

Enduring To The Day Of Jesus' Second Coming

'Who can endure the day of His coming? Who will stand when He appears?' (Malachi 3:2). 'When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?' (Luke 18:8). 'See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. If the ancient people did not escape when they refused Noah who warned on the Earth, how much more will we not escape who turn away from Him who warns us from heaven' (Hebrews 12:25).

The Bible speaks a lot about the dreadful suffering and ordeal the whole earth will be forced to endure before Jesus comes again. 'In those days there will be great oppression, such as there has never been from the beginning of creation until now and never will be again' (Mark 13:19). The emphasis is on enduring, which is not always an enjoyable situation. Persecution is never enjoyable but if we are to follow Jesus, we will suffer persecution and we need to be prepared to endure right to the end. Jesus warned us, "Remember the word (warning) I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his Lord. If they persecuted Me they will also persecute you'" (John 15:20). Jesus said several times, only those who endure to the end will be saved. Those who turn their backs on God before the end may go to a lost eternity. 'You will be hated by all people for My name's sake, but those who endure to the end will be saved ... Those who endure to the end will be saved' (Matthew 10:22; 24:13). 'You must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus ... If we endure, we will also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He will deny us' (2 Timothy 2:3 & 12). 'Only through many afflictions can we enter the Kingdom of God' (Acts 14:22). The people who believe they will be 'raptured away' before great tribulation comes are most at risk because when terrible times come, they will not be prepared. Only those whose hearts are prepared will be able to endure the tribulations right up until the Great Day of Jesus' return.

Persecution is only one difficulty we will face before Jesus comes back. We will also suffer financial losses, family breakdown, sickness that may never be healed, changes in weather patterns, lawless behaviour, violence, robberies, freakish accidents and many other trials before Jesus returns. It is not because God wants people to suffer but suffering comes as a result of the lawlessness, violence and the ungodliness of the majority of the world's population, which is increasing at an amazing rate. 'When the wicked increase, sin increases' (Proverbs 29:16). God never intentionally causes suffering or affliction. 'He does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men' (Lamentations 3:33). It is the vast array of sin throughout the world that causes misery, affliction, sickness, strife, wars and persecution. It does not come from God. A lot of suffering comes from sin, the consequences of our own sin or the consequences of sin against the innocent committed by evil men. One of the reasons the Lord sent Noah's flood to destroy all of mankind was because of violence. 'The earth was corrupt before God and the earth was filled with violence' (Genesis 6:11). If there is violence committed by evil men, then there are those who suffer as the innocent victims of violence. Jesus warned us lawlessness or iniquity would increase and the love of Christians would wane before He returns. 'Iniquity will be multiplied and the love of many will grow cold' (Matthew 24:12). The Lord hates violence of any kind, especially against women and children, and violence against women and child abuse are on the increase. 'I the Lord love justice. I hate robbery with violence' (Isaiah 61:8). 'I hate divorce and marital separation, and a man who covers his wife with violence. Therefore keep a watch upon your spirit so you do not deal treacherously and faithlessly with your wife' (Malachi 2:16). 'Cursed is the man who harasses, vexes or denies justice to the foreigner, the fatherless and a widow' (Deuteronomy 27:19).

There is another reason why Christians in particular will suffer terribly the closer the time comes for the return of Jesus. 'Woe to the earth and to the sea because the devil has gone down to you in great wrath, knowing he has only a short time ... Permission was given to the devil to make war with the Christians and to overcome them. Authority over every tribe, people, language and nation was given to him ... If anyone has an ear, let them hear ... Here calls for the endurance and the faith of the Christians' (Revelation 12:12; 13:7, 9 & 10). Those few verses are very frightening but it is written in the Bible and Christians must be able to heed the warning and keep their faith no matter what circumstances may arise. Those Christians who have a spiritual ear, let them listen to the warnings in the Bible.

In these last days, all believers need to be genuine disciples. Jesus said go and make disciples of all people. He never said to make church members. There is no scripture in the Bible telling us to sign a form to make us church members. We are accepted members of the collective Body of Jesus because we are washed in His blood, baptised in water and in the Holy Spirit. 'Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in My name, teaching them to observe all the things I commanded you' (Matthew 28:19 & 20). Any church that does not accept people because they have not signed a piece of paper are not walking according to the scriptures and may be discarding true disciples. Church attendees who are not disciples are counterproductive. They give the world a very incorrect view of the whole salvation message and a totally false impression of what our Messiah Jesus and the cross is all about. The full Gospel contains information

regarding the cross with the shedding of Jesus' blood, the second coming, holiness, denying ourselves, the Kingdom of God and other truths Jesus taught, and anything that leaves out these aspects of discipleship is a falsification of the Gospel of Jesus. The erroneous modern teaching saying we will have nothing but happiness, prosperity, joy, health and wealth is not the foundation of the Gospel message. Many Christians are healthy and wealthy, but that is not the foundation of the Kingdom of Heaven. The foundation message does not major on human self-centredness but it majors on Jesus as the Son of God, our Messiah, our Saviour, His miraculous birth, the ministry and teachings of Jesus, the blood of Jesus, the cross of Jesus, His suffering, His sacrifice for us and His resurrection preceding the resurrection of the righteous on the last day as we enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Yes, the Kingdom of God was open to us when Jesus first began His ministry (Matthew 12:28; John 3:3), but it is only after we are found worthy on Judgement Day will we enter the Kingdom of Heaven (John 3:5). Seeing the Kingdom of God and entering the Kingdom of Heaven are two different situations. Seeing the Kingdom of God is like looking through a window to see what is inside. Entering the Kingdom of Heaven is going into the room through an open door that will be shut to sinners and to those who were not ready. 'While they were away (complacent), the Bridegroom came and those who were ready went in with Him to the marriage feast and the door was shut' (Matthew 25:10).

We relate to Jesus' suffering by our suffering, knowing it helps us develop endurance and perseverance. 'We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering works perseverance. Perseverance produces character. Character produces hope and hope does not disappoint us because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who was given to us' (Romans 5:3 to 5). If we suffer with Him, we will be glorified with Him (Romans 8:17). 'It is commendable if someone endures pain, suffering unjustly because of their conscience toward God ... When you do well and you patiently endure suffering, this is commendable with God. To this we were called because Jesus suffered for us, leaving us an example, we should follow in His steps ... Jesus suffered for us in the flesh so arm yourselves with the same mind ... Beloved, do not be astonished at the fiery trial which has come upon you to test you as though a strange thing has happened to you, but because you are partakers of Jesus' sufferings, rejoice ... If you are insulted for the name of Jesus, you are blessed ... If one of you suffers for being a Christian do not be ashamed' (1 Peter 2:19 to 21; 4:1, 12 to 16). That is what it means to be a genuine disciple of Jesus. Suffering is part of our walk with God and we need to be prepared to endure increasing suffering, trials, afflictions and persecutions the closer we are to Jesus' second coming. It is good to keep in mind, all the trials we endure help purify us and make us fit for the Kingdom of Heaven and for that we need to thank God (Colossians 1:12).

God has not lowered His standards of holiness, mankind has lowered theirs. This is how God describes people in the world who have rejected Him. He gives them up. 'God gave them up to the lusts of their hearts, to uncleanness so their bodies would be dishonoured among themselves. People who exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator Who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason, God gave them up to vile passions. Their women changed the natural function to what is against nature. Likewise the men, leaving the natural function of the woman, burned in their lust toward one another, men doing what is inappropriate with other men and receiving in themselves the due penalty of their sin. They refused to acknowledge God, so He gave them up to a depraved mind to do those things which are loathsome, being filled with all unrighteousness, iniquity, greed, sexual immorality, malice, wickedness, covetousness, jealousy, murder, strife, deceit, cruelty, slanderers, backbiters, hating God, insolent, arrogant, proud, boastful, inventors of all things evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, faithless covenant breakers, heartless, without natural affection, unforgiving, unmerciful, who knowing the decree of God for those who practice such things are worthy of (eternal) death, not only do the same but approve of those who practice them' (Romans 1:24 to 32). How should we react to people who behave so badly? We need to have the strength to rebuke their behaviour and share the Gospel with them. We love the person but hate their sin. Jesus died for them just as sincerely as He died for the righteous, but we are not to fellowship with them. 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them. The things done by them in secret is a shame even to speak of but all things, when they are reprov'd, are revealed by the Light, for the Light reveals everything' (Ephesians 5:11 to 13). 'What fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? What fellowship has Light with darkness?' (2 Corinthians 6:14).

'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge' (Hosea 4:6). Many Christians are unaware of what God wants from them and if they continue on their present path, they may end up spiritually destroyed. What is God trying to achieve with mankind? He wants His own special people to love and have fellowship with and God will do whatever it takes to achieve His goal and that includes shaking the earth to its foundations (Isaiah 24:19). To be accepted into the Kingdom of Heaven, every believer must be ready at His second coming. Jesus' first coming was to prepare people for eternity by bringing the Kingdom of God to earth and His second coming will be to rule the earth for one thousand years then the righteous will inherit the newly

created earth. All those who accept Jesus are being formed into a special group of people He is purifying for Himself, for His own possession (Titus 2:14). The Jewish people were the first nation called to be God's own special people. 'If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you will be My own possession from among all peoples. All the earth is Mine. You will be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation' (Exodus 19:5 & 6). Through the blood and cross of our Jewish Messiah, that invitation to be God's chosen to join with the Jewish people has been extended to Gentiles who once had no hope and no mercy. 'You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession so you may proclaim the excellence of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light, who in times past were no people, but now are God's people, who had not received mercy but now have received mercy' (1 Peter 2:9 & 10). 'You (Gentiles) were separate from Jesus, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and estranged from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world, but now in Jesus, you who once were far off are made near in the blood of Jesus' (Ephesians 2:12 & 13). Gentiles will never replace the Jewish people in God's affection, but we have been invited to join with the Jewish people to be God's elite alongside them.

God gave Jesus to us to redeem us from sin and to purify for Himself His own special people (Titus 2:14). 'Everyone who has the hope of salvation in them, purifies themselves just as Jesus is pure' (1 John 3:3). Notice the emphasis is on purity. Titus said God purifies us; John says we must purify ourselves. It is a two way process. God works in us and together we achieve His goal. Jesus purifies us with our cooperation. He will not purify us if we refuse to cooperate. The Lord is coming for a spotlessly pure, holy Bride (Ephesians 5:27) and we must be ready. 'Let us rejoice and be exceedingly glad and give the glory to Jesus, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His Bride has made herself ready' (Revelation 19:7). Many unsaved people are beginning to mock the theory of the Second Coming because they feel Jesus has not appeared, therefore He never will. The Scriptures said people would become rebellious over this fact. 'Know this, in the last days mockers will come walking after their own lusts saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? ... All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation"' (2 Peter 3:3 & 4). Their rebellion does not alter the fact we must be ready. Our responsibility is to do what God has already commanded us and that is to purify ourselves and be ready for His return.

When Jesus was on earth, He did not know when He was going to return but warned us to watch, be vigilant, be prepared and we must not be complacent. 'Of that day or that hour no one knows, not the angels in heaven nor the Son, but only the Father. Watch, keep alert and pray, for you do not know when the time will come ... Watch therefore for you do not know when the Lord of the house is coming, whether at evening, or at midnight, or when at dawn, or in the morning, lest coming suddenly He might find you sleeping (complacent). What I tell you, I tell all. Watch'" (Mark 13:32 to 37). If Jesus did not know the time and date of His own return, then we should be content not to know until it is time for us to know. We are not going to miss out if we obey and prepare ourselves. If anybody declares they know when Jesus is returning, they are deluding themselves and misleading others. They are a false prophet and Jesus said several times, we must not believe such things and must not go there. 'There will arise false messiahs and false prophets, and they will show great signs and wonders so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect (Christians). Behold, I have warned you beforehand. If they tell you, 'He is in the wilderness,' do not go out, or 'He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. As the lightning flashes from the east and is seen to the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man' (Matthew 24:24 to 27). We must remember, Jesus taught when He comes, everyone will know about it because every person on earth will see Him (Revelation 1:7). Jesus is God and He is therefore omnipresent – literally everywhere at once, so every eye will see Him all at once. That is how we will know He has arrived and there will be no mistaking the fact! If anyone says the Messiah is here or there, we only have to ask ourselves, why the secrecy? When Jesus really comes there will not be silence and secrecy, everybody will know. We must watch, stay spiritually awake be prepared, be expectant and we need to be careful not to be fooled. If anyone's belief does not line up with the words of Jesus regarding His second coming, then they may need to change their theology, because what Jesus said is the absolute truth and it applies to everybody on earth. Jesus must remain in heaven until the perfect day of His return comes around (Acts 3:21). While on earth Jesus may not have known when He was going to return, but He certainly would know now.

In this age of a severe lack of God fearing people, of evolution, false religions, 'feel-good' psychology, rampant homosexuality, pornography, paedophilia and other sexual sins, those who do believe in God and who walk according to His holy ways, need to be beacons of light in this increasingly dark world, regardless of the personal cost to us. Yes, there are many thousands of people coming to know the Lord in a deep and powerful way all over the world, but at the very same time, there is a great falling away from decent morality, good life ethics and true faith in God. Many Christians are becoming carnally minded and tolerate sin like

never before; sin like having a homosexual minister, for example. Churches are 'dying' all over the place and although many continue to function, their congregations are spiritually weak. There is a simultaneous apostasy and revival happening in various places around the world.

Everything is changing, both on the earth and among humanity; weather patterns, earthquakes, tidal surges, storms, strange phenomena in the sky, animals behaving differently than normal, family values, finances, church services, crime, levels of anger and inexplicable rage, and many other weird things taking place everywhere. As genuine believers, how can we cope with the extreme changes? How should we live our lives to shine for God? How can we endure as we await the return of Jesus? The Bible gives us many clues and we will touch on a few of God's commands. We can do nothing about the earth's changes. We can only control how we behave. We need to live righteously, spend time fellowshiping with God in prayer, fellowship with other believers, praise God in song and have a thankful attitude, and serve God as we look to the return of Jesus. 'The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all mankind, teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, righteously and Godly in the present age. Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, the Lord Jesus our Messiah, Who gave Himself to us so He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people zealous for good works' (Titus 2:11 to 14). Notice in the above verse, the grace of God teaches us to act graciously towards others.

We need to serve God in obedience, led by the Holy Spirit so our good works can endure the test of Judgement Day. 'Every believer's work will be revealed. The Day of Judgement will declare it because it will be revealed in fire and the fire itself will test what sort of work each person's work is. If anyone's work remains, they will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, they will suffer loss but they will be saved but only as through fire' (1 Corinthians 3:13 to 15).

We need to openly demonstrate the Holy Spirit and power of God. 'These signs will follow all those who believe. In My (Jesus') name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues, if they are bitten by snakes or if they drink any deadly thing, it will in no way harm them, they will lay hands on the sick and they will recover' (Mark 16:17 & 18). 'Our speech and preaching are not in persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Holy Spirit and of power so your faith does not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God' (1 Corinthians 2:4). 'We know we are loved by God and are chosen, and the Gospel came to us, not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit' (1 Thessalonians 1:4 & 5).

We must resist temptation to sin and stand against peer pressure. 'My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent ... My son, do not walk in the way with them. Keep your foot from their path for their feet run to evil' (Proverbs 1:10, 15 & 16). 'Let those who think they stand be careful they do not fall (into sin). No temptation (to sin) has come to you except what is common to mankind. God is faithful. He will not allow you to be tempted (to sin) above what you are able to escape so you may be able to endure. Therefore my beloved, flee from idolatry' (1 Corinthians 10:12 to 14). The Bible says twelve times we need to stay sober. 'Watch carefully how you walk, not as unwise people but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil. Do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not be drunk with wine because that is iniquity but be filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing praises in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always concerning all things in the name of our Lord Jesus, to God the Father' (Ephesians 5:15 to 20). If Christians think it is okay to drink alcohol they need to rethink their stance. Jesus said, "If a servant (a Christian) says in their heart, 'My Lord delays His coming,' and begins to beat the servants (become aggressive) and to eat and drink and to be drunken, then the Lord of that servant (Christian) will come in a day when they are not expecting Him and in an hour they do not know and will cut them in two and place their portion (their judgement) with the unfaithful. That servant who knew the Lord's will and did not prepare, nor do what God wanted, will be beaten with many stripes (will be judged severely)" (Luke 12:45 to 47). If people are secret drinkers, God knows about the secret sin even if people do not. Remember, we are told to deny ourselves and flee from worldly desires, and drinking booze in secret is not denying oneself. Drinking wine even at a meal can cause a reformed alcoholic to stumble and fall back into their old habit and fall out of the Kingdom of God and in that case, their blood will be on the head of the drinker. If we make a young Christian stumble there is harsh judgement so it is better to refrain from drinking than be judged for causing a young Christian to fall away from God. Temptations will come to all of us but woe to the person who tempts us to sin (Matthew 18:7). Jesus warned, "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for them if a huge millstone was hung around their neck and they were sunk in the depths of the sea" (Matthew 18:6; Mark 9:42; Luke 17:2). True disciples need to be shining beacons for God and the moderate drinking of wine may not in itself be a sin but for

God's light to really shine, it is better to be a good witness and refuse alcohol, even if we are mocked. We must never give in to peer pressure.

When people reject the truth of the Bible, God Himself sends them a delusion. 'The mystery of lawlessness already works in the world ... with all deception of wickedness for those who are lost, because they did not receive the love of the Truth so they might be saved. Because of this, God sends them a strong delusion so they will believe a lie' (2 Thessalonians 2:7, 10 & 11). We all need to guard ourselves against deception and false religions. 'The Holy Spirit says expressly, in later times (this age we live in) some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to (evil) seducing spirits and doctrines of demons' (1 Timothy 4:1). The only protection against deception is the love of the Truth and being wary. We need to test their spirit. 'Test all things and hold firmly to what is true' (1 Thessalonians 5:21). If we encounter a religious person, no matter how genuine they may be, if their teaching does not bring the peace of God we must back away. 'The peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Jesus' (Philippians 4:7). Leaders of false religions have turned the freedom of belief in Jesus to a legalistic, empty, dead religion who deny Jesus is Lord, our Saviour and our Messiah. 'There are certain men who crept in (to the church) secretly, those who were long ago written about for this condemnation, ungodly men turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness and denying our only Master, God and Lord, Jesus our Messiah' (Jude 1:4). 'If you will confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved' (Romans 10:9). 'Do not allow your minds to be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Jesus. Do not accept it if someone comes and preaches another Jesus, or a different spirit, or a different Gospel' (2 Corinthians 11:3 & 4). Two such false religions are Mormons who have a so-called Mormon Jesus, and Islam who refer to Jesus as 'Isa' and believe He was a mere human prophet, not the incarnate Son of God Who was sacrificed for our sin.

We must be holy and live holy lives. The appeal to holiness is directly connected with Jesus' coming. To produce holiness in God's people, we need to focus on the coming of the Lord and not things that are happening around us. If we search the scriptures we see there is frequently a call for holiness in God's people and it is based on the reality of His second coming. If we do not frequently declare, proclaim, teach and announce His coming, the standards of holiness in the Body will be below what it should be according to the scriptures. 'Just as He who called you is holy, you yourselves must also be holy in all of your behaviour because it is written, "You will be holy for I AM holy"' (1 Peter 1:15 & 16).

We must be blameless, conducting our lives so we are worthy to be called a child of God. We need to be beacons or lights in this dark world. That word 'blameless' is written many times so to be ready for the Day of His second coming, we must be blameless. 'Be blameless in the Day of our Lord Jesus' (1 Corinthians 1:8). 'See that you become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you are seen as lights in the world' (Philippians 2:15). 'Jesus has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and blameless before God' (Colossians 1:22). 'You are witnesses with God, how holy, righteously and blamelessly we behaved ourselves toward you who believe ... Jesus will establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with His saints ... May the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely. May your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus' (1 Thessalonians 2:10; 3:13; 5:23). 'Fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold of the eternal life to which you were called ... I command you before God Who gives life to all things and before Jesus ... keep the commandment without spot, blameless, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus, which in the right time He will show up, Who is the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords' (1 Timothy 6:12 to 14). 'Be diligent to be found in peace, without blemish and blameless in His sight' (2 Peter 3:14).

We need to be eagerly waiting for the coming of the Lord and the first resurrection, and not be complacent. 'Jesus, having been offered once to bear the sins of many will appear a second time, not to atone for sin, but to those who are eagerly waiting for Him for salvation' (Hebrews 9:28). 'Be found in Jesus, not being self-righteous but righteous through faith in Jesus, the righteousness from God by faith so we may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed to His death, if by any means we may attain to the resurrection from the dead' (Philippians 3:9 to 11). 'What kind of people ought you to be in holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring, hastening the coming of the Day of God?' (2 Peter 3:11 & 12).

We must continue to preach the Gospel no matter how much we are persecuted or treated like dirt. Jesus warned us we would be persecuted because He was persecuted, but He also said we would receive great rewards in heaven if we endure persecution. 'If they persecuted Me they will also persecute you' (John

15:20). 'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when people reproach you, persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad for great is your reward in heaven, for that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you' (Matthew 5:10 to 12). 'We toil, working with our own hands. When people curse us we bless them. Being persecuted, we endure. Being defamed, we entreat. We are made as the filth of the world, the dirt wiped off by all' (1 Corinthians 4:12). 'I command you before God and the Lord Jesus, Who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His Kingdom, preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke and exhort, with all patience and teaching, for the time will come when they will not listen to sound doctrine, but having itching ears will heap up for themselves teachers after their own desires and will turn away their ears from the Truth and turn aside to fables (like evolution, false religions etc). Be sensible in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist and fulfil your ministry ... I (Paul) have fought the good fight. I have finished the course. I have kept the faith. There is stored up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the Righteous Judge will give to me on that day, and not to me only but to all those who have loved his appearing' (2 Timothy 4:1 to 8). Jesus will not come until the full Gospel of the Kingdom has been preached worldwide in this generation. Not a watered down Gospel, but the Gospel of Jesus. 'This Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world for a testimony to all the nations and then the end will come' (Matthew 24:14). When will the end come? When the full Gospel of the Kingdom and Jesus has been preached to all nations. It is the responsibility of all believers. Jesus will not come until the last of the Gentiles have come into the Kingdom of God. 'When the full number of the Gentiles has come in (to the Kingdom) then all Israel will be saved' (Romans 11:25 & 26).

When the day of Jesus' return comes, every sinful thing we have ever done or said that is not confessed and forgiven – anything we are ashamed of will be revealed to all. The only sin God forgives are those we confess to Him. If we do not confess our sins then we are not forgiven. God strongly desires us to take responsibility for our behaviour and confessing our sin is accepting responsibility for what we do and say. 'If we confess our sins, God is faithful and righteous to forgive us the sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (1 John 1:9). Every single secret thing and every concealed motive will be brought out in to the Light. To avoid that shame and humiliation, our sin needs to be dealt with now by confessing our sin to God, repenting, humbling ourselves before God and asking forgiveness to allow the Holy Spirit to change our innermost heart. 'God will search this out for He knows the secrets of the heart' (Psalm 44:21). 'You (God) have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your presence' (Psalm 90:8). 'There is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and nothing hidden that will not be made known' (Matthew 10:26). 'Nothing is hidden that will not be revealed, nor anything secret that will not be made known and come to light' (Luke 8:17).

To help us endure until Jesus comes again, we need to be constantly reminded of the first coming of Jesus to Israel, His ministry and life that ended with His death on the cross, proclaiming and remembering His sacrifice, and the second coming of Jesus to Jerusalem from where He will rule the whole world with a very strong hand the Bible calls a 'rod of iron' (Revelation 2:27; 12:5; 19:15). When we share the Gospel, we need to speak directly about the cross and blood of Jesus and not minimise His suffering. All humanity needs to know about Jesus and the results of the cross. We need to remember His sacrifice. Jesus said, "As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes' (1 Corinthians 11:26). It is a privilege to be able to proclaim the Lord's death. When we accept Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, are forgiven and partake of the Lord's supper, we have no sinful past for all our sin is blotted out. Knowing we will be partakers in the First Resurrection is enough to keep us going when life gets tough. We need to remind ourselves continually of the cross and the return of Jesus and the way to do this is by taking the bread and cup of blessing. When Jesus comes He will come in power and in great glory (Matthew 24:30) to establish His Kingdom on earth.

We need to grow up in God if we are going to be strong enough to endure. 'Jesus appointed apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers for the perfecting of the saints to the work of serving, to build up of the Body of believers in the Messiah until we all attain to the unity of the faith, of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature believer, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Jesus so we may no longer be spiritual children, tossed back and forth and carried about with every wind of doctrine ... but speaking truth in love, we may grow up in all things into Jesus Who is the Head' (Ephesians 4:11 to 15). The clues mentioned in this Bible study are by no means all we have to do to prepare ourselves for the return of Jesus but it is a start. Life on earth will become harder in every way and when we are strong enough to look up to God and not across to our circumstances, we will know our hearts are ready. Jesus said, "There will be signs in the sky and the earth will suffer anxiety of nations, perplexed for the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint for fear and for expectation of the things coming on the world. The (spiritual) powers of the

heavens will be shaken ... When these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads because your redemption draws near" (Luke 21:25 to 28).

Who can endure the day of His coming? Who will stand when He appears? All those who meet God's conditions, who walk in the shadow of the Almighty, who obey all His commands, who fight the good fight, who run the whole race, who keep the faith, who endure to the end, who eagerly await His return. "Yes, I come quickly." Amen! Yes, come Lord Jesus (Revelation 22:20).

Amen and God bless you.

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