He said go and make disciples of all nations; He did not say make church members or support building programs.

Jesus said He would be with us until the end of the age. When we 'go' He will be with us always. We are to follow Him; we are to teach others what Jesus has taught us. If we look at the Lord's prayer we can see that it is the will of God for His Kingdom to come to earth. The whole of history is leading up to that one major event. We are looking for the establishment of the Lord on earth. The world has no other hope. No government or scientist on earth has the answer for the world's problems. The more the world learns through science, the worse humanity's problems get. The more mankind invents, the more power he has to destroy himself. There is already in existence on earth, enough nuclear power to destroy ourselves 50 times over. Is that progress? Does that give hope? The whole of society is disintegrating because of the way society has turned its back on God.

When God chose Abraham to be the father of a nation, it was because God knew Abraham would teach his family about the Lord and His statutes (Genesis 18:19). That is why Abraham's family is blessed above all other families on earth – because Abraham followed God and commanded his family do likewise. If every family on earth followed God, we would have very few problems.

There is much to do before He comes. The church is a mess and it is time it got its act together, obeyed the scriptures and stopped wasting time with endless programs. The church has a long way to go before it will be ready for the return of the Lord. That is why the Lord is shaking His people. Many Christians are being shaken by severe circumstances to purify them and make them ready for His coming. When will Jesus return and the end come? Not until this Gospel of the Kingdom has been proclaimed in all the world as a witness to all the nations. The scripture makes it absolutely clear that the Lord will not come until the church has fulfilled its obligations in the world. For us to see the return of the Lord, first Israel and the church have to be completely restored; the full Gospel of the Kingdom has to be preached right up until the very last Gentile is saved – then the end will come. There is so much yet to do, so let's get busy preaching the full Gospel of the Kingdom, sharing what we have, purifying ourselves to ensure the restoration of the church and helping Israel to become completely restored!

Amen and God bless you.

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