

ETHAN TEMPLE MINISTRIES
TOOLS FOR LIFE
ELDER ANDRE EWING

SPIRIT BAPTISM AND WITNESSING

Seventh-day Adventists, as well as many other Christians, have been [anticipating] the second coming for many years. Seventh-day Adventists believe that Christ could have come before now if certain things would have happened. The parable of the 10 virgins teaches that the Bridegroom's return would be delayed.

What is at the heart of this delay in Christ's return? I believe there are two reasons. First, God's people are not ready. Second, the work of preaching the gospel to the world, warning them of Christ's coming, and events surrounding that event haven't happened. The three angels' messages of Revelation chapter 14 haven't gone to the world, as they must before Christ returns.

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from

heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle” (Rev. 14:6-14).

Great and terrible events are to come upon this earth just prior to Christ’s second coming. In the past God’s people have not been ready for such events, as in Noah’s day when the flood didn’t come until the warning of the flood had gone out to earth’s inhabitants, and the boat was ready for the deluge:

“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matt. 24:37).

The warning message will be given and the “boat,” or church, will be ready. Then the end will come.

How did Christ get the most serious message of Noah to the world of Noah’s day? Peter tells us in his first letter. The Holy Spirit that “quickened” Christ, or raised Him from the grave, is the Spirit by which Christ “preached” through Noah to men and women (called spirits) who were captives, or prisoners, of Satan:

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water” (1 Peter 3:18-20).

Numbers 27:15 and 16 indicates that the Bible uses the word *spirits* to refer to living men and women:

“And Moses spake unto the Lord, saying, Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation.”

The Bible also indicates that the term *prison*, or *prisoners*, can refer to men and women under Satan’s power of sin and deception:

“I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand,

and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house” (Isa. 42:6, 7).

Hence, we see from Scripture that it was Christ, by the Holy Spirit, speaking through Noah who prepared the inhabitants of the earth from the flood. So it will be in the last days just before Christ’s second coming (Matt. 24:37). Christ will speak by the Holy Spirit through Spirit-filled Christians to prepare the world for the Second Advent.

I have been a Seventh-day Adventist Christian for many years, and a pastor for most of those years. In my denomination, as well as in many other Christian organizations, I believe much time and money has been spent on plans, programs, and methods to bring Christ to the world. I’m not against plans, programs, and methods, but I’m afraid that we have, more often than not, depended on these things to finish God’s work. Plans, programs, and methods will not finish God’s work. Great speakers, marvelous Christian musical concerts, or satellites will not finish God’s work. *God’s Holy Spirit will finish God’s work* – God’s Spirit, speaking and ministering through Spirit-filled men and women.

Personal Reflection and Discussion

Why do you think Jesus has not come yet?

What did Jesus say about Noah's day and our day?

How did God finish His warning work in Noah's day?

What, or whom, do you think God will use most in finishing His work on earth?

What can you do to become one whom God will use to finish His work?

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