
The Writer's Inkhorn

Volume 9, Issue 6

Continuing Reflections on the Word for Your Personal Growth in Christ

Nov/Dec 2016

Are You Ready for the Coming of the Lord?



his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

Scripture Texts: Isaiah 9:6-7; Luke 1:17;
Malachi Chapters 3 & 4, selected verses

And Malachi 4:5-6a:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers...

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

The title of this issue puts the question front and center: **Are you ready for the coming of the Lord?** Take some time to read chapters 3 and 4 of the book of Malachi to see how his prophetic words were for the people **then and** for what is to come **in the future**. You see, our lives are all about living in the now *and* for the future if we will be **a people prepared for the Lord's return**.

The Christmas season is always a wonderful time to reflect on Christ's first coming to Earth, as well as His imminent second coming. And on several occasions in Scripture, we have the prophecy of Christ's birth and His glorious reign mentioned in the same text and in the verses above from the prophet, Isaiah. Christ came and will return. Will you be ready for His return?

Are you even *thinking* about where you plan to spend eternity? Readiness is first an **attitude** before it is an **action**. Did you catch that? Readiness is an attitude **before** it is an action. In other words, readiness is a state of mind, a mindset, if you will. We have got to be focused on the fact that we are to live in the now **and** for the future. We have got to live **in** the now **for** now and **in preparation for** the future.

Luke (1:17) said of John the Baptist, called the forerunner for Christ's first advent as Savior:

And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

If you had a mother or grandmother who talked about a "rainy day" fund, then in all likelihood she **had** a rainy day cookie jar or mason jar where she would periodically put something aside for the rainy day that was *certain* to come. Mom or Grandma understood that even if *conditions* were not certain, the fact that there would *be* a future that she needed to be prepared for *was* certain. Rain often comes suddenly, and one does not wait until the rainy day *arrives* to *prepare* for it.

Compare Luke's words to those of the prophet in Malachi 3:1, who wrote of John as the messenger:

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to

*[T]he Lord whom ye seek shall **suddenly** come to His temple... Jesus came suddenly the **first** time and most/many were not prepared. And His*

second coming will **again** be sudden, and many will again not be prepared. *[W]ho may abide the day of His coming?* Malachi keeps reminding us of the expectations for our lives in the now, while not letting us forget about what lies ahead. Are we a people **prepared** for the coming of the Lord? Hear more words from the prophet in 4:1-2a:

*For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, says the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. **But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings.***

Are you truly living in a **state** of readiness? Luke says in his gospel in 17:25-28:

And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draws nigh.

From Genesis to Revelation, the Scriptures are replete with promises and prophecies of the coming Messiah, Redeemer, Savior, King:

*The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, **until Shiloh come**; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." (Genesis 49:10)*

Jude's words (14, 15) of Enoch (Hebrews 11:5-6) are believed to be the earliest recorded prophecy of the second coming of Christ:

*And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, **Behold, the Lord cometh** with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of*

all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

The prophet Joel writes in chapter 2, verse 1:

*Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: **for the day of the LORD cometh**, for it is nigh at hand.*

There are hundreds and hundreds more references to the coming of the Lord throughout the entire Bible. I have included just a few of them here from the New Testament writers, to both stir your pure minds and to encourage you in looking forward to the day of the Lord.

Acts 3:20-21 *And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.*

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

1 Thessalonians 5:1-4 *But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.*

1 Thessalonians 5:23 *And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Hebrews 9:28 *So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him*

shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Hebrews 10:37 *For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*

James 5:7-9 *Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draws nigh.*

1 Peter 1:13 *Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. (NIV)*

2 Peter 3:3-4, 8-12a *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*

But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 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...

1 John 2:28 *And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at his coming.*

1 John 3:2 *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.*

Revelation 1:7-8 *Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending," saith the Lord, Who is, and Who was, and Who is to come, the Almighty.*

Revelation 3:11 *Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*

Revelation 22:12-13 *And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*

Revelation 22:20-21 *He which testifies these things says, "Surely I come quickly." Amen. **Even so, come, Lord Jesus**. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

Listen to me; still yourselves. Are you ever more convinced of the importance of these passages? If no one else was in the room where you currently are as you are reading this, and you stood there face-to-face with God and Jesus, could you honestly say that you are ready to go back with Them in peace? Will you have done all you were *destined* to do and been all you were destined to be? You see, being prepared for His coming is also about **destiny and purpose**. If we have **not** done **the best** that we could, **where** we were, with **what** we were given **by God**, we will **still** not be prepared to meet Father and Son **in peace**. Will you have lived your **fullest** life, the abundant life that Christ said He came to give you? **Your life in the here and now matters as much to God as the life He has planned for you in the hereafter**. Did you *know* that? Have you *thought* about that? Malachi 3:17 states:

*And they shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, in **that** day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spares his own son that serves him.*

Can you imagine yourself as **a crown jewel** in the royal diadem of God, part of His special treasures? You can, if you have lived fully into

the life He has purposed for you here, **and** have received Him into your heart so that you are indeed ready for the second coming of the Lord when He returns in **that day**.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

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The following story is one that I came across years ago, and have treasured it ever since. It is appropriate to share at this season, especially given the content in this issue of *The Inkhorn*.

Who'll Take the Son?

(Author Unknown)

A wealthy man and his son loved to collect rare works of art. They had everything in their collection, from Picasso to Raphael. They would often sit together and admire the great works of art. When the Viet Nam conflict broke out, the son went to war. He was very courageous and died in battle while rescuing another soldier. The father was notified and grieved deeply for his only son.

About a month later, just before Christmas, there was a knock at the door of the father's mansion. A young man stood at the door with a large package in his hands. He said, "Sir, you don't know me, but I am the soldier for whom your son gave his life. He saved many lives that day, and he was carrying me to safety when a bullet struck him in the heart and he died instantly. He often talked about you, and your love for art." The young man held out his package. "I know this isn't much. I'm not really a great artist, but I think your son would have wanted you to have this."

The father opened the package. It was a portrait of his son, painted by the young man. He stared in awe at the way the soldier had captured the personality of his son in the painting. The father was so drawn to the eyes that his own eyes welled up with tears. He thanked the young man and offered to pay him for the picture. "Oh, no sir," said the young man. "It's a gift. I could never repay what your son did for me."

The father hung the portrait over his mantle. Every time visitors came to his home he took them to see the portrait of his son before he showed them any of the other great works he had collected.

The man died a few months later. There was to be a great auction of his paintings. Many influential people gathered, excited over seeing the great paintings and having an opportunity to purchase one for their collection. On the platform sat the painting of

the son. The auctioneer pounded his gavel. "We will start the bidding with this picture of the son. Who will bid for this picture?"

There was silence. Then a voice in the back of the room shouted. "We want to see the famous paintings. Skip this one."

But the auctioneer persisted. "Will someone bid for this painting? Who will start the bidding? \$100, \$200?"

Another voice shouted angrily, "We didn't come to see this painting. We came to see the Van Goghs, the Rembrandts. Get on with the real bids!"

Still the auctioneer continued, "The son! The son! Who'll take the son?"

Finally, a voice came from the very back of the room. It was the longtime gardener of the man and his son. "I'll give \$10 for the painting." Being a poor man, it was all he could afford.

"We have \$10, who will bid \$20?"

"Give it to him for \$10. Let's see the masters!"

"\$10 is the bid, won't someone bid \$20?"

The crowd was becoming angry. They didn't want the picture of the son. They wanted the more worthy investments for their collections.

The auctioneer pounded the gavel. "Going once, twice, SOLD for \$10!"

A man sitting on the second row shouted. "Now let's get on with the collection!"

The auctioneer laid down his gavel. "I'm sorry, the auction is over," he said.

"What about the paintings?" the man inquired.

"I am sorry," the auctioneer began to explain.

"When I was called to conduct this auction, I was told of a secret stipulation in the will. I was not allowed to reveal that stipulation until this time. Only the painting of the son would be auctioned. Whoever bought that painting would inherit the entire estate, including the paintings of the masters. The man who took the son gets everything!"

God gave His Son nearly 2,000 years ago to die on a cruel cross for our sins. Much like the auctioneer, His message today is still, "The Son, the Son, who'll take the Son?" Because, you see, whoever takes the Son, though he be poor, gets everything. And whoever disregards the Son, though he be rich, truly gets nothing.

Your Teacher and Sister,
Dr. Mary Webster Moore

Contact me. May I assist you? I am available for speaking and workshops and I am dedicated to adding value to the lives of others. Reach out to me at 773.735.8713 or mary.webster@trnty.edu

