

# (God and Man) Hastening the Lord's Coming

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of hastening the Lord's coming by taking action, praying, and living a holy and godly life.*

**Duration:** 57:20

**Topics:** "Gods Will", "Evangelism"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of living according to the will of God. He highlights that worldly things and fashions are temporary and will pass away, but those who do God's will abide forever. The speaker encourages believers to focus their minds on doing God's will rather than being occupied with passing things. He also emphasizes the responsibility of spreading the gospel and helping others find victory over sin. The sermon concludes with an invitation to visit the speaker's website for further resources and contact information.

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## Transcript

There is one Old Testament person who is frequently referred to in the New Testament in relation to the second coming of Christ, and that is Noah. I want you to notice the number of places his name comes. First of all, in Matthew twenty-four, Jesus himself said concerning the coming of the Son of Man, verse thirty-seven, Jesus said that the coming of the Son of Man will be like the days of Noah.

For as in those days they were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage unto the day that Noah entered the ark. They did not understand until the flood came and took them all away, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. They didn't understand means they didn't understand and believe what Noah preached.

And there was a reason for that, because the Bible says that there was no rain on the earth in those days. It says in Genesis two and verse five, the Lord did not send any rain upon the earth. Verse six, a mist used to rise from the earth and water the surface of the ground.

So for nearly fifteen hundred years, it never rained on the earth, as far as we know. Some other way, a mist used to rise up and water the earth, like we read in Genesis two, six. And therefore, when Noah said, it's going to rain, something that never happened before, he was crazy and he started preaching that when he was four hundred and eighty years old.

So I can imagine that people must have thought he's really gone nuts now. He was okay till now, but it suddenly went crazy. He's talking about something that's never happened before.

Rain has never fallen on this earth. We've never seen such a thing. And he continued preaching.

They didn't believe. They didn't believe that any such thing. They didn't believe that something that had never happened would happen.

The other thing Noah preached, as we know, the way of salvation into the ark. The same and even Christians, many Christian preachers and leaders and bishops, to say that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation, because in some places, people can attack them, if you say that. Like Jesus said in Mark sixteen, verse fifteen, sixteen, that he who believes not will be condemned.

You see, in some states of India, you could be arrested for preaching what Jesus preached. And so, it's easy for Christians to compromise, to move away from, in other words, when a person says that there is some other way of salvation, he's actually saying that Jesus is a liar. Because he said, I'm the way, no one comes to the Father but by me.

It's so clear. So that's what Noah preached. And I see Noah there as an example of a man who was not ashamed to proclaim exactly what God said, even though he himself had never seen rain.

He had to preach what he had not seen, just because God had said it. And he continued to preach, even though nobody believed on him. And it says here, the coming of the Son of Man is going to be like that.

You know, all of a sudden, we read there, back in the Old Testament, that one day it started to rain. And there was no time to escape, it was too late. So before it started to rain, all those who were to be saved were inside the ark.

And if you turn to second Peter, chapter two, read there about a rising among the people. If you read the context set there in the following, false teachers, verse one, that would simply introduce destructive heresies. False prophets' saying is that if you are a child of God and you sin, it's a very popular doctrine.

More than 50% of believers are unbelievers. It speaks about God not sparing the angels, verse four, that sinned. They were holy, they were in God's presence.

Noah did not spare the ancient world, sin was serious. A preacher of righteousness with seven others, and he brought a flood upon the world. The Bible says that's why he had so few in his church, because he never lowered his standards.

And it goes on to say, just like, you know, the patience of God waited in Noah's time. I want you to see in chapter three, verse 20, one Peter three, sorry, one Peter three, first Peter, not second Peter, one Peter three, verse 20, there's a phrase there, says the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah. I just want to point out, there's a number of occasions where Noah is presented in scripture as someone who was a victim to the Lord just before the flood, and there's a picture of those who will be the Lord's people on earth, just before the second coming of Christ.

It says in verse 20, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, until the ark was complete, and everybody had got in, God kept waiting, waiting, waiting. And in second Peter three, it says in similar words, verse nine, second Peter three, verse nine, the Lord is not

slow about his promise, as some count slowness, but is patient towards you, not wishing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance. So that's again, the patience of God waiting in our time, for all those whom he has called to come to repentance.

And once that number is complete, the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will melt away, pass away with roar, the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Now that's something that's never happened before. Noah preached about a rain, and we preach about fire.

And that type of fire has never happened. A fair fire has fallen from heaven to earth. Occasionally, Sodom and Gomorrah and the sons of Aaron, the soldiers who came to capture Elijah, were killed with fire from heaven, destroyed by burning with intense heat.

People don't believe that. Just like in that day, in our day, the Lord is waiting for whose names are in the Book of Life to be saved. The Bible says that our names were written before the foundation of the world.

That means the Lord looked into the future for thousands of years, and He knew all those who would respond to the gospel in all the thousands of years, and He wrote their names in the Book of Life. A lot of them have already been saved. There are sure more than 90 percent, and many are saved, and they're on the earth.

But there are still some names in the Book of Life which are people who have not yet been saved. And the Lord's waiting for them to be saved. And once the last person is saved, whose name is in the Book of Life, that would be like the last nail put in the ark that took Noah and his family in.

Judgment on who to ask a question. Do we just sit and wait? So it's looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God. Looking for the--that we look forward for Jesus to come and establish His kingdom on earth.

But what does it mean to hasten the coming of that day? It means to hurry up, hurry that day along. To hasten something means to make it come faster. How can you make the day of God come faster? This idea, whatever will happen--prayer, change--many things don't happen.

When we get to heaven, we discover a big list of things we could have received on earth if we had prayed, but which we never received, which we missed. Because we felt, well, if it'll happen, it'll happen. And it didn't happen.

But it would have happened if we had prayed. Because the Bible says very clearly, you do not have because you do not ask. So it's possible there's something I'm supposed to have which I don't receive because I don't ask.

And Jesus always spoke about asking with intensity. The only two parables that He ever spoke about prayer were of the widow who kept on asking, and the man who went to his neighbor's house and kept on knocking till he got. If that--the point of those two parables is basically one thing.

If that widow had not kept on asking, she would have been--continued to be harassed by the enemy, like a lot of believers are being harassed by the enemy, defeated by sin, because they accept that as normal. You know, that widow, we read in Luke 18, was being harassed by her enemies, harassed, harassed, harassed. And she knew that she was not supposed to be harassed.

She knew that legally she had a right over her enemy. But her enemy was taking advantage of his stronger power, this poor widow, and harassing her illegally. And the point of the parable is that Satan is harassing us illegally.

There's no need for you to be harassed. There's no need for you to be defeated by sin. There's no need for you to live in fear.

But that harassment will not stop unless we go to the judge, unless we go to our father, and keep on knocking, keep on asking. And I believe the vast majority of believers are being-- they have a legal right which they don't claim, and they don't get. And so many believers seem to be perfectly happy to die as a defeated, money-loving, world-loving Christian.

I mean, they started out like that, that's all right. But they seem to be happy to die like that. And when they get to heaven, they'll discover what they missed.

There are a lot of things other believers got, which they could have had, if they had asked. You know, we live in a country, in India, the vast majority of people, the religions they follow, teach what is called fatalism. Fatalism means whatever will happen will happen.

And it's that religion that allows a lot of people in this country to remain poor, and to accept that as their lot in life. Okay, that's what we're supposed to be. We'll be like that.

And we never feel that they should improve their circumstances for their children. Some do, but the vast majority don't. They just accept, for example, bonded laborers.

Laborers in many parts of this country just accept their lot in life, that we shall always be slaves to the upper caste people. Our forefathers were slaves for generations, and our children and their descendants will be slaves for generations. This is fatalism.

We'll never seek to be free from that. And that attitude, you know, a lot of attitudes that we have as Indians, which are not Christian, they are heathen. The lack of fellowship between husband and wife is an Indian thing.

It's not a Christian thing. The average Indian husband, he doesn't talk to his wife about interesting and fellowship, and it's all strange for Indian husbands. Fatalism, whatever.

Many, perhaps many sitting here, have accepted a substandard, defeated Christian life, saying, okay, that's normal. It's not normal. If you went like the judge, like the widow to the judge, you could be different.

The same thing with the, came to him with need. We also have people around us whom we need, whom we seek to minister to, who are in need, and after trying a few times to help them, we're not able to help them, and we give up, say, okay, well, what can we do? That's exactly what the neighbor, that man could have done. He knocked a few times at his neighbor's house.

He tried to get some food for his friend, didn't get it. He said, okay, what can we do? Let's go to bed. Whatever will be, will be.

But that, the point of that parable is that fellow didn't stop till he got something to bless his friend with, and Jesus was saying, you've got to pray like that, that you don't stop till you have something from God to bless your friend with. Now, one of the very, very few stories that I believe are true concerning the raising

of the dead, and there are lots of people who tell stories about raising the dead, but one of them, you see, when a charismatic or a Pentecostal talks about raising the dead, I don't usually, because they've got a wild imagination, but this story was written by a Baptist. Baptists don't believe in any type of miracle.

They don't believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They don't believe in speaking in tongues. They don't believe in any of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

And there's a book by a very famous Baptist pastor called John Rice called Prayer, Asking and Receiving. He died many years ago. He was a godly man.

I met him when he came to India about 40 years ago. Uh, he writes in that book about, um, whose husband died. When she came and found people around her husband's body, she pushed everybody out of the room, locked the door, and knelt down and prayed and said, God, you can't take away my husband.

He said, you can't do it. But you may say such events are rare. He said, I agree.

Such events are rare, but such faith is also rare. Now, I'm not saying that God raises everyone who's dead. I'm glad that when he was sick and dying, they sent a message to Jesus.

What would have happened if they had not sent a message? When Jairus, his daughter, supposing he had not gone, supposing the father had not gone, so what should he have to do? That's my question. The coming of the day of the Lord. One way is to recognize those names in the book of life, folks who are not yet saved, one of them.

Maybe you're supposed to sit back, lazily, with the idea that whatever will happen. See, the cleverer we are, the more our logic works that way. Why do you need to pray? He already knows what you're going to do.

Some cities are clever. In the villages, people are simpler, and that's why they pray more. I mean, why in the world would Jesus said it, so we do that.

Jesus said it, we do it. You don't need baptism to be saved. We know that salvation is not through water baptisms.

What will happen? They go to Tirupati, they go. And usually they go with some... Ask these people who come back from this. They say, I hope so.

Does God answer the prayer? I don't know. Maybe, maybe he won't. If he doesn't, I suppose it's not God's will.

If he does, I suppose it is God's will. So the Christian is no more sure than the fellow who's prayed to a faceless idol. He's prayed to an idol that cannot speak or hear or anything.

We're supposed to be praying to the living God. But in terms of assurance, I don't have any assurance. He doesn't have any assurance either.

Because in the back of our mind, we're logic. We've got a fatalistic attitude. What will happen, will happen.

But here he speaks about hastening the coming of the day of the Lord. Paul had that sense of urgency. And any true Christian will have a sense of urgency, will have a longing that his life must count for God.

Every day of his life must count for God. He must hasten the coming of the day of the Lord. I can imagine how Noah worked overtime on the ark.

Because he knew the ark has to be completed. The rain can't come till the ark is finished. And Jesus can't come till the last person whose name is in that book of life is in there.

Noah could have said, sat back and said, well, I suppose God's already decided. The date when the rain is going to start, that's already fixed. God's fixed a date.

Like we say, coming of the Lord is fixed. You can say God has fixed a date when the rain will come. I suppose it'll come, it'll come.

Whether the ark is finished or not, it'll come. No, it will not come till the ark is finished. Can you imagine what would have happened if the rain came before the ark was finished? And on whom did the ark being finished depend? On God or on man? Sure, God helped Noah.

It'd be impossible. That was the supernatural work of God. You know, the two tigers walking in, the two lions walking in, lion and lioness, etc.

That was God. So God did a great part of that. But it depended on Noah so much because not one bit of that ark was completed supernaturally.

It wasn't God who hammered the nails together. It was Noah and his sons who hammered those nails together, put the pitch on the ark. And it took a long time to complete, over a hundred years.

So, so is the coming of the Lord. There is a part we have to play with a sense of urgency. 2 Peter 3, verse 11.

Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in all holy conduct and godliness? If you really believe that all these things are to be destroyed, which we see around us, what are you going to live for? What did Noah live for? Do you think he was trying to beautify his house at the cost of neglecting the ark? There's nothing wrong in beautifying the house. It's good. I'm sure if there's a leak in Noah's house, he fixed it.

That's okay. But it was not at the cost of the ark. And if he had to spend money on the ark, and therefore spend less money on beautifying his house, he'd do it.

Say, okay, never mind if my house is not so beautiful. Let's get the ark finished. He was serious.

Because he knew that his house would be burnt up. We turn to 1 John 2. One who believes this verse can never live the way other people in the world live. Impossible.

The world is passing away, and also its lusts and its fashions, says in one translation. But the one who does the will of God abides forever. Now we say, if you accepted Christ, we abide forever.

Yeah, true. Then we'd have to say that the one who accepts Christ is the one who does the will of God. Because here it says it's only the one who does the will of God is going to abide forever.

A true disciple of Jesus is one whose whole life is gripped by wanting to do the will of God. And he knows that the world and all its fashions are going to pass away. How would you live if you knew that all the

fashions are going to pass away? I mean, take an illustration.

Supposing you knew that a particular fashion of clothes, maybe particularly for women, men's clothes, fashions don't change much at all. Women's fashions seem to change very frequently. I mean, when I look at 30 years here in Bangalore, men's fashions haven't changed one bit in 30 years.

Women's fashions have changed a lot in 30 years. Supposing you knew that a particular fashion next year, I mean, in six months' time, it's going to be completely different. How many clothes would you stitch of this present fashion? The world and its fashions are passing away.

He who does the will of God abides forever. Is your mind occupied with things that are soon to pass away? It says in 2 Peter 3, One day is for the Lord is a thousand years, a thousand years is one day. In a short time, it'll pass away.

How much is my mind occupied with that? And how much is my mind occupied with doing the will of God, to know God's will, to know, Lord, what is your will? Do that. Sometimes we can miss something and see which places I should visit, because I'm not sure when the war is going to start there. None of us can be sure till January.

And so I said, perhaps I should not skip Doha this time, because that's where the American base is going to start. Let's all meet in Dubai. But I said, let's not decide right now.

Let's pray over the next four or five days. I see you brothers praying, I pray. And as we have faith, we'll move forward.

So Brother Matthew wrote to me from Doha, Brother, we prayed and we believe the war can only start after you come and go. I said, OK, if you've got faith, then I'll go. So I changed my plan and I said, we go to Doha first.

See, if someone has faith, that's, I mean, then his faith plus my faith, that's it. The two wires join, it's OK. So I was glad that somebody there had faith.

That was important. And so I was very glad that we went to Doha because we had new contacts. And then came to Dubai.

So, and so we had some wonderful meetings in Bombay, public meetings with about 400 people each night. And we had full day meetings as well. It was good that we had a sense of what we should do before going.

And, you know, little things like this, it's not whatever will be, will be. Little things like this, if we had done according to our own wisdom, maybe somebody would have got left out who should have been saved. You know, sometimes people hear a word.

I got an email a couple of days ago from someone who said that he heard me preach somewhere a few months ago and was really challenged in hearing that. And some weeks later, he was listening to the tape again and he got saved. She's a lady, a Hindu.

So that's in another country, not here. So, I mean, it's amazing how the Lord leads us. And I've come to see that if I'm not one day in the place where God wants me to be each day, I'm not hastening the day of God forward.

If I'm in a place where God doesn't want me to be because I went there seeking something on my own, God's will. So anyone who says whatever will be, will be, it's not going to work like that. We must have a sense of urgency, the time in which we live, that I want to be each day where God wants me to be so that my life can count for God.

And I can never be there if I don't, first of all, deny my own choice. The whole secret of Jesus' life is described in John 6, 38. I came from heaven for one purpose, not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me.

That was the secret of Jesus' life, John 6, 38. That's how we're supposed to live. And if we live like that, we can hasten coming the day of the Lord because the one who does the will of God abides forever.

And everything else is going to pass away. Some things, you know, okay, we didn't get time for it. It doesn't matter that everybody talked about it.

You didn't get time to see it. Okay, so what? You need to do the will of God. Maybe there's an interesting site somewhere where other people say, have you seen that, what's happening over there? No, I didn't get time to see it.

So what? If you've done the will of God, that's it. Maybe there's some interesting book you didn't get time to read. There are other things that are more important.

How should we hasten the day of the Lord? Think of Noah. Turn to Hebrews in chapter 11. Hebrews 11, being warned by God of things not yet seen.

In reverence, prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness, which is according to faith. The righteousness, which is according to faith. It was not just Abraham, but also Noah.

How did he become an heir of this righteousness, which is according to faith, which we have? Not according to law. There was no law in Noah's time. There was no law in Abraham's time.

They were righteous by faith. He says, we are also righteous by faith. He's comparing the people who lived before Moses gave the law with us.

Who are living after the law has been abolished. You know, the two periods in human history when there was no law. One was before Moses gave the Ten Commandments.

Sorry. And the other is after Jesus, after the day of Pentecost. So he says, we're living after the day of Pentecost.

Let's compare ourselves with those fellows who lived before the law. They didn't have any law either. Noah was one of those.

How did he become an heir of the righteousness by faith? It's written here. By condemning the world. How did he condemn the world? His whole way of life.

That he had no time for a lot of things that worldly people were interested in. I'm sure Noah had friends. Imagine a man living 480 years in the world, not having friends.

He must have had lots of friends. And some of them call Noah for something. He says, no, I've got something to do.

What's he got to do? He's got to go and put one more plank on the ark. That's what he's got to do. Somebody else calls him for something else.

And I'm not saying he had no relaxation. I'm sure he had some relaxation. Otherwise he'd go crazy.

But there was a sense of urgency. The relaxation was only in order to be refreshed again, so he could get back to work on the ark. To get back to work on the ark, he needed to sleep.

He needed to eat. He needed some recreation. Sure.

But the people in the world were not like that. And Noah condemned the world by the way he lived. Because he had been warned by God, verse 7, and he believed that warning.

God has said it's going to take place. Things that were not yet seen, it says, in reverence, boy, you know, I'm sorry to say, I find in the present generation of Christians, a tremendous lack of reverence. There's a lack of reverence for God.

There's a lightness and a frivolity and a lightness about the way they talk about things. So many jokes about God and hell and even Christians laughing at God in heaven and hell. You see, is that, you see a lot of younger people now, they don't have any respect for older people.

So gone. It is an indication of the lack of reverence for God. They worship some unknown God.

Influences come to it. You find these two things go, reverence for God and respect for older people. So it says here that in reverence, he prepared this ark.

There was a sense of seriousness about him as he went about doing the work of the ark, condemning the world. He says, sorry, I can't. I don't have time, fellas, for all the things you're busy with.

That's what Noah would say. If anybody called him, he says, you know, I wish I had time for that, but I don't have it. It says in Matthew chapter 24, where we read in the beginning, you know, we saw that what were people in the world doing in those days? Matthew 24 and verse 38.

You look at verse 38 and see the things that people were doing in the days before the flood and see if you can find anything sinful in that. They were eating and drinking. They were marrying and giving in marriage.

And if you turn to Luke chapter 17, you see a few more things mentioned there about the last days, because Sodom and Gomorrah was also like that. And it is the same as happened in the days of Lot, Luke 17, 28. Now, Lot was in Sodom, and you'd expect Jesus to be saying, well, the fellas were indulging in sex and homosexuality and killing people and all that.

No, he doesn't mention anything of that. He says they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building. So you see there, eight things, eight things, verse 27 and 28.

Eating and drinking, marrying, giving in marriage, buying, selling, planting, building. Now, which one of us hasn't done these things or isn't planning to do these things? We eat, we drink, we marry, we give in

marriage, we buy, we sell, we plant, we build. Jesus was warning about a preoccupation with a whole lot of things in the world.

What was he trying to teach us here? Was he trying to teach we shouldn't eat and drink and shouldn't marry, shouldn't give in marriage? Far from it. What he was saying was, there are a lot of legitimate things in the world. You can get so taken up with those things.

Eight people, I'm sure his wife helped him, I'm sure his daughter's-in-law helped him. Oh, well, dad, out of eight means twenty-five percent of the workforce is reduced that day and has slowed down and the art gets delayed. Hastening the coming of the day of God, need a sense of urgency.

There are a lot of things I can spend my life doing. Building the church, whose name is in the book of life, whom I'm supposed to witness to. I know hundreds of people, I don't know whose name is in the book of life, but if there is one Lord, here I am, available.

About your way of life, it is the people around you which convinces people. This man believes the world is passing away. Thirty-six years ago, he said to me, oh, exactly.

He saw that I- Do the people around you know that? Do the people who work with you, do they sense in you something far more important to live for? They're living for, as Noah did, condemning the world. He did not live for eating and drinking. He did not live for building and planning.

I'm sure he built, I'm sure he planted, but it was all secondary. He ate and drank, otherwise he could not have lived for 120 years. But his eating and drinking was all directed towards building the ark, building the ark.

He dreamt about the ark and I can imagine while he was dreaming, he dreamt about how to fix the planks and the floors in the ark. And this is what he was dreaming of. He wasn't dreaming about making more money.

He was dreaming how to complete the ark. How can I do? We are so few people, only eight of us in the whole world, and God's given us this tremendous job to do. And we think, Lord, we're so few people, so few people on the earth who are seeking to spread this gospel, this wonderful news that you can have victory over sin.

So many Christians don't know it. What are we doing? That is p-o-o-n-e-n-dot-o-r-g-forward-slash-z-a-c for video messages, audio messages and books by Zak Poonen that can all be downloaded freely. Our mailing address is Christian Fellowship Centre, Forte da Costa Square, Bangalore, 560-084-INDIA.

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