

## Preparing The World For The Second Coming Of Jesus

'A voice of one who cries out, "Prepare in the wilderness the way of the Lord ... Make straight a way for our God and the glory of the Lord will be revealed"' (Isaiah 40:3 & 5). 'Behold, I send My messenger and he will prepare the way before Me.' ... 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes' (Malachi 3:1; 4:5).

'He (John the Baptist) will be great and distinguished in the sight of the Lord. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb. He will turn back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God and he will go before the Lord (Jesus) in the Spirit and Power of Elijah to turn back the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready for the Lord (Messiah) a people prepared in Spirit' (Luke 1:15 to 17). "You little one, will be called a prophet of the Most High for you will go on before the face of the Lord (Jesus) to make ready His ways to bring the knowledge of salvation to His people in the forgiveness and remission of their sins" (Luke 1:76 & 77). 'As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord"' (Luke 3:4). 'As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "Behold I send My messenger before Your face who will make ready Your way. A voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord"' (Mark 1:2 & 3).

Jesus told His disciples the prophecy in Malachi was fulfilled. 'Jesus said, "What did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes I tell you, but one more eminent and more superior to a prophet. This is the one of whom it was written, 'Behold, I send My messenger ahead of You, who will make ready Your way before You'. Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist and from the days (beginning of the ministry) of John the Baptist until the present time, the Kingdom of Heaven has endured violent assault and violent men seize it by force. All the prophets and the law prophesied up until John and if you are willing to receive it, John himself is Elijah who was to come. He who has (Spiritual) ears to hear, let him hear"' (Matthew 11:9 to 15). The disciples asked Jesus, "Why do the scribes say Elijah must come first?" Jesus replied, "Elijah does come first to restore all things and will get everything ready, but I tell you Elijah has come already and they did not recognise him and did to him as they liked." Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them about John the Baptist' (Matthew 17:10 to 13; Mark 9:11 to 13). What Jesus was saying to the disciples, those who can understand, let them comprehend, John the Baptist came in the Spirit and Power of Elijah, so Elijah will not come again.

John knew he was God's special messenger. 'There came a man sent from God whose name was John. This man came to witness that he might testify of the Light, so that all men might believe in it. He was not the Light himself but he came that he might bear witness regarding the Light. The true Light (Jesus) that enlightens everyone is coming into the world' (John 1:6 to 9). John the Baptist said of himself, "I am the voice of one crying aloud in the wilderness; 'Prepare the way of the Lord as the prophet Isaiah said'" (John 1:23). "I have been sent before Him (the Messiah) to be His appointed messenger" (John 3:28). The end of the Old Testament and the start of the New Testament speak of John the Baptist. He was a righteous and a holy man (Mark 6:20). Following the prophecies in Isaiah and Malachi, we have the fulfilment in Luke 1:15 almost word for word, so these Scriptures prove Elijah is not coming again and Jesus clearly told us John the Baptist was the 'Prophet Elijah' who was to come, meaning John came in the Spirit and Power of Elijah. John the Baptist knew his role was to prepare the way for the coming of Messiah Jesus and he said he was the one sent who was prophesied about. Elijah will not come again but Jesus will.

John prepared Israel for Jesus' first coming then Jesus Himself established the 'Way' (Acts 19:23), which was the name of the new establishment later called the 'church'. In Judaism and Christianity the Kingdom of God, also known as the Kingdom of Heaven is a Messianic term referring to the eternal Kingdom set up before the foundations of the earth were set down. It is an eternal 'house' of God but Jesus said He was going to prepare a place for each and every genuine believer within the eternal 'house' of God. "In My Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will receive you to Myself so where I am (going) you may be there also" (John 14:2 & 3). Heaven is where God lives. It is His 'house'. The Kingdom of God is the Kingdom of Heaven and is the place where God dwells. To get there we must all repent. 'Jesus came into Galilee preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God saying, "The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand! Repent and believe in the Gospel"' (Mark 1:14 & 15). Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all of the holy prophets are already in the Kingdom of God (Luke 13:28).

John came to prepare the way for Jesus' ministry so the Jewish people in and around Israel were ready for the Messiah to come. Millions believed in Jesus and received their eternal salvation but millions rejected Him. That is the same as the Gentile world. Millions of Gentiles have embraced the Gospel message, believe in Jesus and have received eternal salvation but millions of Gentiles have rejected Him. It was the role of John the Baptist to prepare Israel and the Jewish population for the first coming of Jesus the Messiah. The role of

the Christian church in our day is to prepare the entire Gentile world for the second coming of Jesus. Jesus promised to come again and He will in His perfect time but just as Israel had to be ready for Jesus the first time, so the world has to be ready for Jesus the second time. Announcing the Kingdom of God was central to the teachings of Jesus. John called out telling everyone to repent because the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. In our time, the church is expected to call out for everyone to repent because Jesus is coming again. Jesus will usher in one thousand years of peace for the world. It is not the end of the world, it will be the end of this age of grace. The end of the entire earth will happen but not for another thousand or more years as we can read in 2 Peter 3:7 to 18.

When John the Baptist preached repentance, people were drawn to hear him speak. About the first century BC (Before Christ) and on to 1 to 70 AD (Anno Domini – the coming of God) Israel was an extremely troubled place. Many Jewish people were forced to bow to Roman rule. The Romans were cruel in the extreme to anyone who disobeyed their oppressive demands. The Jewish people were crying out for deliverance just like they had when they were being oppressed by Egyptian rule, Babylonian rule, Persian and Mede rule. There were hundreds of prophecies regarding the Messiah in the Tenach (Old Testament) that the Jews constantly studied. They were waiting for their Messiah to deliver them and asked Jesus if He was going to deliver them and restore Israel (Acts 1:6). Simeon was waiting for the 'Consolation of Israel' (Luke 2:25). Righteous Jews were persecuted more because they would accept only God as their King, not any Roman. They were persecuted by Romans and by ungodly Jewish leaders. The pagan leader Herod was a mentally ill man who was terrified of any person who might try to overthrow him, knowing if that happened the Romans would execute him. A few Godly Jewish people knew the Messiah would be coming soon and those words were kept to a whisper. If anybody spoke out loud about a King or Messiah they would have been lashed. Herod had spies within the temple's courtyard who would report back to him. Fear permeated the entire region. The coming of Jesus was a sudden event. Holy angels heralded His coming. His ministry was heralded by John then Jesus Himself began His great work. Instead of being delivered from the oppression of the Romans, Jesus was murdered then severe persecution took place. The death of Jesus was the opposite of what the Jewish people were expecting in their Messiah. As a result, they turned on the Messianic Jews, so the Messianic Jews were being persecuted by both the Romans and also by some Jews who were still waiting to be delivered from the Roman system. It would have been a terrible time for the devout Jews who had accepted Jesus as their Messiah. The Jewish people could not understand, the role of their Messiah was not to deliver them from the Romans, but to deliver their souls from eternal damnation. He came to save souls not physical bodies (James 1:21), for the Jews first then the Gentiles. There is now no distinction between Jews and Gentiles in the eyes of God because Jesus is King and the Lord of us all (Romans 10:12).

How can we prepare the world for the second coming of Jesus (Yeshua) the true Messiah? This sinful world is far, far away from being the place where God's will is being done. Sin abounds in this world so it is up to the Christians to spread the Gospel of the Kingdom. Jesus said, "This Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached to the entire earth for a testimony to all nations, then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14). Christians need to teach people the Bible is the true, infallible Word of God, written by prophets and apostles as God gave them instructions. The entire Bible is a God-breathed document (2 Timothy 3:16 & 17). Jesus is the only hope this world has. It is up to us to counter the effects of the evil teachings of evolution and speak the truth about creation. Christians are mandated to teach people about God, to teach people about the one and only way of salvation through the blood and cross of Jesus and not through a false religion. Christians should be an example of Godly living and they should love and support Israel. Genuine Christians the world over should love the Jewish people. Jesus was born Jewish, in the Jewish land of Israel, He spoke the Jewish language of Hebrew and followed all of the Jewish feasts and rituals. Since our Messiah is Jewish we must embrace and support the Jewish people and Israel. When Jesus comes again He will be coming to Israel's capital Jerusalem. All Christians should help the Jewish people return to their true homeland, Israel. When we support God's mission to help the Jews return home, we are acting fully within the will and purposes of God. We need to pray for peace in Israel and Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6) and to pray for Israeli's who are being cruelly persecuted and attacked by evil neighbouring countries. Christians need to remind the world of the promises made to Abraham and his descendents, the forefather of all Jewish people today. God's promise was to give Israel to the Jewish people for as long as the world remained.

There is one absolute truth all people on earth need to know and understand, and that truth is the only people who will be in the Kingdom of Heaven will be the souls of righteous Jewish people and righteous Gentiles. They are the Gentiles who accepted God as their Lord before Jesus came and the Gentiles who accepted Jesus as their Messiah after He came. Jesus is the one and only way into heaven (John 14:6) and all people who reject Him while on earth will be rejected by Him on Judgement Day (Matthew 7:23). Nobody who embraces a false religion will go to heaven unless they repent of their sin and turn to God. A false religion is a religion that has a false messiah or worships anything or anyone other than God alone. The only God we should worship is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the One true God of the Jewish people and

the Holy Author of the Holy Bible (Exodus 34:14). Unbelievers cannot enter heaven. The Bible gives us long lists of people who cannot be accepted into the holy Kingdom of God. They are lists of people filled with unrepented sins and who balk at the mention of God or His righteous judgement. They become angry when confronted with their sins.

The lists of unrighteous people who will never see, much less enter the Kingdom of God are: All people filled with unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil habits, secret slanderers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, unforgiving, unmerciful, who knowing the ordinances of God and those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but also approve of others who practice them' (Romans 1:29 to 32). All sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, male and female prostitutes, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, slanderers, gossipers, extortioners (1 Corinthians 6:9 & 10). 'The lawless and insubordinate, the ungodly and sinners, the unholy and profane, murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, manslayers, all sexually immoral (that would include paedophiles and rapists), homosexuals (lesbians and people who have changed their natural birth gender), slave-traders, liars, perjurers and any other thing contrary to sound doctrine (1 Timothy 1:9 & 10). All people who are cowardly, unbelieving, sinners, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters and all liars. Their part is in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur, which is the second death (Revelation 21:8). If people want to escape the wrath of God they have only one choice and that is to, 'Repent of your wickedness and ask God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you' (Acts 8:22). God is a God of love (1 John 4:8) but He is also a God of severe but righteous judgement (2 Timothy 4:8). God loves everything He has created (John 3:16) but has a special love for people who turn to Him. Jesus said, "The person who has My commandments and keeps them, that person is one who loves Me. The one who loves Me will be loved by My Father and I will love them and will reveal Myself to them" (John 14:21). 'Behold, how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!' (1 John 3:1).

The preparation for the second coming of Jesus is a spiritual, heartfelt preparedness. Preparation is not sudden, it is a long, steady process. The Kingdom of God is already established but person by person, heart by heart, the Kingdom is slowly being increased by genuine people who are seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. 'Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness then all these other things will also be given to you' (Matthew 6:33). When Jesus comes the second time it will be a great and wonderful day but we must be prepared or we will be taken by surprise. He will come as suddenly as a flash of lightning and will stand on the Mount of Olives. His power will split the mountain in two creating a wide valley. 'As lightning flashes from the east and is seen even to the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man' (Matthew 24:27). 'In that day, His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east. The Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, making a very great valley. Half of the mountain will move toward the north and half of it toward the south' (Zechariah 14:4). 'Things, (amazing heavenly things) which an eye did not see and an ear did not hear, things which did not enter into the heart or thoughts of mankind, these things God has prepared for those who love Him' (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Amen and God bless you.

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