

May 15, 2017

Dear Members and Friends,

Looking at conditions in the world, one has to conclude that there may not be much time left before Christ returns. "Not much time left" is a relative term. If you are young, the impact on a possible delay of Christ's coming is less traumatic than if you are older, when a delay could impact you in that you may die before the event happens (even though death has no bearing on your salvation if you die in Christ). But we don't want to get into a complacent frame of mind that "my Lord delays His coming," which could have disastrous consequences.

Matthew 24:45-51 states (Authorized Version throughout):

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; And shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Notice verse 45, which addresses our collective responsibility of giving the world and the membership meat in due season; that is, the members are to be spiritually fed and the world is to receive a warning message and the good news of hope, following the coming disasters, trials and tribulation. Without Christ's return, there would be no HOPE. Hope is an amazing quality because if we are going through a severe trial and lose hope, what remains?

At one time, Paul and his companions almost lost hope, as recorded in Acts 27:20: "And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away." However, that was not the end of the story:

"But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me" (Acts 27:21-25).

God was not going to abandon Paul, his companions and the members of the crew. Therefore, all could be of good cheer, believing in God's intervention and deliverance.

Today, we have similar promises from Christ when being tried. Hebrews 13:5 says: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." This is a promise we can and must rely on.

Also notice 1 Corinthians 10:13: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a [better: the] way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." God's

promise of escape and protection can also be found in Luke 21:36: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

God gives us the promise that we will not be tried beyond our capabilities and that He will show us the way of escape from the trial; and He gives us the additional promise that He will never forsake us. In addition, we must also not forget this promise, as recorded in Matthew 24:13: "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."

Let us ask the following questions:

Are there more severe trials coming on this sinful world? Yes!

Are we to lose hope when facing the hard times ahead? No!

Armed with God's promises, we should never lose hope, but rather look to our fantastic future potential of becoming godly kings and priests, serving under Christ in the Millennium and beyond, by helping to usher in a time of true peace and prosperity, which this world sorely needs.

In Christ's Service,



Rene Messier