

Ready for the Lord's Return

Written by Joel A. McNabb

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In our day and age, most believers (and unbelievers) are content with the way they are living. Some talk about the Lord's return as if it can be at any moment, yet they go about their lives as if He is not coming in their lifetime or for another hundred years. Christians are told that their work is to witness to the lost, so that they will know Jesus Christ also. But it is also our duty and work to **learn** what God is all about, so that we may be able to tell others **why** Jesus died for our sins and the

purpose

of His coming back again. As Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11:29). Through the blood of Jesus we receive redemption and eternal life which is a wondrous gift of God; then, we must seek to understand His word. God will have a kingdom here on earth as He has in heaven, and you must be born again to see and enter into this Kingdom (John. 3:3,5).

Are we, as believers, preparing for our Lord's return and His Kingdom on earth? Peter said that God would send Jesus back to earth when the "times of restitution of all things" has been completed (Acts 3:21.) Yet we hear preachers say that Jesus can come at any minute and we do not know the time of His arrival. What then is to be restored, or has been restored, in order for Him to come? The "restitution of all things" has not happened, or He would be here, as Peter said.

There is a misconception that we will be supernaturally taken away from any trouble that is coming to the world, and from the Beast and his mark. It has mislead believers so that they are sitting back in their comfortable churches and looking up to the heaven for the clouds to burst open and a bright light to shine forth, with Jesus on a white horse bounding down to earth in glorious victory.

Paul said of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, "Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (2 Thess. 2:3). Have you asked your preacher to tell you who is this "son of perdition"?

After Judah had been in captivity for seventy years (this was their punishment for not keeping the seventh year Sabbath for four hundred and forty nine years), God caused His spirit to move on Cyrus, King of Persia, to build His temple again (Ezra 1:1,2). Cyrus sent a remnant of Jews to accomplish the task of rebuilding the temple and restoring the wall in Jerusalem. The inhabitants that occupied the land during the captivity of Judah were not happy about this, and

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they conspired to fight against those sent to build. When the remnant saw the enemy, they began to pray night and day, and they built: "every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so we builded" (Neh. 4:17). Peter said that the restoration would precede Jesus' return. The Temple represents God's Church, and here we have a prophecy of it being rebuilt (restored) in a time of trouble. As it says in Daniel, "...the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." (Dan. 9:25).

The doctrine that is taught today, (that we will be caught away and miss all the trouble and tribulation) does not agree with the prophecy that is in Nehemiah. Paul tells us that tribulation and anguish shall happen to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile (Rom. 2:9). How then are we to miss tribulation if it has to occur? Many believe that we will rule and reign with Jesus, but remember, "if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him" (2 Tim. 2:12). And, "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). If the early church received glory and honor, then had to go through persecution and even suffer unto death, why would God allow us at this end of the age to miss any trouble or tribulation? The same scripture that is used to show that we are to be "caught up", also says that there will be those that are "alive and remain" – a remnant that has endured.

It is not in man's nature to want his body to be harmed or hurt in any way, and we will do almost anything to keep from having pain. The hospitals are full, and prescription drugs are used to alleviate any pain we, as humans, might have. It is not a sin to see a doctor, or to try to fix something that is broken or hurt, but Satan knows that man's quest for survival greatly influences his actions, as he said to God, "Skin for skin, yea all that a man hath will he give for his life" (Job 2:4). No doubt Satan will try to use that knowledge against humanity again.

In the parable of the sower, some seed fell on stony ground; "who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended" (Mark 4:16,17). They were offended because they were not rooted in God's word. "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Pet. 4:13). If the church, the temple, is to be rebuilt in troublous time, and we do not have a root in ourselves, we will be deceived when the dragon issues the flood of his persecution out of his mouth and demands his mark be taken. Many will be fooled into taking his mark in order to save their very lives. But God's word will prevail, and those that are rooted and grounded in the truth will be alive and remain. Jesus said that there would arise false Christs, and false prophets, and they would show signs and wonders, so great that if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect (Matt. 24: 24). The key words here are **if it were possible**, because the very elect – the Apostles and Prophets – must have the word of God in them to know better. This deception will

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take place, and those who will not listen to God's holy apostles and prophets will be deceived and go through the flood issued out of the mouth of the dragon. They will either take the mark or be killed, because they would not hear.

God is sending out a warning to Christians in these last days to hear His word and "to continue in the faith and that we must through much tribulation enter the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator" (1 Peter 4:17-19). Where are those believers that Jesus said would be hated of all men for His sake? If we are to miss all the trouble that is to come, why would he say, "but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 10:22).

Jesus says the harvest is the end of the world. This is not a harvest of souls, as many believe, but a harvest of believers who have the seed of the word of God planted in them. The enemy planted **tares** alongside the **true believers** and that is what we see today. Since 1962, God has been gathering the tares into bundles to be burned; that is why you see all these mega churches and TV preachers with large crowds. Paul said, "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. 3:13-15). Jesus will come at the appointed time when all things are restored and His house is established (Isa. 2:1-4; Dan. 8:19).

God will send Jesus when the times of the restitution of all things are fulfilled. God's word says that the Church will be restored in troublous times, and that it will be a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. In fact, God's word says, "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts" (Haggai 2:9).

When all the work of restoring is finished, then Jesus will come and rule and reign in righteousness for a thousand years on this earth. Will you be able to stand in that day? I pray you will and that you will be alive and remain when He comes.

Watch ye therefore, with your eyes open and not shut, for in such an hour as ye think not the

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Son of man cometh (Matt. 24:44).