

Time of Preparation

by George Warnock

George Warnock's sermon emphasizes the critical need for believers to prepare themselves spiritually for the return of the Lord through a deep union with Christ and genuine faith.

Duration: 1:25:52

Scripture: Luke 3:2, Romans 10:17

Topics: "Preparation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the frustration and confusion of the prophet Habakkuk, who questions why God seems to be silent and inactive in the face of treacherous people. Habakkuk pours out his heart in complaint, but then decides to wait and see how God will respond. The Lord answers him and instructs him to write down the vision and make it clear for others to read. The speaker also references the story of Simeon, who had been waiting for the Messiah and finally saw him in the baby Jesus. The sermon emphasizes the importance of waiting for God's timing and being prepared in our hearts to see and receive Him.

Transcript

I felt going around like this, I just started doing this, I felt it wasn't just a case of, well, coming to give a certain teaching, but I felt that the Lord would want to impart something to his people. You could, I could stay at home and write and send your writings, and of course I've been doing that, but if the Lord sees fit to send us to God's people, I sort of feel it's for somewhat of a different purpose. And Paul, when he wanted to go to Rome, he said his desire was that he might impart unto them something.

And then he went on to explain that, that is, that I with you might be comforted together with you by the mutual faith, both of you and me. So that not only was he desiring to give, but he expressed the desire that there be a mutual impartation of faith. So I trust that the Lord will have been encouraged where I've gone to feel that the Lord has ministered something to people that I think gave them something that they could lay hold on, something to challenge them, something to encourage them further in the ways of the Lord.

For I believe we've come to a very, very critical hour in the history of the world and in the history of God's people, a very critical hour, an hour when we can expect change. And we accept that, I guess. But until the change comes, perhaps we don't realize how devastating a change it might be.

So I believe it is a time of preparation, primarily. It's a time of preparation. Not that God isn't doing certain things in the world, but preeminently it's a time of preparation to get a people ready for the coming of the Lord.

Not only to get a people ready, but when that people is ready that they'll have such a manifestation of the life of Christ in them, that they will be what Jesus asked for in his prayer to the Heavenly Father. They would be that people in such union with him that the world would believe that Jesus is the Son of God. And Jesus said that's all it's going to take, a people in union with Jesus as Jesus is with the Father, to make the world know and be assured that Jesus is the Son of God.

That's all it takes. And so rather than keeping that as our vision, our hope, and as our desire until it consumes us, to say it doesn't work, of course, it doesn't work, so we have our own way. Missionary programs, radio programs, TV programs, outreaches, books, tracts, because God's way doesn't work.

Or if it works it isn't practical, or of course it's there in the Bible, but you know, what can we... Jesus said when he has a people that are one with him as he is one with the Father, that the world might believe that he's the Son of God. So we lament that there's not enough missionaries, preachers, tracts, books, not enough money. I tell this little story almost everywhere I go because I calculated this many, many years ago and I mentioned it once to a former pastor of mine who spoke of the great need for the missionary program and I mentioned it to him and it literally staggered him.

Before I'd come I looked up the National Geographic atlas I got and roughly there's around 150,000 towns, villages, cities in the world. Probably many more than that, but in the atlas there's at least that many. So I said, okay, let's start with one Christian in each village, each town, each city.

I don't care how big it is, how small it is. One Christian with this life I'm talking about, with this union with Christ and with that power and living reality of Christ in them that enables them to reproduce their kind. The Church of Jesus Christ is reproducing its kind and because we're sterile, dead, ineffective, that's the kind of Christians we are.

You wonder sometimes if they're really Christians or not. And if they are, they have the same kind of life we have, which is not very much. And so one Christian with this vital life of Christ just reproducing his kind to make two in one day's time, and that work goes on so that the next day there's two now, the next day there's four, and we're starting with 150,000 say, so the next day there's 300,000.

That's all over the world. You're telling me, just take your little town, one here, next day two, next day four, next day eight, by word of mouth, without radio, without TV, without books, tracts, in two weeks the whole world is one to Christ. I'm not saying that's what God's going to do.

I'm saying that's the principle of life, that's the principle that operated in the New Testament Church. 3,000 were one to the Lord, and 5,000, and probably within a matter of a few weeks, 20, 30,000 people in Jerusalem, the church in Jerusalem, scattered all over, meeting in homes. I shouldn't say scattered, but I mean they had all things in common, and in as far as it was possible they would get together and have a little fellowship in somebody's home, someone down the street, someone in their home, and the word of the Lord grew and increased and multiplied until they had a great Christian community in Jerusalem, occasionally meeting in Solomon's temple, until persecution arose, but the church was there scattered in Jerusalem.

And oh, they rejoiced in that communal way of life they had, because Christians were together, they had all things common, they'd get together in Solomon's porch, and then they'd go to their homes, and believers would be added to them, added to them, added to them, until we read that it was multiplied, the word of the Lord grew and multiplied. And then, having learned the ways of the Lord and come to know him, God scattered the church. And that's God's way of causing this principle of multiplication to work, it's scattering! It's not when you get 30,000 people in Jerusalem, you get together and try and build a temple to seat them all, it's that they become the church of the living God.

You are the church of Christ and the earth, and wherever you are, you're the church, and yet we can't get away from that concept of going to church. God wants us to be in the church where we are, bring someone to church to get them saved. No, you're the church out there, get them saved out there.

I realize we don't have that kind of life, but with that kind of life, one Christian, just one in New York, one in Los Angeles, reproducing himself, and just bringing two people to the Lord, and that's all he does. With those two people having this kind of life, they bring each two people, and in two weeks the whole world is one to the Lord. I'm talking about the principle of it.

And we say it doesn't work, and so what have we got? A vast machine, a vast ecclesiastical machine to try and reach the ends of the earth with the gospel, especially now we've got radio and TV and satellites and everything. Oh, how wonderful. And we're further behind now than we were a hundred years ago.

More heathen in the world today than there ever was. You say God's way doesn't work? Man's way that doesn't work. God's way is a people simply walking in the anointing of Jesus.

That requires vision, requires preparation, and I believe that God is preparing that kind of a people in the earth. Whether God sees fit to do it in two weeks or two months or two years or twenty years, I don't know. He's going to have that kind of a people in the earth, and he doesn't need a crowd.

He only needs one in your city, one in your village, that's all he needs. With that kind of a life, that kind of a life can reproduce Christ in others. God's going to bring forth this kind of a people.

I know we're in end time. I know the Lord is coming soon, but I know also that he's coming for a prepared people. He always visits a prepared people.

At any time of visitation in the earth, God has a prepared people for that time of visitation. Always has a prepared people. Somehow we've got a doctrine of the coming of the Lord that says, well, we're saved, we're washed in the blood, you can come any time, Lord.

I'm not saying it'd be lost. I'm saying that God wants a prepared people to usher in the coming of the Lord, even as he did the first time. Why did God require prepared people the first time he came? They were ready for him.

They were longing for him. They were in bondage under Rome, and they were God's chosen people. And they had learned theologians and scribes and Pharisees who had all the doctrines about the coming of the Lord.

They had it down very well. There was no problem there as to their understanding of the coming of the Lord. What need for preparation? We're ready.

We're in bondage from Rome. We want Messiah to come and deliver us. But God would usher in his Messiah with a great preparatory work, because the work that he was going to do did not conform to the ideas of the scribes and Pharisees.

God's ways were different. God's ways are always different than man's ways. And so it was needful, if God was going to establish the kingdom of heaven in the earth, it was needful that God send forth a voice, a pure voice that would prepare the hearts of the people for that day.

We've got the same situation in the world today, the same thought that they had in Jesus' day, the kingdom of heaven is at hand, we're God's people, we're going to take the kingdom, we're going to rule and reign with Christ. Got the same concept. We don't understand the principles of God's kingdom.

We just think one day, whenever that point comes along, 1993, whenever it comes, God slaps it on the earth. He doesn't do that. He planted the kingdom of heaven in the earth 2,000 years ago, something that neither the scribes or the Pharisees or Jesus' own disciples could understand, that God, Jesus, came to earth to begin to plant the seeds of the kingdom in the earth, that the kingdom of God might spring out of the earth, not flop down from heaven.

Spring out of the earth. And to grow in the earth until the time of harvest. The kingdom to grow in the earth until the time of harvest, which they thought might take 15, 20, 30, 100 years.

We don't know what they thought. Even in Paul's day it seemed that they thought that the day of the Lord had arrived, the Thessalonians. Paul says, no, there are certain things that are going to happen.

And so they thought it might have happened then. God keeps that as a secret. It's gone on some 2,000 years.

And the Lord still hasn't come, because he's been waiting for that harvest to mature. Only God knows when he, according to his own wisdom and knowledge, says, the harvest is ready. Thrust in thy sickle and reap, for the harvest of the earth is ready.

Only God knows when that hour is. So all we can do is seek to do the will of God in the earth until that time comes. And I believe it's very, very near at hand.

I know there seems to be much to do. There is much to do. But according to that little story I told you, God can do it so fast.

When God gets this people, he can do it so quickly. It's staggering when we think of it, that with that kind of life in a people, without any program whatsoever, just with that kind of life that's so in union with Christ that we have the ability to reproduce our kind, to reproduce Christ in the lives of others. And in a matter of days or a few weeks, God can encompass the whole earth.

It's mathematically correct, you figure. But somehow we get used to the ways of the Church, and we figure, well, that's the way. And the Church gets further and further and further away from God through the centuries until there's hardly any semblance today to the New Testament Church.

People who simply became the Church of the Living God, met together wherever there was a place to meet, in homes or... Paul rented a schoolhouse one time, but they were the Church. Because they were the Church of Jesus Christ, according to God's intention, they were the shining forth of God's glory in the

earth. So that when this Church went, whether it was sent forth by the Lord or scattered by persecution, where they went, other churches sprang up.

They reproduced their kind in the earth because they were a seed that was scattered and sprung up. So that all over the empire, churches sprung up in the midst of great persecution and opposition. Without radio, without TV, without books, any of that, the Church grew and multiplied for some 300 years until the Roman Empire was crippled because of the impact of a little stone that was cut out of the mountains without hands.

It was crippled. We might have thought maybe the Lord would come now and put an end to this reign of evil and judge them, separate the righteous from the wicked. But no, somehow, according to his own wisdom, he let the Church go on and on almost 2,000 years.

And a great apostasy sat in, a great falling away. The Church had been so weary of the persecution that when Constantine came along and said, 'It's all right, I'm a Christian now, and I'm going to favor the Christians,' many their bishops who were the intellectuals, they knew the Roman language, Latin and Greek, as well as the native language of the country where they were, so they were the intellectuals. So they became presidents and governors and mayors and prime ministers of countries.

Constantine took his armies who were once heathen and took them down to the waters and baptized them. He says, 'Now you're Christian. Now we're going to fight in the name of the Lord.' Almost overnight, a great apostasy sat in, and we've never been extricated from that Babylonian captivity, never got away from it.

There have been movements toward that end at times which seemed that there was a little bit of a withdrawing from Babylon. The Church has never got away from that separation of State and Church. Make it legal, make it a part of the Constitution.

If Church and State are separate, that doesn't solve a thing. We're intertwined with the world. We've adopted worldly principles.

The Church has completely taken over with worldly principles. Financially, economically, the Church growth system is all based on worldly principles. If you go this route, you can increase your Church.

You've got businesses set up that are set up on a financial basis to go to different churches and say, 'We'll come to your church and we'll show you how you can double your church congregation in so many months or years if you pay us a fee and we'll show you how to do it.' And you just follow these principles all worked out by computer. You can do it. One man told me he was in that.

He said he was sincerely in it, and he thought he was doing the Lord's will. And he says, 'There's no problem. If you want to increase your church, it's all computerized.'

We can show you exactly how to do it. And the Church has fallen into that. And so we think it's so wonderful. We have a church that seats 2,000 people, and now it's crammed full, so we're going to sell it and build one that seats 6,000.

We're all excited about Church growth, bringing in the principles of the world, and there's no life in it. Not reproducing Christ, bringing in Babylonish methods, bringing in the music from Babylon, bringing in the philosophies and the culture, some of which even comes from the old cult, but now it's being incorporated

into our textbooks, into textbooks that are used in Bible schools. Staying in a home where a young man had loaned me his room, I was staying there for meetings and I just happened to glance through one of his books.

Heíd come from a famous Bible school in Canada, one of his textbooks. He had all this philosophy written out. Iíd heard about it, you know, that weíre all categorized as, whatís some of those, sanguine, and whatís some more of them? How many have you studied? Youíre sanguine or youíre this or that, four or five different categories.

That teaching went all through that little town where we are, and the young people were excited about it, because some teacher came along and taught them. Here in this book I found that it came from the writing of a Greek philosopher, Hippocrates. Heís the one who started it.

The Greek philosopher knew nothing about God and Paul says, ìThe Greeks, by their wisdom, knew not God.î And now their philosophies are in their textbooks, theyíre taught in Bible schools and seminaries, and we donít realize that the Church has been completely taken over by the Babylonian system, economically, financially, and Godís people arenít aware of it, just not aware of it. So wherever there is a need for a prepared people in this day and hour, itís today. God must have this people who go forth in the anointing of Christ in this hour to put to naught this self-anointing thatís on the Church, a self-anointing, an anointing of the flesh, which God says you must not do is anoint the flesh, nor shall you make any kind of an ointment thatís like the one that God has ordained, neither shall you make anything like it.

It shall be holy unto you. And God grant that Godís people in this hour will begin to catch the vision of coming into union with Christ and to realize how far we are from that, for if we donít realize how far we are from it, we just coast along thinking, ìWell, here we are in union with Christ and weíre so far from it.î God is doing that and he wants to stir up our hearts, bring about a great repentance in his people to say, ìLord, we have not gone your way, but we want to.î And if we know, if we are assured itís end time, that doesnít mean we double our efforts, it means we stop our efforts and seek God and find Godís way. But because itís end time, double your efforts, send in more money, send out more missionaries, send out more people from Bible schools to evangelize the world, because the time is short, Godís way is so clear, coming to union with Christ, thatís the answer.

Itís difficult, you canít do that. Itís easier to raise money, easier to have a TV program, easier to get millions of dollars rolling in, get one man to preach the gospel. You canít do it.

Every passing day, thereís more heathen in the world than there was yesterday, every day that comes. But with the people walking in the anointing of Jesus, though itís going to mean thereís going to be great tribulation, great affliction in the world, in process of time, and I donít know how long itís going to take, in process of time, all the inhabitants of the world will know that thereís a Lamb that reigns on the throne. We read it in the book of Revelation, ìThe time comes when they say, ìHide us from the face of the Lamb, for the day of his wrath has come.î Theyíre not saying it now.

You find a hundred scientists to give you a good scientific explanation for everything that happens, and theyíll continue to do that, until when God increases his righteous judgments in the earth and has an anointed people in the earth bearing witness to the exalted and reigning Christ, the world is going to know that thereís a Lamb on the throne, one with whom they have to stand in judgment. Theyíre going to know it. God has this people that heís after.

God must have a prepared people for that day. It's not just something that God says, "The time has come, here is my kingdom, that you rejected 2,000 years ago, here it is now." Even the first coming came in with a prepared people. Why a prepared people, Lord? We're ready, we're your people, we've got the promises, we know where Christ is going to be born in Bethlehem of Judea.

They never found him, never saw him. Only those whose hearts were prepared saw him. Though he was openly revealed to Israel, born in Bethlehem of Judea, taken down to the Temple, dedicated, very few saw him.

But you see, God had to prepare a people, because the coming of the Christ was going to involve a manifestation of the kingdom of heaven and the earth that was going to expose the hearts of people. And God wanted a prepared people, so that when that day came, he would have a remnant who would believe and enter in because of the preparatory work that God had done. And God knew that if he didn't prepare the hearts of their people, the Messiah would come and there would be no fruit from it, unless he prepared his way.

So instead of just sending Jesus, he sent John the Baptist, who was a voice of the Lord crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his path straight. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the rough places shall be made smooth, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." So John the Baptist was that clear voice of God for that day and generation, a clear, pure word from God. Do you think God's going to let the second coming of the Lord come without having a people who send forth a pure, unadulterated, clear, crystal clear word from the mouth of God? God's not going to do that.

He's going to have a clear voice coming forth from the temple. And that's why he seeks to get his temple ready and cleansed, that there might come forth that clear prophetic voice from the people of the Lord. As I've said so often, you can read and study everything you know about deception and seduction, study it all, get it all down pat, it's not going to make you and I immune to seduction and deception in this hour.

The only thing that's going to prepare your heart and mind for the onslaught of deception that's coming over the world and over the church is abiding in the anointing. It's the only thing that's going to do it. No matter how knowledgeable you are in the realm of the satanic, until you come to know God and are walking in union with the anointing of Christ and abiding in him, you're not going to be immune to the deception that comes.

That's God's antidote for deception, abiding in the anointing. Read all of these books and you don't see any emphasis on that. The anointing that he has given is that thing which abides in you, which causes you to abide in the Father and in the Son, the anointing.

So John the Baptist came as a clear, pure voice from God. When God desires to bring forth a change in the midst of his people, he prepares the ground, he prepares it sovereignly. We could go through the scriptures and point out how God prepared the way whenever God would bring about a change, for when God's people go into apostasy, God may wait many, many years sometimes.

He may wait, but when the cup of iniquity is full, God comes on the scene with a prepared people. The days of Eli, God had sent a man of God to Eli and warned him, "The priesthood has become corrupt. Your sons have become corrupt." Eli was a good man, but he didn't know what to do about it.

He was not prepared to deal drastically with the situation, and so corruption abounded in the priesthood. And all the while, the time came when God says, I'm going to have to wipe it out. Before he wiped it out, he prepared a people for God's new order. He prepared a people for it.

You know the story of Hannah. She cried unto God for a man child. Perhaps she didn't know all the implications of the burden of her heart.

All she knew that as a woman in Israel, it was a reproach not to bear a man child. She cried unto God for a man child, and seemingly God didn't hear. And Penina, of course, she had children and sort of persecuted Hannah because she was fruitful.

Why aren't you? And so she sort of had pride of heart because somehow the Lord enabled her to bring forth children, and Hannah, well, you know, God must be displeased with you. But God loved Hannah. Because he loved her, he kept her barren.

You say, That doesn't sound like God. I know. There's a Hannah people in the earth whom God has kept barren because he loves them, because they love him, and God loves them, and there's a mutual relationship, but they're not effective. It doesn't seem to them that they're being effective in the earth.

They can't boast about having accomplished anything. They can't point to results that they have, like so many others. And if you'd just do it the way we do it, you'd have results.

But these people just know that they want God with all their hearts, and they want to walk in the anointing, and they want to walk in truth. God doesn't seem to help them. They remain barren.

So Hannah kept crying unto the Lord, crying unto the Lord, until she came to a place of desperation. And when she went down to the temple to worship with Elkanah, once again that burden was heavy in her heart. But somehow God put it in her heart to pray a special prayer on this occasion.

And the prayer was, O Lord, if you will hear the voice of thine handmaiden, will give thine handmaiden a manchild, then I'll give him unto you, and he'll be yours all the days of his life. And when she made that prayer and meant it, and God knew she meant it, God heard it. And Eli said, Woman, you appear to be drunk.

Put away the wine. She said, No, my Lord. Speaking as a woman of deep grief and sorrow, because only her lips moved. That's how humble her prayer was. She couldn't even pray an effectual prayer, a loud prayer, just her lips moved.

Eli says, Go home, and the Lord grant your request. She took it as a prophetic word from this man of God, for he was a man of God. But he's at the head of an apostate system that didn't know how to deal with it. God was going to deal with it.

Eli was not prepared to do anything drastic. I believe there's many good men out there in the Church, but they're just not prepared to be drastic. In a time of apostasy, it takes a radical in high places.

If there's a man in high places who would dare to become a radical for God, I believe God would do something. But that might cause the boat to rock. That might cause some schism in the system, and we don't want that.

And so God has to come in with a mighty hand and smash it to pieces. He's going to do it. And so when she'd made that commitment, "Lord, if you'll give me this son, I'll give him to you, and he'll be yours." So there's a people praying the same prayer.

"Lord, if you'll just bring forth this man-child, this corporate man in the earth, we will not claim him, we'll give him to you, he'll be yours all the days of his life." God's going to hear that kind of a prayer. But I have to say that we've got to come to that place of inspiration where we'll begin to pray that kind of prayer. How, you say, can we come to that place where we'll pray those effectual prayers? I know of no other way than to walk in such union and such harmony with the Lord that you'll feel the impulse of his own heart.

As you and I begin to feel the longing and the impulse of the heart of God, then we partake of God's desire. Otherwise, we declare the word, give good teachings, have a nice meeting, do the best we can for the Lord. But when we begin to touch the heart of God, then that which is the burden of God's heart becomes my burden, and it'll be heavy upon you as it is heavy upon God.

Well, there's a heavy burden on God's heart. God says, "I am like a woman in travail," he says, "I am in anguish to bring forth." God is in great travail. Is there burden upon him to bring forth a people that will show forth his glory in the earth? And so Isaiah said, "For Zion's sake, I will not hold my peace." And as I read that one day, I said, "No, it's not just Isaiah.

It's the Spirit of God," for he wrote by the Spirit. It's the burden of God's Spirit saying, "For Zion's sake, I will not hold my peace. And for Jerusalem's sake, I will not rest until the righteousness thereof go forth, as brightness in the salvation, as a lamp that burneth." It's the burden of the Spirit of God.

He says, "I can't rest until the righteousness of Zion goes forth as a lamp that burneth." God can't rest. He's burdened because he doesn't have a true representative people in the earth. That's why he made man to begin with, that he might have one like his counterpart in the earth, one in his image, that this man in the earth might truly represent the God that created him.

We know the story of the fall and we know the story of redemption, but how many of us realize the implications of redemption, that God might, after so many years of human failure, eventually bring forth another man in his image, the perfect Adam, the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, you say, "He's done that." I know he's done that, but because he loved him so much, this one, this Christ, this one in whom was all his delight, he says, "I want a family like him." That's why he didn't leave Jesus in the earth. God has found the total delight of his heart in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why didn't he leave him here these 2,000 years in this world that is in such turmoil and chaos? At least there might be one man on the earth that loved God with all his heart, mind, soul, spirit, one man on the earth who walked in truth. The reason he didn't leave him here was because God had a better plan, that in throning him at his right hand, he might be able to bring forth a family on the earth like him, a family like him, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. And God will not rest until this happens.

God doesn't find any rest in the works of our hands. He finds no delight, no true joy in this great religious system in the world. He finds delight only in his Son.

And only as we come into union with God's Son are we going to delight the heart of our God. And so John the Baptist came to prepare the hearts of people because this thing that God was going to do was going to be so strange, so different, so totally unlike the ecclesiastical system of the day, that if the hearts of the

people were not prepared, they would not be ready to greet the Messiah, the Christ. It was going to be totally different.

We're inclined to think that when God moves, you know, he'll just move in the church somehow and lift it a little higher. But as he has dealt with the church, so he dealt with Israel. He had to find a prepared people.

We're not in the mainstream necessarily of the religious order of the day. If God wanted to change the system, do away with the apostasy, he'd have to move beyond that and find someone through whom he could work. He found Hannah, brought forth Samuel.

Who had a clear, pure word from the Lord. I'm emphasizing that. That was back in the days of the law.

That was back in the dispensation that Paul says had no glory at all, by reason of the surpassing glory we have in the New Covenant. No glory at all. God raises up a man who had such a pure, clear word that God didn't let one word fall to the ground.

He spoke a pure word from God that all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that this was the voice of God. God isn't going to do that today. It's going to come through the travail of a people who long to see God's glory more than anything else.

That when God sends forth his glory, they will not begin to tamper with it and touch it and lay hold of it. Try to take it to themselves. So once again, there was to be a great change in Israel.

The Messiah was going to come and all Israel knew that Messiah, his appearing was at hand. We're told that everybody was in expectation of the Messiah. God says, 'I've got to raise up a pure voice.' Once again, he chose a barren woman, Elizabeth.

He used her to bring forth this son that would be the instrument that would prepare the hearts of the people for the coming of the Messiah, for if their hearts were not prepared, they would miss him. So they would come to him, the religious people, the publicans, the sinners, the soldiers. They'd come to the prophet.

He was thinking of this soldier in the armies of Rome. He somehow believed in the Jewish religion. He recognized that God must be working there.

He heard about this prophet. He got leave of absence. He said, 'I want to go down to get a word from the prophet.' And the other soldiers may be scoffing at him, 'Where are you going? I want to go and get a word from the prophet.'

Who's that? John the Baptist. Oh, that guy that lives out there in the wilderness. That maniac living on locusts and wild honey and dressed with camel's hair.

Well, I think he's got the word of the Lord. How many miles does he have to travel to come to John the Baptist? What will he do? Don't hurt anybody. Be content with your wages.

But I came to hear the word of a prophet. That's the word for you. Do violence to no man and be content with your wages.

Seems so insignificant. What's that got to do with the coming of the Lord? Very much. Because when this Messiah come, he wouldn't start driving out the Romans and setting up the children of Israel under their

own vine and fig tree and giving them places of prominence and making them rich and wealthy.

He was going to tell them that the poor were the ones that he came to preach the gospel to. And he was going to declare the same message, "If you've got abundance, share with those who don't have any." Oh, we don't want to hear that. We want to hear a message that encourages us to get rich and increase with goods, become prosperous.

That's the kingdom. No, it's not. And so we have the same deception over God's people today that lingered in the minds of the Israelites.

When Messiah comes, he'll drive out the Romans. We'll have a kingdom like they had in the days of Solomon, perhaps, or at least in the kingdom of David. We'll have that glory back again.

God was not going to do that because God has always been interested in bringing man back to his own heart. Though he established these kingdoms and these various orders throughout the history of his people, his ultimate desire was always to eventually find for himself a temple in the earth in whom he might live and move and walk and have his being. Be content with your wages.

Don't strive after earthly things. Be content with what you've got. Publicans would come to him.

"We want a word from the prophet." "Don't take any more than is coming to you." Others would come. "You've got two coats. Give to one who doesn't have any." There doesn't seem to be much depth in it, does there? But God was going to establish a kingdom, and the principles of the kingdom were going to be so different.

"To that was preceded from the religious order of the day, that God had to prepare the ground." And here the Lord Jesus, enunciating the principles of the kingdom, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." So different, because the kingdom of God is primarily righteousness and peace, joy in the Holy Ghost. That's the kingdom. "And He bore forth the true joy of the Holy Spirit." And so to Elizabeth, Zechariah was born this John the Baptist, "ordained of the Lord to rise up in Israel and give them a pure, clear word that nobody could mistake its meaning." And all the people, the common people, recognized him as a great prophet from the Lord.

You think God isn't going to raise up a clear voice today? He's going to raise up a clear voice, but it's not going to be just in one man. It's going to be in this corporate man. He had the one man, John the Baptist, and the one Messiah, Christ.

But God wants a family like Jesus in the earth. Like him. And when I say "like him," I don't mean having that same office that he's got.

I mean having the same nature. And so Paul says, "He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one, all of one nature, all of one kind. Therefore he that sanctifies is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, 'I will declare thy name unto my brethren in the midst of the congregation while I sing thy praise.'" "So he that sanctifieth are ascended Lord and high priest, and those who are sanctified in the earth are all of one kind, all of one nature." He, of course, having the highest office in the universe, and he'll always

have that, a name that's above every name, but a people in the earth drawing from his very life and being his true brethren in the earth, partakers of his same nature.

That's why God took him away, because he knew if he took him away he could send forth the spirit that he had into a corporate people in the earth. And so God had shepherds ready to see the Messiah the night he was born. Their hearts were prepared, not because they knew all the scriptures, but because they were humble.

«The humble shall see thereof and be glad.» God revealed to them where the Messiah was. And then, forty days later, he was taken down to the temple to be revealed in the temple. The temple, that's where the religious people were.

That's where the scribes and Pharisees held sway. That's where the learned theologians were. Surely they'll see the Messiah when Christ is taken right there into the temple.

But no, they couldn't see him. Why? Their hearts were not prepared. They knew the scriptures, and the wise men said, «Where is he that is to be born King of the Jews? Oh, down in Bethlehem, five or six miles down the road.» Quoted the scripture for it.

Never went down to investigate. Why should they? The Messiah comes, he'll come to the temple. We'll herald him as our Messiah.

But he came to the temple, and they didn't see him. But there was a few in the temple whose hearts were prepared, and they saw him. One man by the name of Simeon.

Well, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. Simeon, you know, is one of the twelve sons of Jacob, means «hearing.» So, Simeon had this name, «hearing.» And I think it is probably prophetically given to him, because he would be a man who would hear from God. «A man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.» And so here was a man, Simeon. We don't know what he performed by way of good works. I'm sure he was a good man.

It says he was just and devout. It doesn't tell us of any programs or any ministry that he performed. The important thing was that he was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

«And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.» And so he might have done some wonderful things. He may not. I don't know.

But the Holy Spirit didn't see fit to record it. This was what was important, that he was full of the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost was upon him, and that he had a revelation from the Lord. And because of that revelation that he had received, from the Lord, that revelation had become a heavy burden upon his heart.

We talk much about illumination, revelation, and I know it is the day when God is giving revelation, but it will not profit us or anyone else until that revelation becomes a burden upon us. Not just something we know, until it becomes a burden upon us. And so when God gave Isaiah a revelation, it became a burden.

And he says, «I can't hold my peace.» Isaiah is saying that. But because he was one with the Spirit, at least in that anointing, he was just sharing the burden of the Spirit of God. So he shared God's burden.

Have you ever wondered why the prophetic word that came to the prophets of the Old Testament was often called the burden of the Lord? The burden of the Lord. Jonah didn't have the burden of the Lord. He had a prophetic voice, but he had no burden.

And God failed to fulfill his prophecy, which he was wishing God would do, and nothing Jonah would like better than for God to destroy the Ninevites because they were rising up as a great threat to Israel. And God didn't fulfill his prophecy powder. He didn't have the burden for the people.

He just wished God would wipe them out, and that's why he ran away. Because he says, he said in his heart, 'I know, Lord, you must have some sneaky thing in mind. If you're sending me down there to preach to the Ninevites, the chances are you've got some motive in mind.'

When I preach to them, maybe they'll repent and you'll spare them and you won't wipe them out. I'm not going to do it. Wipe them out.

He didn't have the burden of the Lord, but God used him, brought him down very low, so that when he went to Nineveh, he went with a prophetic word from the heart of God, hoping that God would do what he said, only to find that the people repented and God repented. To Jonah's horror and to Jonah's anger, pouting because God didn't wipe them out. But most of the prophets had a weight of God upon their shoulders, because of the word God gave them, the burden of Habakkuk, the burden of Amos.

What am I saying? That God is requiring of the people of this people whom he is joining to his heart, to draw so nigh to him that we'll begin to feel and sense and know the burden of God's heart so it'll become our burden. And when it becomes our burden, all we can do is be filled with the Spirit and walk before the Lord and wait for God to do it. Wait for God to do it.

For God won't let you and I tamper with the bringing into being of this corporate man in the earth any more than he would let anybody tamper with that word that came to Mary. 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon you and the power of the highest shall overshadow you, and therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God.' Nobody could tamper with that. All she could do was say, 'Be it unto me according to thy word.' God won't let any apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher, I don't care how great or mighty he is, tamper with this work that God is bringing forth and structure it and order it and arrange it and control it.

That's why he has to move away from the ecclesiastical system. Because if God does it in there, they'll tamper with it. He has to do it with the people who are saying, 'Lord Jesus, we wait for you to do it.'

There's nothing we can do to produce this anointing only to hear your word and seek to be filled with the Spirit and walk in the Spirit. Wait for the Lord to do it. You see, we've been waiting so long. The most grievous thing, perhaps, that God's people have ever had to undergo was God's tardiness.

God is always so slow. A nephew of my brother-in-law had a little son, I think, five or six years old, and he was in deep trouble. You know, little children get in such deep trouble.

His dad says, 'Well, just pray about it.' 'Oh,' he says, 'I have prayed about it, but God's so slow.' And his grandpa says, 'I can relate to that.' But that's the way we feel. That's the way David felt. That's the way Hannah felt.

That's the way some of the psalmists felt. That's the way Habakkuk felt. "Lord, you're so slow." "You know, Lord, that the time is now when you must act." God seems to keep silence and show, "Well, God isn't doing it."

We better do it. "God isn't doing it. We've got to do it." And, of course, we're encouraged by most people in the church. Most people in the church will say, "Well, quit waiting for God."

God's waiting for you. They used to tell me that. I sort of got under the condemnation of it. I guess maybe they're right to one day, I'm going to look up the concordance and see if God waits for man. No, I found that God wants man to wait for Him.

"Wait on the Lord," said David, "my soul, wait on God." I know that doesn't mean sitting around folding your hands. It means being so attentive to God that whatever He says, we do it, but we don't do anything else if He doesn't say to do it. We get weary of God's tardiness.

Habakkuk said, Habakkuk had the burden of the Lord, but he says, "Lord, I don't understand it." He says, "I'm going to utter some complaints against the Lord." And he says, "I know I've got to be careful because, you know, we've got to watch how we complain against the Lord because if we get in the wrong spirit, we'll be like the children of Israel in the wilderness. But if we're in the true spirit of the Lord, we can complain in a righteous way. And God knows our hearts cry and He knows what we're saying and He understands."

We're just simply saying, "Lord, you just know that the world's in such a mess, the church is in such a mess. Why don't you come forth and do something about it? Unwilling Lord, send me forth. We're, you know, we're just anxious for God to send us."

And then we just like to hear a word of a prophet and maybe go forth or we'd like to feel in our prayer closet God was saying, "Arise now, go forth and I'll be with you and I'll anoint you." Somehow we can't convince God to send us forth and so we go, you know, and so the cry of Habakkuk, the burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see, his first words were, "Oh Lord, how long shall I cry and thou wilt not hear? How long am I going to have to cry unto you, God, and you won't listen to me?" Sounds like a "You got to be careful when you say things like that to the Lord. "God, I've been praying all these years and why don't you answer me?" "Because the burden of the Lord was on him. God saw the true intent of his heart and he saw a pure heart."

He knew what Habakkuk was saying and he knew that Habakkuk didn't understand that God had ways and times and seasons which we can't comprehend. And so he asked many questions. "Why dost thou show me iniquity and cause me to behold grievance? For spoiling and violence are before me." He says, "The enemies made total devastation of Israel and why don't you do something about it? How long am I going to cry and you don't hear? Wherefore lookest upon those that deal treacherously and you don't do anything about it? Make as men like the fish of the sea as creeping things that have no ruler over them."

They take them up in their net. We, your people, they catch us in their net and then they rejoice and give praise to their gods because they've been able to persecute us." Habakkuk said, "It's not right." "And then having poured out his heart in these grievous complaints, he says, "Now I've got to stand back and wait and see how the Lord's going to answer me when he sees fit to reprove me." He sort of felt God was going to have to reprove him for sort of blaming God for not hearing and not answering prayer. He says, "I'll stand upon my watch and set me upon the tower and I will watch to see what he will say unto me and what

I shall answer when I'm reproved. The Lord answered me and said, "Write the vision and make it plain upon tables that he may read that readeth it."

For the vision is yet for an appointed time but at the end it shall speak and not lie. Though it tarry, wait for it. And that's God's answer to you and I. We say, "How long, O Lord, when are you going to do it? Get the learned men to calculate schedules. They're coming up with schedules for 88 and 90 and all that."

Study them out and get very knowledgeable in that area if you like. But God doesn't go by any schedules that men are able to figure out. And even if you hit the right year when God's going to reveal himself, if our hearts aren't prepared, we won't see him.

If the vision tarry, wait for it. For it will come, it will not be delayed. We say, "We're so near the end."

I know that prayer of Jesus is a beautiful prayer and we've worked on it for 2,000 years and somehow it still isn't fulfilled, so we'll have a great ecumenical gathering. We'll get all the church denominations together and we'll have a great hallelujah time and we'll have the gifts of the Spirit in our midst and there'll be prophecy and tongues and healings and God will be blessing and that will fulfill the prayer of Jesus that they all may be one. But there's no unity there. There's no unity of the Spirit there for Jesus didn't pray that we'd all be one.

He prayed that we might be one with the Son as the Son is one with the Father. That's what his heart is after. And so bearing the burden of it will, it will able us to be prepared for that.

And my concern is, my prayer is, that God will begin to send forth a word to his people that will cause them to feel and to sense the burden of the heart of God for this hour and for his people, to sense the extreme burden that's on God's heart to bring a people into union with Jesus, for it's heavy on God's heart. We can't do it. Nevertheless, if we embrace the word of the Lord, that word, if we truly embrace it, and draw an eye into God, that word will become a burden and eventually a travail that will bring forth the intention of God's heart.

Simeon had a very simple burden. I don't know if he performed any other good works, but the Holy Spirit doesn't see fit to mention the kind deeds that he performed or how he might have talked to someone about the Jehovah God of Israel. The Holy Spirit sees fit to mention only that God had laid upon him a burden, that all he could do was to wait, and in waiting, walk in the Spirit, with the promise that he would see the Messiah before he died.

But it became a burden upon his heart. I've got to live to see the Messiah. I sense from what he said that he was getting pretty old.

I sense that he was getting old and weary of life, feeling futile, feeling useless, wanting to die. But God had said, "You're not going to die until you see the Messiah." You say, "What's that got to do with the eternal purposes of God?" You and I don't think the way God thinks. We don't walk in ways that are consistent with God's ways.

That's what Isaiah discovered. God said to Isaiah, "My ways are not your ways, and my thoughts are not your thoughts." We rationalize so much when we get into some kind of an ecclesiasticism. rationalize.

Didn't God give me a mind to use? We rationalize. God wants us to know that when it comes to spiritual things, we cannot, cannot understand the simplest principles of the Word of God. No matter how

intellectual we are, we cannot understand except by the revelation of the Spirit of God.

The natural man cannot receive the simplest principles of God's Word except by the Spirit of God. *Receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.* What's our mind for? Carry on in this natural life, even then, even carrying on in our natural life. God wants to change that mind, transform that mind, until we have the mind of Christ.

And until we come into that transformed mind, we're not going to be that people in the earth that God wants. Thank the Lord for a sound mind, understanding. But when it comes to spiritual things, we cannot understand the things of God with that natural mind.

It's got to come by a renovation of our mind. It's got to come by a spiritual revelation. The gulf is too far between God and man.

I studied Greek a little once for a few months, never got into Hebrew. Found I didn't have time to continue in either one. And I sort of felt I was going to miss out on a lot because as a teacher of the Word of God, I felt it was going to be essential to know Greek and Hebrew until the Lord reminded me that Saul of Tarsus knew Greek and Hebrew to perfection, but in the midst of it all did not have an understanding of the ways of God.

He didn't know the true God. He didn't know the Messiah with all that knowledge. And God began to show me that sure, there's a gap between English and Hebrew and English and Greek.

There's a gap there, an inch long. But the gap between the language of man and the language of heaven is infinity. That's the gap that has to be bridged.

I'm not downgrading intellectualism I think God has raised up some intellectuals in the church. I enjoy using a concordance. I thank the Lord for these men.

I believe many of them God gave them that simple task to do, to write out these concordances and whatnot. What I'm saying is that as far as understanding God's word and as far as coming into that place where we can be a vital instrument of Christ in the earth, we are totally dependent not on wisdom and knowledge in the natural but on the anointing of Jesus. Simeon had the burden.

I've got to see the Messiah. That's all. And he's prepared to die.

What importance was that? It was exceedingly important in the mind of God. He was going to be a part of that small company that was going to usher in the Christ. And right there in the temple, when Messiah came to the temple, Simeon was there in the temple.

That day had to be, because he was walking in the Spirit and the Spirit was taking Jesus to the temple and Simeon was walking in the Spirit. There had to be the fulfillment this day of the promise that God had laid upon his heart. I don't call it the promise, I call it the burden.

He wanted to get rid of it. As Austin Sparks points out, he says, *Lord, the word is despised, desperate.* Referring to the Lord as one who has total and absolute control, not just to the Lord, you know, I love you Lord, you're Lord of my life, but the Lord who has total control, a despot. For all these years, we don't know how many, he had waited and waited for the Messiah and he saw him, passing by perhaps twenty,

thirty, forty little babies, all looking the same, nobody saw anything different in any of them.

But Simeon saw the Christ and was relieved from the burden that God had laid upon his heart. He said, "Now Lord, now despot, let me depart in peace. According to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared before the face of all people.

A light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people, Israel." And Joseph and his mother marveled at those things which were spoken of him and Simeon blessed him and said unto Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel for a sign which shall be spoken against. Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." The manifestation of Messiah was not to set up some kind of a temporal kingdom where everything would be lovely and nice and beautiful for the chosen people but to deal with the hearts of men. Jesus came into the world to deal with the hearts of men, to change them that he might have a people through whom the salvation of God might go to all nations.

So he had to expose the hearts. That's what the coming of Jesus was all about, to expose the hearts, to prepare a people for the Lord. And the work wasn't finished during those three, three and a half years of his ministry.

God never intended to be finished there. He intended that that work would go on in his ascension. So now he is the Ascendant Lord.

It is the purpose of the Holy Spirit and his people to carry on, continue the work which Jesus started in the earth, to expose the hearts of people, to prepare a people to cleanse their hearts, to unveil and cover, root out all uncleanness and prepare a people for the glory of the Lord. So we have a great prophet. We have a man with a burden to see the Christ revealed.

And we have one Anna, a prophetess, who spent her time in the temple in intercessions, people that probably are not considered of any great importance. These are the people to the revelation of the Messiah. One Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher.

She was of a great age and had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity. She was a widow of about four score and four years. Eighty-four years old.

Unless, as some believe, she was a widow for eighty-four years. I don't know. She departed not from the temple but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

And so we have the thought. The Lord is coming in a certain day. We are ready.

We are charismatic. We are filled with the Spirit. And here is a poor widow woman who lived in the temple who had the burden of God.

She knew the Lord was coming too because we are told that all Israel lived in a state of expectation. But because the burden of the Lord had become a part of her being, she literally lived in the temple with fastings and prayers crying out unto God to come forth in the earth and reveal the Christ. Christ would not come into the world apart from these mighty intercessions of Anna.

She was a part of God's purpose in preparing the way, building the temple. And here is a poor widow woman who lived in She knew the Lord was coming Israel lived in burden of the Lord had become a part

of her being, she literally lived in the temple with fastings and prayers crying out unto God to come forth in the world apart from these mighty intercessions of Anna. And here is a poor widow woman who lived in out unto God to come forth in the earth and reveal the Christ.

And here is a poor widow woman fastings and prayers crying out unto God to come forth in the They touch the heart of God, and so they have God's burden in the earth. God wants the burden of his heart in the heavens to rest upon a people in the earth that he might bring into being the desire of his heart. So God says, I'm setting watchmen upon your walls, Jerusalem, who will have my same burden.

They will not rest day nor night. Ye that make mention of the Lord keep not silence and give him no rest till he establish until he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. God will not do anything until there's a people who get the burden of his heart that'll cry unto him to do it.

But he's gonna have that people. And the word that goes forth that lights upon the prepared people will get that burden. Till the time comes when the voice of prophecy is no longer just the thus saith the Lord my people, and sit down, I gave a word from the Lord, wasn't that wonderful, that prophecy.

That word of prophecy must become so much a part of us. But the time comes when having declared with the prophetic anointing God's desire to his people, the prophet realizes he's done all he can and nothing has happened. And, oh yes, the bones came together and bone to his bone and flesh came upon them and sinews, I'm not saying nothing happened, there was a noise and there was a shaking and bone came to bone and flesh came upon them and sinews and all that but they were still dead.

I think that's about as far as we've got. In the early days of revival, the 48 revival, which became known as latter rain, I don't call it that except by way of identifying it because latter rain is associated with a lot of kingdom building, a lot of carnality, we know all that, but there was a pure word come forth and the Lord would emphasize that prophecy in Ezekiel that God was gonna raise up a prophetic voice to his people, calling the dry bones of God's scattered spiritual Israel together. And there was a noise and there was a shaking, bone came to his bone, flesh, sinews covered them but there was no life in them and that's where we are.

And we'll continue that way until somehow there's the burden of the Lord that cries out unto God to do that which he has declared. You say if he said he'd do it, why do we have to ask him to do it? It's simply that God wants a people in the earth who are united with him and if it's God's burden, he wants the people in the earth that'll have that burden. So Ezekiel turned his eyes away from the dead carcasses laying out there in the sand, turned his eyes to heaven and he says, come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live.

He prophesied to the wind, he began to, those words that once went to people went up to God, do it Lord, prophesied to the wind, the same prophetic anointing that caused the bones to come together and to be covered with sinews, that same prophetic anointing in mighty intercessions went to God to say, God come from the four winds and breathe upon these slain that they may live. I believe that's coming and I believe God wants to send forth a word to prepare his people to so sense the burden of God's heart that we will not sleep night or day until God establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Mysterious, honor and power forevermore, you've lifted your sun over all the earth.

Oh our hope, you're the son of man,

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