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Converging Hopes for Jewish and Gentile Believers

By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #117 ~

When we look back through history, we see that Jewish believers had hope for the future. Abraham was *"looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God"* (Hebrews 11:10). Job stated, *"at the last He* (my Redeemer*) will take His stand on the earth"* (Job 19:25). Hannah knew that *"the Lord will judge the ends of the earth"* (1 Samuel 2:10). David said confidently, *"I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever"* (Psalm 23:6). When writing about the Son of Man, Daniel knew *"His kingdom will be an everlasting Kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him"* (Daniel 7:27). These Jewish saints all had hope, for they were looking ahead, and looking forward, to God's purposes being fulfilled. But they had an incomplete picture, for God had not revealed to them all that He was planning to do in the future.

What about the saints in the early church? It's obvious that they learned much more about this hope, the glorious plans God had in store for His

people. Peter (1 Peter 1:3-5, 10-13), John (Revelation), Matthew (Matthew 24), Luke (Luke 21:7-36), Paul (1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:9), and James (James 5:7-9), all wrote about the coming of Jesus Christ. This divine revelation, in addition to what the Old Testament saints had written, gave them a much clearer picture of Christ's return and specific events preceding it. Like the believers before them, these 1st century Christians also had hope, for they were anticipating the fulfillment of God's promises to them. But it wasn't clear to them when all these prophesied events would take place. In fact, Jesus told the apostles, *"It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority"* (Acts 1:7). As we look back, we can see that they didn't need to know when, for God knew it would be a long, long time until the end of the age and the coming of Christ.

Here we are in the 21st century, and close to two thousand years have come and gone since the start of the church age, and Christ still has not returned. Millions and millions of believers from the past, both Jews and Gentiles, have gone on to heaven before us. Their passing away, their departure from this earth, was a good thing, for their hope was partially fulfilled – they immediately were taken to be with Christ, met many loving saints, and were blessed to be in a sinless and perfect state. And they passed the baton on to other believers, and now it's our turn to run the race.

But it won't be thousands of years before Christ comes back, and it won't be hundreds of years either. That the Jews are back in their land, that Israel has been reestablished as a nation is proof, evidence, and God's sign to us that it won't be long before He sends His Son back to earth. No one but God knows the exact time of Christ's return, but we can know the general time, for God's prophetic word is being fulfilled in the world around us, and we can see that the day of Christ is drawing near. Matthew 24:3-36

What a privilege to be living at this time in history, in these years leading up to Christ's return. Shouldn't we be more excited about His

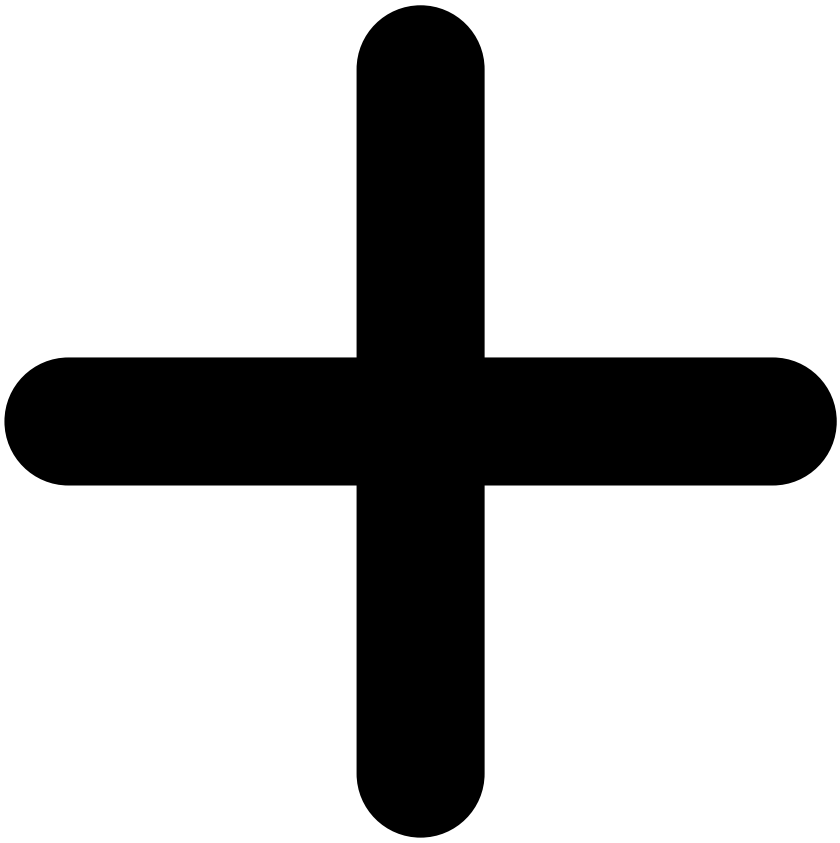
coming than other believers who lived in the past? Shouldn't we see that our *"salvation is nearer to us than when we first believed"* (Romans 14:11)? Shouldn't we be like the *"sons of Issachar, men who understood the times, and knew what they should do"* (1 Chronicles 12:32)? Shouldn't we *"give understanding to the many"* (Daniel 11:33)? Shouldn't we *"make ready the way of the Lord"* (Luke 3:4)? Shouldn't we be *"looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God"* (2 Peter 3:12)? Shouldn't we tell others all we know about what lies ahead, and Who will soon appear in the clouds above us (Mark 13:23, 26)? Yes, yes, yes!

For thousands of years, believers have been hoping, waiting, looking, longing for that time when the Messiah, the Christ, will set up His kingdom on this earth. But to think He could come in our lifetime is a thrilling thought, a most encouraging possibility. Might we then *"run with endurance the race that is set before us,"* the last leg of this race, this race to the end of the age, this race to see Jesus. Might we fix our eyes on Jesus, and fix our hope on the grace to be brought to us when He is revealed (Hebrews 11:1-2, 1 Peter 1:13), for it is at His coming that we will begin to see the realization of all our hopes, the fulfillment of God's promises to all His people. Then we will be given new bodies, meet up with loved ones we knew on earth, see God's judgment of the world, be revealed with Christ in glory, and soon after that, begin to reign over the earth with Him.

Then we will see His plans for the Jews coincide with His plans for the church (Hebrews 11:39-40). His promise to the Jews, *"the righteous will inherit the land and dwell in it forever"* (Psalm 37:29), will be fulfilled in conjunction with His promise to the church, *"blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth"* (Matthew 5:5). Romans 15:10 confirms this when it says, *"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people,"* His people being the Jewish believers. Then we read, *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit"* (Romans 15:13). Might you see that God wants all believers, Jews and Gentiles, Old Testament saints and church-age believers, to be abounding in hope! Might you be excitedly looking

forward to what God will be doing for all His people, and all for His glory. *“Praise the Lord all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise Him.”* Romans 15:11

P.S. This post spoke about the future of both Jewish and Gentile believers. I have written quite a bit about the Jews in past posts. Here are three I would strongly encourage you to read: A Jewish Reading Lesson, Why the Jews are Important for You and the Church, Clear New Testament Confirmation of God’s Plans for the Jews.





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