

WHEN WILL THE KILLING STOP?

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” — Revelation 21:4

Almost weekly we see flashed across the screen **“Breaking News!”** — and we learn of another mass shooting, another terrorist bombing or another truck driven into a crowd of innocent people. In the aftermath, thousands are left wounded and/or grieving. With broken hearts we cry out, *“When will the killing stop? Since God has a plan to put an end to all this suffering, what is He waiting for?”*

The Apostle Paul has provided the answer: *“The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God... For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”* (Romans 8:19-23) Yes, the *poor groaning creation* is waiting for the adoption and the manifestation of the *sons of God*. This word *manifestation* is taken from the Greek word *apokalupsis* which means *revealing*. Until the *sons of God* — the followers of Jesus — are *adopted* and *revealed*, the *whole creation* must continue to wait for relief from this unrelenting pain and sorrow.

WHO ARE THE “SONS OF GOD” AND WHY SHOULD THE WHOLE CREATION WAIT FOR THEM?

The Apostle Paul explains who these *sons of God* are when he states: *“As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God. The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with*

Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” (Roman 8:14-17) Simply put, the *sons of God* are those who are willing to lay their lives down with their Master, to be *“dead with him”* and to thereby prove faithful through all the trials and tests that God has permitted to come upon them. These *sons* make

up what is termed the *body of Christ, the little flock — the Church*. Romans 6:4; Matthew 16:18; Luke 12:32

Like their Master, Jesus’ followers must learn obedience by the things which they suffer — proving worthy to receive glory and honor. (Hebrews 5:8-10) The faith and character of these *sons of God* must be developed, tested and perfected. *“The trial of*

your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory....” (1 Peter 1:7) These trials upon the *sons of God* are preparing them to reign with Christ in his Kingdom. They will dispense blessings to the *poor groaning creation* — teaching righteousness and bringing healing to a world which has been in crisis since the fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden.

This work of proving, preparing and perfecting the *sons of God* has been going on throughout the Christian era. Before the waiting time is over, this *body of Christ* needs to learn sympathy for the suffering world of mankind. When this *body* is complete, its members, collectively, will be able to say to those raised to life again upon the earth that they understand every ill that the world has endured. Jesus, their example, had also become sympathetic as he endured his trials. *“Our High Priest is not one who cannot*



feel sympathy for our weaknesses. On the contrary, we have a High Priest who was tempted in every way that we are, but did not sin.” (Hebrews 4:15 GNB) There is no better way to strengthen and encourage the hearts of others than to have endured the same kind of trial. As every support group will testify, the most effective healing comes from a sympathetic ally who has “*been there and done that.*”

SORROW’S EVERLASTING LESSON

Despite the extreme suffering the *whole creation* has experienced for over six-thousand years, something constructive will come from it. God realizes the enormity of human suffering — from a time “*before the foundation of the world,*” He planned for the world’s recovery — turning these *cursed* conditions into an opportunity to teach mankind the extreme consequences of sin and rebellion. Yes, experience with Satan’s evil world will teach mankind the everlasting lessons of trust, loyalty and obedience to our all-wise Creator. “*It is a difficult exercise which God has imposed upon the sons of Adam to develop themselves by it.*” Ecclesiastes 1:13—*Fenton Translation*

God has provided ample assurance in His Word that His chastenings are rehabilitative so that His *beloved* wayward children might be restored back to His loving favor. (John 3:16) God only chastens to heal: “*...they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors [Satan, sin and death], and He shall send them a Saviour, and a great one, and He shall deliver them... and the Lord shall smite [chasten] Egypt [a picture of the world]: He shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the Lord, and He shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them.*” Isaiah 19:20, 22

The permission of evil and suffering will have been a useless torment unless mankind is given an opportunity to use this experience to make positive choices at some future time. The Scriptures promise that those who are resurrected in God’s thousand-year Kingdom on earth will return to the days of their youth to begin again under more favorable circumstances. (Job 33:24-26) All the troubles and tribulations of the past, instead of being useless sufferings, will be valuable guides. Death, the penalty for sin, is not the irrevocable end of human existence; *it is the final experience of an everlasting lesson.*

Our faith can be strengthened in the promise that God has a loving reason for everything He plans and purposes to do. At this time, He has *permitted* the exceeding sorrows of a world left on its own and under the present ruler of darkness, Satan. The world is quickly learning that, as long as sin and selfishness prevail, it is helpless to win a war against evil. But it is comforting to know that when God finally provides through His Son the long awaited worldwide *peace*, we can rest assured that there will be great changes in the earth. Then *all* will begin to see that the permission of evil was both educational and preparatory to the leading of mankind into the ages of blessings to come, wherein “*all the families of the earth will be blessed.*” Genesis 28:14-18

The promise is that once God, through His Son, puts an utter end to all evil, “*affliction shall not rise up the second time.*” (Nahum 1:9; Job 34:29) In other words, these harsh lessons of evil will never be necessary again when all the families of the earth will learn, by contrast, that love, peace, righteousness and unselfishness are far more preferable than the life they once had during this *present evil world*. The depth of God’s wisdom is shown in His foresight to devise a plan that provides for man’s free choice and experience with evil, but nevertheless brings redemption through Christ which will result in future eternal happiness.



WAITING TIME IS ALMOST OVER

The prophet Habakkuk stated: “*The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come.*” Habakkuk 2:3) At some point in the near future, this time of waiting for the refining work of the *sons of God* will be over. Jesus’ parable of the *Harvest* states: “*In the time of harvest I will say to the reapers... gather the wheat into my barn.*” (Matthew 13:30) He also stated that “*the harvest is the end of the age.*” (Verse 39) This illustrates the end of the Gospel Age — the Christian era — when the body of Christ, those who were willing to suffer with Christ during this nighttime of sin, will be complete. Then will the promise of Acts 15:14-17 go into effect: “*God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name... after this I will return [at the second advent] and build again the tabernacle of David [set up the Kingdom of God]...that the residue of men*

[those who did not accept Christ now] *might seek after the Lord....*” God’s work since the death of Jesus has not been to convert all humankind at this time, but merely to *call out* from among the *poor groaning creation* a people for his name. In His Kingdom all the *residue of men*, who are not of these called out ones, will have their opportunity to seek the Lord by the guidance of Christ and his completed Church. Like him they shall be compassionate priests, understanding judges, and benevolent kings. 1 John 3:2; Revelation 20:6; 1 Corinthians 6:2

GOD’S COMPASSIONS FAIL NOT

— LAMENTATIONS 3:22 —

The Prophet Jeremiah sends a message of consolation for every grieving heart: *“Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for... they [the poor groaning creation] shall come again from the land of the enemy [the grave].”* Oh, what a compassionate God we have! God is not indifferent to every sorrow. He commissioned Jeremiah: *“Tell the people about my sorrow and say: ‘May My eyes flow with tears day and night, may I never stop weeping, for My people are deeply wounded and are badly hurt. When I go out in the fields, I see the bodies of men killed in war; when I go into the towns, I see people starving to death.’”* (Jeremiah 14:17, 18 *GNB*) It is comforting to know that when man suffers, God suffers, and as the Apostle Paul states, God *“comforteth those that are cast down.”* (2 Corinthians 7:6) It takes extreme faith to believe that there will ultimately be a beautiful end to all of the tragic stories that we see in the news — to believe that God’s wisdom has planned for the eternal welfare of all, and that His Divine love and power **will** attain that end. All those who have died **will** come forth from their graves to be reunited with their loved ones.

Though God’s plans are misunderstood now, in due time His merciful character and government will be vindicated. Then all will begin to see that it was not God who *caused* the evil, but that he *permitted* it for a relatively short period of time for man’s instruction. By comparison to this nighttime of sorrow, the Apostle

John describes a time free of every present evil: *“And I saw a new heaven [spiritual rule] and a new earth [new social order upon earth under this benevolent heavenly government]: for the first heaven [corrupt spiritual systems] and the first earth [society oppressed under the leadership of Satan] were passed away.... And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem [Christ and his Church], coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people.... And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”* Revelation 21:1-4

This is the hope of the *poor groaning creation* who have been *waiting for the sons of God*. Yes, *the whole creation* — animals, trees, oceans, and even the air we breathe — every element of creation has been enduring the devastating consequences of sin and death. God’s Divine Plan will bring about a peaceable Kingdom under Messiah — the Prince of Peace!

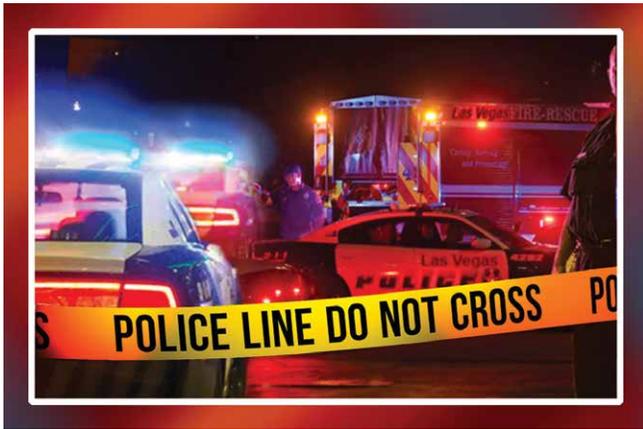
This will be a glorious opportunity for every man, woman and child to learn to know the Lord, to obey

him, and to grow to mental, moral and physical perfection. This does not mean universal everlasting life regardless of obedience, for the Scriptures declare that such as refuse to profit by these glorious opportunities granted them shall be destroyed from amongst the people in the second death — *“They shall be as though they had not been.”* (Obadiah 1:16; Acts 3:19-23) We believe that this will be rare, however, for the Scriptures indicate that the majority *“shall return [from their graves], and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads....”* (Isaiah 35:10) Then, God *“...will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us... we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”* Isaiah 25:7-9



“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb... and a little child shall lead them.”

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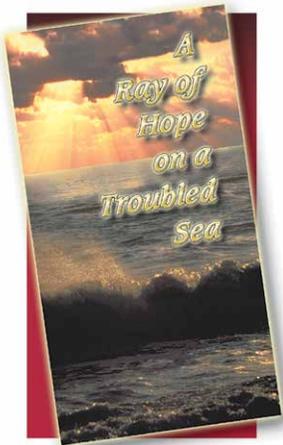
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