

When Time Runs Out

Scripture Reading: Revelation 10 & 2 Peter 3.3-18

For the last two thousand years the God's people have been waiting with hushed breath, listening for the sound of the trumpet which will herald the coming again of the Messiah in glory as King of all kings and Lord of all lords. Do our hearts grow weary with waiting? Does our faith begin to fail from longing? This study helps us to see that God is not slack concerning his promises, but is abounding in mercy, mighty in justice, and rich in grace. Just when will He then come?

The Age We are in is the Times of the Gentiles.

Luke 21.24 Jesus taught, *'Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.'* - Confusion in the heavens - Fear on earth - v27 *'And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.'* See also Acts 15.14-18.

The time of the Gentiles began when Judah was conquered, Jerusalem destroyed and the people carried into captivity in Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar in BC568. The Lord revealed his plan to godly Daniel in a series of dreams as told in Daniel chapters 2, 7, 8, 9 and 10 to 12. We are told there that there would be four world powers; Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome which would be reconstituted as a mix in the last days. We were also told that there would be a period of 490 counting years commencing with the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem given by Artaxerxes in BC445 (See Daniel 9.25 and Ezra 2). These years can be counted from then to the rejection, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, God's Messiah. See Daniel 9.26&27.

This Age Will End with the Restoration of Israel and Jerusalem under Jesus the Messiah.

It is only in our day, our lifetime that Israel has returned return to the Land given under the covenant promise of God to Abraham and his descendants. But today Israel does not possess all that land, and in Jerusalem their temple site is occupied by a mosque.

Look again at the prayer God answered in giving a knowledge of the 490 years to Daniel in 9.16-19. It was to know when God would cause the restoration of Jerusalem, and the then desolate temple, and the removal of the reproach of their wilful sinfulness.

The counting of these years stopped with the rejection of the Messiah. The counting will resume to coincide with the end of the times of the Gentiles Revelation 10.5&6 *'And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer.'* The word 'time' is the Greek *Chronos* and in this instance means 'delay'. Therefore the events of the seventh trumpet may now begin. The counting of the last seven years, the seventieth week of Daniel, has recommenced. These are the seven years which were so significant to Daniel, as in Daniel 12.6-8.

The delay is due to the Grace of God.

The example given to us is that of the days of Noah. Noah's age was marked by increasing wickedness and violence. See Genesis 6.5&6 to the extent that God saw it necessary to remove that civilization from the earth v7. Noah was a preacher of righteousness to his generation, although men did not listen to him. See 2 Peter 2.4, There was a period of delay due to the mercy, justice and love of God in order that they may be saved, see 1 Peter 3.20., and

even after Noah and his family had entered the ark, God waited a further seven days before He shut them in, and all others out. See Genesis 7.10&16. They however were simply content to make the most of the trying times. See Matthew 24.37-39

The willful rejection of the antediluvians of Noah's world, has been repeated in every age. The bite of the serpent has affected all men from the day of Eve until today. Death has passed upon all men for all have sinned. (Romans 5.12). When Noah and his family stepped out onto the freshly cleansed earth after the flood, sin came out with them. The sins of the old world soon reappeared. Refer Genesis 9.18-24.

God was merciful with the men of Sodom, see Genesis 18.16-33, and the Amorites, Genesis 15.13-16. The Ninevites did repent of their sin. See Jonah 1.1, 3.10 & 4.2

'The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance'. 2 Peter 3.9.

In the judgement at the end of this age God will cleanse this world with fire as the 'elements melt with a fervent heat..' Such is the sin of our age. Consider:

The End of the Age Will Judge the Past and Begin Afresh.

Refer 2. Peter 3.3-18 in this section.

Notice:

That the world is still under the control of the Lord by His word Compare v5 with v7.

That the world, which was once cleansed by water will yet be cleansed by fire v7. Such is the sinfulness and greediness of men today against God, humanity and nature.

God's delay (slow or slack, the word here means tardy) is not because God cannot

or will not keep His word but because He is merciful and patient v9.

'One day is as 1000 years' v8, is not a reference to the coming millennium being of an indefinite period, but to the eternity of God. We, not He dwell in time.

The earth will be cleansed v10. The AV and NASB use the word 'to burn up' or 'consume with fire. Many ancient manuscripts use a word meaning 'to lay bare' or 'to expose' See the NIV or your margin notes. This reading better suits the context and parallel passages about the return of the Lord to the earth. There will be earth shattering events in the heavens causing the cities of the world to topple, the seas to boil, and few will survive.

Look up these references.. Isaiah 24, Joel 2.28-32, Zechariah 14.1-11, Matthew 24.29-30, Revelation 6.12-17; Revelation chapter 8, Revelation 16.15-21. There will be a mighty cleansing of the earth which Peter says is the judgment of God upon ungodly men. The end result will be that the earth will be returned to pristine, Eden like condition. Man will be given a new beginning under the reign of the truly righteous King of kings. See verse 12, and Romans 8.15-23.

Peter calls us to review our life's priorities and practices. See verse 11.

Then, lastly, we are to 'look for' three things.. See verses 12-14. The same word is used and it means 'to look forward to; to expect, to wait for, be thinking about': His coming,

The world of righteousness to come
How to please Him. When He comes be looking your best, 'spotless'.

The judgments of God upon the ungodly will not harm those who are his. Revelation 7.3 & 9.4, also 2 Thessalonians 1.7-10.

Our task is to Preach the Gospel.

How can we hasten that day, verse 12? See Matthew 24.14, Revelation 12.6.

Welcome

Glen Park Gospel Church

Lower Road, Eltham North

Sundays 10.30 am

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