

What He Hath Prepared

Happy Sabbath to everyone.

This week, I was considering the idea of the return of Yahshua. This is something that Christians, particularly Adventists, have declared to be “soon,” and we have labored, and evangelized, with this belief held as a significant factor in our efforts.

The Bible says this with regard to the relationship between the soon return of Christ and our evangelism (and let me know when you have read through this passage): “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. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

“Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” (2 Peter 3:9-14)

There are a number of things that this passage reveals. First, it tells us that the apparent “delay” in the Advent is because of Yahweh’s longsuffering towards humanity. He is not willing that any should perish, and yet He knows that in the judgment, many shall. It is not an easy thing for infinite love to release even a single sinful soul to destruction, and yet the time must come, or else misery, suffering, and death will continue forever. This cannot be. As Paul tells us, the very universe groans for release from the curse under which it has existed for thousands of years.

Second, Peter tells us that the day will indeed come, despite any apparent delay. And in the day of judgment, even the elements of this world – the mountains, the seas, the buildings, and the forests, will pass away in a great wave of destruction.

Then, Peter points us to the life that Yah desires His people to have, of holiness, and of uprightness, and he says that this should be the case because (among other things) we know how this world will end. In other words, our affections must be set on the spiritual, the heavenly, because all that is of this earth is destined for destruction.

Now, the degree to which we can encourage this to happen is the degree to which we fulfill this divine instruction. Peter says that those who live according to the will of Yah will be “hasting” the day of the universe’s release. Traditionally, we have read that word as “hastening;” however, the shortening of time is only one of the meanings of this term. Peter uses a word that does not only mean “to speed up,” but also “to earnestly desire.” Clearly, these two things are connected, because one would not want to encourage and hasten something that he did not eagerly desire to appear.

Now, as we have all experienced, we are living in a time of gross spiritual darkness. It has indeed been fulfilled what the prophets envisioned hundreds of years ago, “Behold, the days come, saith Yahweh, that

I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of Yahweh.” (Amos 8:11)

It is not that Yah desires that His Word shall be scarce. As we know, the wording of the Old Testament is such that Yahweh claims to perform that which He permits to happen through the freely made decisions of human beings – as with the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart during the time of Moses. Humanity, because they did not long for the appearing of Christ, have turned away from the promises of the Most High. Because of this, a true and saving knowledge of His Word is very scarce indeed. Even those who claim to speak for Him, who give weekly sermons from pulpits and stages, often teach the very opposite of what our Father has spoken, a disregard for His holy Law, an acceptance of sin in lives that are labeled as “Christian,” and misunderstandings of every doctrine that the Bible presents. Is it any wonder that the passing-away of these things should be with “a loud noise,” and “fervent heat?”

For the evangelist, this presents a very high tower to climb, if we wish to reach the hearts of others. The false doctrines spread abroad in Christendom have made virtues out of sin. There is pride, spiritual laziness, and fear of every variety. Those who claim to love Yahweh ignore and deny the verses written by His nearest followers, that our love for Him will produce in us obedience to His commandments, lives dedicated to the blessing of others, and humility that guides us to self-examination and a desire to stand firmly in the light of our Father’s judgment.

And in these last days, as prophecy is being fulfilled, we must be in the Spirit of Sabbath, and also the solemnity of the New Moon. While we speak to others of victory, of Sabbath rest, of purity of life and doctrine, we must be always in prayer, and watchful of temptations, so that we will ever be “hasting,” both encouraging and eagerly desiring the soon return of Yahshua.

I know that, in speaking to my own family, and various others, one of the biggest barriers I have encountered in getting them even to hear my words on these matters, is that of fear. And it is not just “fear” in a general sense. It is a very specific fear – that of change, that of the unknown.

Those who contemplate a religious awakening (or re-awakening, if they were once faithful to the light they had) must deal with the changes that Yah requires them to make to their lives, so that He can sanctify them through His light and power.

Again, if our affections are fixed on the eternal things, rather than those that “shall be dissolved,” that “shall pass away with a great noise,” this is not a sufficient concern to turn us from pursuing the truth. In fact, it is a joyful thing to consider. Our task, then, when speaking of victory over sin, and the everlasting life that results from standing innocent before Yahweh, is to fix the affections of those with whom we speak on Heavenly things. This is very much the work of Elijah, who prepares the Way for Yahshua, of whom it is written, “And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” (Mal 4:6)

Doctrines are important. Truth is important. The character of Yahshua is the goal, and obedience to the commandments and will of Yah is the way in which this character is produced. However, what must happen first is that the affections of men must be turned away from the earth, and upward to Heaven. This is why the very first of the Three Angels that bears the Gospel tells us to “Worship Him that made Heaven and earth...”

And this is exactly where “faith” comes in. Why do those who know not Yahweh so often desire to keep their ignorance? It is because they have been taught the religion of the “senses.” They have been taught that what they see, and feel, and experience in their bodies, is all that exists. And even if they claim to believe otherwise, and perhaps even think that they are religiously-minded, their words and actions often reveal that their confidence is in the things of this world, rather than the next.

Faith is necessary to see beyond the senses, and to fix affections on the things to come, but even those who would be spiritual have much stacked against them. Their pastors and priests tell them that the afterlife is some ghostly existence entirely unknowable to living men, and that Yahweh set it up that way. They are informed that the development of a spotless character is secondary to the “rituals” of their faith, whether that is baptism, the confessional, or an initial “sinner’s prayer.” They are fed so much superstition and fantasy that they come to regard Yahweh as truly unknowable, and so they place all manner of intermediaries (saints, angels, rote activities, memorized prayers, etc.) between Him and themselves.

Surely, Satan rejoices in this atmosphere of fear that exists even in the most apparently “joyful” of Churches. Even the Pentecostal, celebration-type churches, they do not come face to face with Yahweh. They do not stand before Him and, as David, say, “Search me, O Elohim, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psalm 139:23, 24)

And because they are not taught to say those words of David, they are not able to say these words of David: “I hate them with perfect hatred, I count them mine enemies,” (verse 22) in reference to those sins that lead to rebellion in the heart of mankind.

Because men are trained to walk by sight, and not by faith, the following verse holds no comfort for them: “For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O Elohim, beside thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him.” (Isa 64:4)

We are not permitted to “see,” to foreknow, those things that await us in glory. We are required to receive it on faith, that the things of this world (however Satan may polish them in our sight) are of no account compared to them. We are required to exercise trust toward our Father, that He knows well how to cause everlasting rejoicing in those that love Him, so that there is nothing in this temporary world worth our affections so much as the worship of the Almighty.

Lest any think that these ideas are not divinely and powerfully connected, the belief in the promises of Yah and the desire to hasten His coming, let us read what Isaiah said before that often-quoted verse above. Here is more from the passage from which it is taken:

“Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, as when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!

“When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence. For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.” (Isa 64:1-4)

Here we have much the same idea expressed by Peter, but arranged in order to appear as another perspective. Peter says, “Since the things of earth will shortly pass away, let us set our affections on Heavenly things, and hasten the return of our Lord with eager anticipation.” Many years before, Isaiah wrote, “I long to see your power poured out on the world, to destroy that which must be destroyed, because (for) since the beginning of the world, you have promised greater things for your faithful people than we can possibly know, yet eagerly anticipate.”

There is a famine of the Word of Yah. There is a lack of the knowledge of these words, and therefore a lack of belief, that Yah truly has greater things for us than anything this world could possibly offer.

We see the darkness of this present earth, and we are sorrowful. We know that persecution lies ahead, and we are prayerful. And yet, we know that Yah is with us in all these things and, when we have endured them to the end, He will open our eyes, so that we may see those things reserved for the faithful “since the beginning.”

It is the “blessed hope” of the Christian that, with character perfected, we will behold those things that Peter and Isaiah wrote about – the destruction of all that corruption has done to taint this world. With fire and noise, with great shakings, Yah will reveal His displeasure toward sin for all the universe to behold. These are fearful words to those who do not know how to separate themselves from their transgressions, but for us it is something to eagerly anticipate.

Like our Father, however, it is not something we can eagerly anticipate with unbounded joy, for like Him (as I said at the beginning) we know what this means for our fellow human beings. We know what it means for those who will not unite in will and spirit with the Father and His dear Son, who will not unite with His people as they depart from Spiritual Egypt. We encounter many, as we depart, who look back upon the Egypt that they left, and desire the things that they are leaving behind. They do this, because they do not trust the word of Yahweh, that Canaan will be sweeter than the things that they consider to be “loss.” If they will be saved, they must learn to place their trust in Him who is faithful.

And as for us, we are called to be as Moses, and as Joshua, to rejoice in the land to which we are being taken, even though we have not yet set foot there in the flesh. We are called to encourage one another, and those with whom we speak, to come to know our Father, to come to love Him, and to trust His promises, and to know that nothing that they love, and nothing that they fear, is greater than the blessings He gives us even in this life. How much more, then, are those blessings yet to come to be valued?

This is the essence of Elijah’s evangelism – to turn the hearts of the children to the Father. This is why we are to speak with an invincible faith, and to speak with a testimony most holy. It was not for nothing that we have been instructed in this manner. It is, of course, for us – that Satan’s temptations should have no power over us through words of doubt. But it is also, equally, for those who hear us testify, that the world may know that there are people who love Yahweh supremely, and are willing to surrender those temporary things in favor of those that are eternal.

As we search ourselves, let us be this grand example. Let us come to know our Father as no humans ever before have known Him... for He has invited us to do just this. Let our trust exceed those whom the world has called “saints,” and let our belief in His promises make us immune to both the enticements and the threatenings of this temporary age. As it is written, perfect love casts out all fear. As it is written, our

Father knows those who are His. As it is written, we shall not fail, nor be discouraged. And how shall we succeed? How shall we avoid discouragement that so easily befalls mankind? It is by receiving the gifts our Father has given us: the spirit of Sabbath rest, the victorious life, the trust that fixes our affection on Heavenly things, the covenant of faith that binds all believers together.

These are things in which we rejoice, believing that they are but a shadow of things to come, until the day breaks fully, and all that is less than perfect in the sight of our Father has passed away. Let us accept Yah's invitation, to be perfect in His sight, and let us help others to see the joy, and the glory, of trust in our Father's Word. We may not know those things Yahweh has prepared for us, but we "know" them by faith, because we know who He is. Let this knowledge guide our faith, and the way that we go about eagerly, "hasting," to turn the hearts of our fellow men towards our Heavenly Father, so that His will be drawn toward them.

Are there any questions or comments on tonight's study?