

Can You Accelerate the Return of Jesus?

In the midst of all that is happening around the world today, are you and I able to accelerate the return of Jesus?

Some would say we absolutely cannot hasten the return of the Lord because, in their theological take on the providence of God, everything is preordained.

I believe very much in the sovereignty of God. I also believe He gave us free will, and He invites us into the mystery and destiny of being a co-laborer with Christ.

As we consider whether we can hasten His appearing, let's ask another question: Is it possible that we can cause it to be delayed? It is an interesting concept, is it not?

The Bible seems to suggest that we can either hasten or delay the coming of the Lord:

"What sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!" (2 Pet. 3:11-12).

Without majoring on the dimensions of calamity in this passage, let's look at our part in the coming day of the Lord. Peter suggests that "holy conduct and godliness" will hasten "the coming of the day of God." Your life and your lifestyle can be part of hastening the coming of Messiah, when the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!"

I also firmly believe that prayer can change the course of events. One of our models is Daniel in captivity in Babylon. He read the prophetic promise of an earlier generation—but he

did more than just read it. He sought God earnestly that the promise would be fulfilled:

“I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the Lord given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes” (Dan. 9:2-3, NIV).

What was the promise? That at the end of 70 years of captivity in Babylon, Judah would be released and return to its homeland. Daniel read the prophecy of Jeremiah from an earlier generation, then sought God to remove the hindrances that stood in the way, so the promise could be fulfilled. He did not assume that the timeline would automatically take place. He took on himself the mandate to remind God of His Word and see God’s Word come to pass.

That is the dynamic of intercession—how we can hasten a promise to come to fruition.

‘In Like Manner’

Now to another question: How will Jesus appear? The angels told the disciples, “‘This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven’” (Acts 1:11, NKJV). This absolutely amazes me.

Since I like to ponder phrases, let’s consider the phrase in like manner. What could that mean? Surely Jesus will come back down out of heaven, but to where? The Mount of Olives on the outskirts of Jerusalem.

But there is more to it than that.

What are some possible “in like manner” scenarios? I believe there are at least four:

1. He will return in similar historic circumstances to the demographic and political situation in Israel and the entire

Middle East at the time He left.

2. He will return in like manner to the Jewish people living in the promised land as when He was taken up, as today many Jews live in the land, and more continue to return from the nations of the earth.

3. He will return in similar spiritual circumstances to when He lived in the land, when there were scribes and Pharisees as well as ordinary Jews who were believers in Yeshua. Today there are Orthodox Jews and Messianic believers in the land.

4. He will return in like manner as when He was taken up, since the world powers of Greece, Magog, Babylon and Persia are realigning themselves.

Restoration

Before the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, there must be a restoration of all things. Let's listen to Peter on the Day of Pentecost:

"Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things, about which God spoke by the mouths of His holy prophets from ancient times" (Acts 3:19-21).

Restoration happens in reverse order. Let me explain that with a simple analogy.

I have often mentioned that my earthly father was a carpenter. He made furniture and was very involved with antiques. So I grew up around shellac, which was applied to wood furniture as a stain and sealer. Some old pieces of furniture have layers of shellac as well as layers of paint, as the owners over the years have added their preferences to the pieces. Well-made

furniture passed down through generations of a family can have a dozen layers of finish. To restore the piece to its original beauty, each layer starting from the top needs to be removed.

In the same way, God is restoring His creation, from where we are (at the “top”) to return to the original (at the very base). Think of it, in a sense, as the book of Acts reversed.

Consider that God’s restoration involves five stages, starting with stage 5 and moving back to stage 1:

- **Stage 5:** Worldwide evangelism, along with the realignment of the political systems of the nations. That is the end of the book of Acts.
- **Stage 4:** The regathering of the Jews, the restoration of Israel and the restoration of unity in the body of Christ.
- **Stage 3:** Intercession, persecution, tribulation and signs and wonders with a revival focus, including a back-to-Jerusalem movement.
- **Stage 2:** The fire of the Holy Spirit falling, accompanied by a glory realm of God and the nations entering the valley of decision.
- **Stage 1:** Jesus will return in like manner to the way He departed: the return, the great hope, the Second Coming, the return of Messiah Jesus!

Back to the Beginning

When Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost, he quoted the book of Joel. In my summation of this book, I am going to do likewise—take us to the place of the beginning, which is also the place of the ending: the book of Joel.

Peter saw on the Day of Pentecost what Joel had declared prophetically: “This is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel” (Acts 2:16). Hundreds of years earlier, Joel had

prophesied, “I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind” (Joel 2:28). So if this was that, then let’s go to the model of Joel and see what else he might have to tell us regarding the great hope—the Second Coming of Jesus.

The book of Joel evokes a chain reaction that is significant as it relates to Acts 2—the empowering of the early church by the Holy Spirit and its relation to the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Joel ties together three elements to create a chain reaction, an acceleration, the consummation of the ages:

1. Intensive intercession, the global prayer movement today.
2. The fire of revival in the midst of shaking world events.
3. The return of Jesus Christ as the conquering King.

We have done a quick romp, a restoration in reverse of the book of Acts. We have looked at some ways that the Lord Jesus can return “in like manner.” We have seen parallels between the book of Acts, the book of Joel and the book of Revelation. That starts with fire and ends with, “And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’”

We Will Behold Him!

I pray that you will be renewed in the washing of the water of the Word and are being prepared to receive the fire of Pentecost, the birthmark of the church. I believe you can receive right now, right where you are, because His plan is personal and includes you.

“Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen” (Rev. 1:7).

Here is the resolution of the conflict of the ages—when the Son of Man, the Son of God, splits the skies and comes with His saints and angels, and every eye will behold Him. The

mystery has now been revealed: that Christ Jesus is the Messiah of Jew and Gentile alike. He is the answer to every person's questions. He is the risen Savior and Lord, and we will behold Him, the Lamb of God.

Will you come into agreement with God's heart for His great plan for Israel, the Middle East and all the nations of the earth?

A Personal Prayer

Father, we declare that it is a great honor and privilege to live in these days that are like none other, yet were spoken of by the holy prophets of old. So pour out Your Spirit on all people. Release dreams, visions and revelations. Join the generations for such a time as this. Pierce the Islamic veil. Convict us of our idols. Cleanse our house. Restore Your house with fire, power, character and integrity. We declare that the mystery and the destiny of Israel ultimately is about the great hope, the Second Coming of the Messiah.

We do come into agreement with Your great plan for Israel, the Middle East and all the nations of the earth. We lift our hearts to You, our Lord and our King, and we cry out together. The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." Even so, Prince of Peace, come quickly. Lord Jesus, come for Your honor and for Your glory and for the great global end-time harvest, when You, Jesus, will receive the reward of Your sufferings. Amen and amen. {eo}

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