

Are We Delaying the Return of Jesus Christ as King of Kings to Restore Peace to the World?

Meditate on the following quotations:-

“An estimated 923 million people in the world go hungry” [Bread for the World]

“Estimates of the world’s homeless population plus those living in poor housing can reach 1,000 million people” [Youthxchange]

“Over 1,000 million people in the world don’t have access to safe, clean drinking water” [Charity:Water]

Add to the above all who are in the many war zones in this world or those who live in fear under harsh rule of dictators.

Add to this the millions who have Aids or are plagued with cancer and other painful diseases.

All human efforts have ended with little improvement, if any, when trying to solve these vast problems.

Only the direct intervention of the Creator God and His healing power, and total authority can ever change the accelerating path of misery.

Can we as Christians speed the return of Jesus Christ to sort out this human mess?

2 Peter 3:11-12 [NIV] *“What kind of people ought you [Christians] to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you **look forward to the day of God, and speed its coming.**”*

2 Peter 3:12 [The Living Bible] *“You should look forward to that day and **hurry it along...**”*

2 Peter 3:12 [Amplified Bible] *“While you wait and earnestly long for, expecting and **hastening, the coming of the day of God ...**”*

2 Peter 3:12 [Good News Bible] *“As you wait for the day of God and **do your best to make it come soon ...**”*

God has chosen to use human instruments to bring about His master plan for humanity.

Filled with love and compassion for all humanity, true Christians are earnestly praying for the return of Christ to end all this human misery.

Christians should not only be praying but actively preparing themselves and all of humanity for the return of Christ.

God raised up John the Baptist to prepare a people for the first coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Luke 3:2-6 [NIV] *“during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert. He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: **“A voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all mankind will see God’s salvation.’”**”*

In John's day when a king took a trip messengers were sent ahead to tell those whom he was about to visit to literally prepare the road so the king's journey would be a smooth one, without obstacles.

John was using this physical example to tell the people that their lives needed to be prepared for the coming of their Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Malachi 3:1 [NIV] *“See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD Almighty.*”

Malachi prophecy is **not** referring to the first visit of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, but His coming as Lord, [Hebrew “yehōvâh”, the self-existent or eternal one] at His second coming.

“The Lord you are seeking” – this indicates a group of people who are longing for this second coming of the One who was “the messenger of the covenant”, referring directly to Jesus Christ, the Son of Man.

Malachi 3:2-3 [NIV] *“But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness,”*

This is **not** what Jesus Christ did at His first coming, to become the Saviour of humanity through His loving sacrifice on the cross.

How are we to prepare ourselves for the day of God, the return of Jesus Christ?

“A refiner and purifier of silver.”

In the process of refining metals the raw metal ore is heated with fire until it melts. The impurities in the ore separate from the metal and rise to the top where they are skimmed off, leaving the pure metal.

As the impurities of silver are skimmed off the top, the reflection of the worker is seen in the metal.

As we through tests and trials are purified by God, His reflection will be seen in us.

God is saying here that Christian leaders [Levites] should be especially open to this purification.

“A launderer’s soap” – was an alkali used to whiten cloth and also used here as a symbol of purity and righteousness.

Hebrews 12:4 [NIV] *“In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.”*

We may **not** as yet, have put our lives on the line as a result of our faithfulness to Jesus Christ, but in our struggle to overcome sin and Satan, the instigator of sin, we may be called to do this.

Revelation 12:11 [NIV] *“They [Christians] overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb [Jesus Christ’s sacrifice] and by the word of their testimony, [telling others what accepting Jesus Christ as Saviour has done for their lives] **they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.**”*

Hebrews 12:5-8 [NIV] *“And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because **the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.**” Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If Are We Delaying the Return of Jesus Christ...?*

you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.”

This discipline is for our purification and preparing for Christ’s return.

Hebrews 12:11 [NIV] *“No **discipline** seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”*

This discipline brings a harvest of righteousness in us.

Why all this personal preparation?

Revelation 5:9-10 [NIV] *“And they sang a new song: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. **You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.**”*

Jesus Christ will use all resurrected and living Christians at His return to be priests, teachers and rulers, leaders under Him.

The job description of such people will be to bring all who have **not** known or accepted Jesus Christ to repentance.

Revelation 20:11-13 [NIV] *“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And **I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened.** Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and **each person was judged according to what he had done.**”*

The books that were opened to these resurrected people were the books of the Christian Bible which were unknown or **not** understood before.

We need to ask ourselves the question, ‘do we know and understand the Christian Bible well enough to teach it to others?’

What other task can we be involved in to “hasten the return of Jesus Christ?”

The first disciples questioned Jesus about His second coming.

Matthew 24:3 [NIV] *“As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and **what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?**”*

In His answer to the question there was one thing that all disciples of Jesus Christ can be active in fulfilling.

Matthew 24:14 [NIV] *“And **this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.**”*

Preaching the Good News of the coming in its fullest form the Kingdom of God, that is the rulership of God over His created children on the earth.

This is at this time to be a “testimony” or a “witness” to all nations even if the vast majority do **not** accept this message.

The experience and response of Isaiah when confronted with the glorious presence of God explains this present non-acceptance of the message we are commanded to preach.

Isaiah 6:8 [NIV] *“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, **“Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”** And I said, **“Here am I. Send me!”**”*

Isaiah’s response to the cleansing of his sins and the request from God for a messenger.

The messenger was to explain the Good News of the forgiveness of our sins.

God accepted Isaiah’s offer but warned him that all his efforts would fall mostly on deaf ears.

Isaiah 6:9-10 [NIV] *“He said, **“Go and tell this people: **“Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.’** Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.”**”*

Why this blindness and lack of acceptance and understanding?

Isaiah asked God this question and was given an answer that is very similar to what Jesus Christ said would happen to this world’s people just before His second coming.

Isaiah 6:11-13 [NIV] *“Then I said, **“For how long, O Lord?”** And he answered: **“Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, until the houses are left deserted and the fields ruined and ravaged, until the LORD has sent everyone far away and the land is utterly forsaken. And though a tenth remains in the land, it will again be laid waste. But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land.”**”*

The people would only listen when all they had tried to solve humanity’s misery had failed, and the situation came near to the extinction of all life on earth.

Matthew 24:6-12 [NIV] *“**You will hear of wars and rumours of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth-pains. “Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,”**”*

Does this sound very like what the world is experiencing even now?

Matthew 24:29-31 [NIV] *“Immediately after the distress of those days **“the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’** **“At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.”**”*

The return of Jesus Christ will be seen and experienced by all who are alive at that time.

The “*elect*” are only those who have elected in their lives to prepare for Christ’s return and who are hastening this return by fulfilling the commission that Jesus Christ gave to all His disciples.

Matthew 28:18-20 [NIV] *“Then Jesus came to them and said, **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”**”*

The “*end of the age*” is the end of human rule and the beginning of Jesus Christ’s rule on earth.

Are each of us as Christians preparing for that day and are we preparing the people in every nation for Christ’s return by preaching to them the Good News in every way we can.

Only then will that day be hastened in its arrival.