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The Main Thing - "Prepare the Way of the Lord"



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #172 ~

NOTE: I am sure most of you are aware of the sickening and evil murder of George Floyd, and now the senseless rioting that is being seen in major cities all over our country. God is not blind to what is going on in the United States. We have had this problem of the pandemic for over 10 weeks, and now the tragic events of this past week. We must realize that God wants to get our attention, to wake us up – He wants us to turn to Him, to seek Him, to repent of our sins. And we also need to pray for our leaders. God is the answer – only He can truly help us. May He have mercy on us. "… for God troubled them with every kind of distress. As for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded… they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and soul." 2 Chronicles 15:6-7, 12. The *"main thing"* we need to do is given in the message of John the Baptist, which is talked about in this post.

THE POST: It’s good to keep up with what’s going on in the world, particularly as it relates to prophecy. As for me, I watch cable news, read a few newsletters, look at some on-line sites, and view an occasional You-Tube video. In the past ten weeks I’ve learned some things about COVID-19, masks, ID 2020, digital identity, surveillance drones, forced vaccines, crypto-currencies, a global financial order, 5G technology, and Russia-China-Middle East alliances.

I am interested in these subjects because I want to see how they might relate to the end-times and the fulfillment of prophecy. But it doesn’t take long to see that there’s a lot of information and a lot of conspiracy theories out there. Now I do plan to keep reading up on subjects like these because I want to be informed, I want to understand the times, and I want to be a watchman (1 Chron. 12:32, Ezek. 3:17). But I’m not going to take the time to burrow into all the minutia, especially if what’s being said seems far-fetched and extreme. Isaiah 8:11-13, 1 Timothy 1:3-4

You see, I don’t want to go down some rabbit hole – I need to stay above ground so I can see the big picture. I do believe God wants us to know general things about Christ’s coming and the end-times, and I’ve taught extensively and repeatedly on these subjects. But I don’t think it’s worth it to get bogged down in specifics or speculation. What I’m saying is that we need to be balanced, and discerning. Yes, there are some things we need to know, but there comes a time when we just need to trust God and realize that He’s in control. Sadly, many Christians get so focused on what’s going on in the world that they fail to do the work of God.

As a pastor, my primary job is to build up the church and reach out to the lost, which is also my purpose with this blog post. My desire for you is to know what will be happening before the rapture of the church, and to be encouraged, to be strong in faith, hope and love, to be doing the Lord’s work, and to be excited about the return of Christ. 1 Thessalonians 1-5

One way to be encouraged is by learning from the lives of believers that we read about in the Bible. I cannot think of a better example than John the Baptist. Even though he and his fellow Jews were oppressed by the Romans, he didn't fret, he didn't get angry, he didn't focus on what they were doing, and he didn't debate with the *"learned"* men of the day. He did what God wanted him to do, which was being a forerunner for Christ. And isn't that our job today? Yes, it is! John knew that Christ was coming soon, and he told the people all about Him. Here we are 2000 years later, living in the end-times, and we too know that Christ is coming soon, and we too need to be telling people about Him. Now what can we learn from John's life?

John was a man of godly character. He feared God, and he wasn't afraid of man. His goal was to please God, not man. John was humble – he knew who he was in relationship to Jesus, that Jesus was eternal, above all, and more powerful. He said, *"He must become greater; I must become less."* (John 3:30-31). John was zealous and passionate, and was determined to fulfill the mission God had given him. He was a holy man, not distracted or weighed down by the world or the flesh. John was honest and sober-minded, and did not withhold or sugar-coat the truth. He spoke the word of God plainly, clearly, and powerfully. John 1:19-34

John was a man with purpose, which was to *"prepare the way of the Lord, make straight paths for Him"* (Luke 3:40). How did he do this? He preached the gospel, the good news (Luke 3:18). He proclaimed, *"the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Matt. 3:2). He told the people that they were sinners, and specifically how they were sinning (Luke 3:10-14). He told them that Jesus was the Lamb of God, *"who takes away the sin of the world"* (John 1:29). He exhorted the people, telling them that they needed to repent if they were to be forgiven of their sins (Mark 1:4). He told them that salvation and being a member of God's kingdom was by the work of the Messiah – He *"will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."* Luke 3:15-16, John 1:29-34

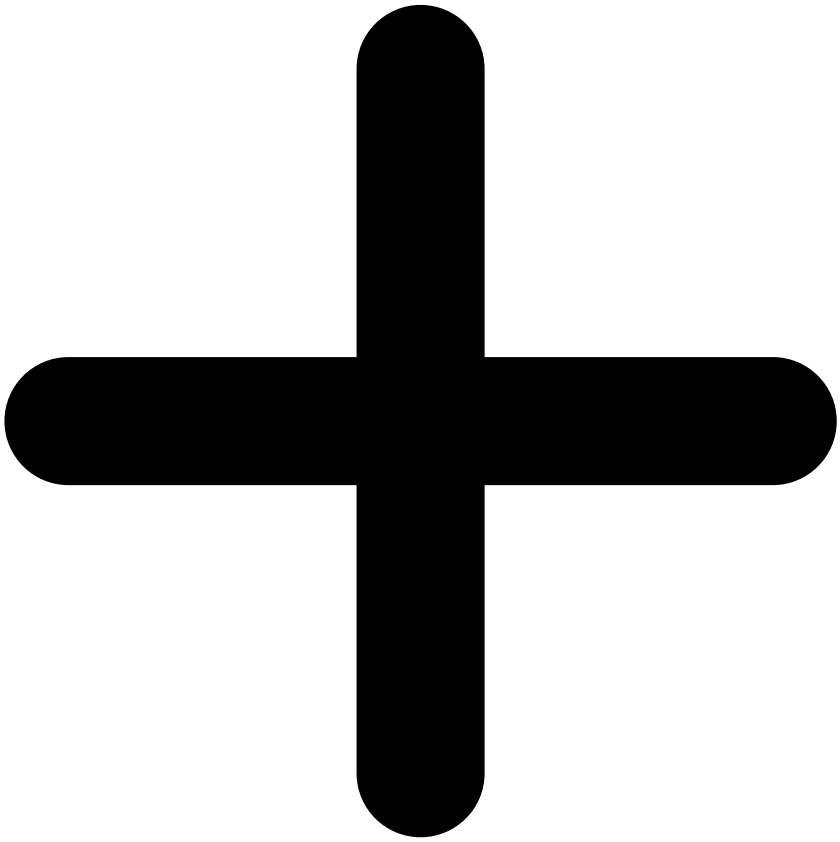
John also told the people what would happen if they did not repent, that

they would be judged for their sins. He spoke soberly and boldly how the Messiah would baptize with *"fire,"* specifically about the *"coming wrath,"* being *"thrown into the fire,"* and the *"burning up of the chaff with unquenchable fire"* (Matt. 3:7-12). John also preached about the millennial kingdom age, though he knew not, like we know, when it would come. He thought it would take place at Christ's 1st coming, but now we know it will be during His 2nd coming. John declared, *"Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth"* (Luke 3:5). This is speaking of the time when Christ the King will rule over the world, when there will be righteousness and peace. John goes on to say that "*All people will see God's salvation"* (Luke 3:6), which is referring to when Christ returns and saves a great many Jews, soon followed by His 1000-year kingdom age, when the whole world will witness God's mercy, power and glory. Isaiah 40:3-11; Psalms 47, 67, 72, 98

More than any other passage in the Bible, these words about John's life, his character and purpose, motivate me to prepare the way of the Lord. Can you see how relevant his life is, and how it instructs us what we are to do? We can get so distracted by what's happening in the world, even with things that may relate to Christ's return and the rapture, but we must stay the course, and continue to carry out the Lord's work. We are to teach the saved about the 2nd coming of Christ, and tell the lost about the 1st coming of Christ, and their need to be saved before His 2nd coming, before it's too late, before they are *"thrown into the fire."*

"I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, in view of His appearance and His kingdom, preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:1-2). This is for pastors and preachers, but it should also encourage you to tell people the truth about Christ, His 1st coming and His 2nd coming. Don't get off track, don't be focused on man's work – be doing God's work, keeping the main thing the main thing – ***"Preach the word."***

P.S. When you get time, read *“Make Ready the Way of the Lord,”* another post that talks about your purpose in life, that you are a forerunner for Christ. Then there’s an article, *“What Does God Want Me to Do in the End-Times?”,* which lists out a number of verses instructing you how you are to live for the Lord.



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