



Well, here we are at the start of a new year. Many, things throughout the world have already taken place, just in these first three weeks. Some are a continuation of things that have started during the course of last year or even in years prior to that. Either way, things are happening.

Are these things that are taking place signs that the end times are about to begin or that they already have begun? Are they things that just happen, with no spiritual connotations? That is the real question. To be honest, I do have my thoughts on the events of the world, but I will leave my thoughts on that for another time.

However, things are happening and taking place. Obviously, we are all aware of the events in California with those horrendous fires and those fierce “Santa Ana winds.” They are causing major destruction of property and land, as well as, unfortunately, there have been lives that have been lost.

We see the events that took place in New Orleans and in other parts of our country where lives, to many lives, were taken by anarchists and people who have been mentally affected by the devil – whether through PTSD or simply because of the wickedness and evil that is in the hearts of men and women who shoot and kill each other, as well as innocent people.

We know of the events that are taking place throughout the world such as:

Israel’s escalated offensive in Gaza as well as its engagement against Hezbollah in Lebanon. Israel successfully eliminated key leaders of both Hamas and Hezbollah. Despite international concerns about the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, Israel's actions has seemed to have “cemented” its dominance in the region for the time being. The future of the Middle East, however, still remains “uncertain” as seen and described in the Bible.

The war in Ukraine completed its third year with continued clashes between Russian and Ukrainian forces. While Ukraine's power infrastructure continued to suffer, the United States’ approval of long-range missiles in November highlighted the ongoing international involvement and the decline of diplomatic relations. Again, as the Bible tells us will happen.

2024 was a year marked by devastating natural disasters. The year began with the “Noto Peninsula” earthquake in Japan, which killed at least 250 people. Across the globe, extreme weather events wreaked havoc. In March and April, flash floods and unseasonal rains in Afghanistan and Pakistan killed over 1,000 people.

In 2024, we saw catastrophic floods in Brazil, Indonesia, Spain, and Kenya, as well as deadly landslides in New Guinea. Wildfires and hurricanes here in the United States also contributed to the widespread devastation felt throughout the world.

Wow!!! As I mentioned previously, this year is not starting off any better. But God...

We must remember that our God knows everything that is happening and that He is allowing everything to take place. I am not saying that He is causing all these calamities to take place, but he is quite aware of them all. Is He allowing these things to take place because they are all a part of His end time plan? Many will speculate on that one way or the other.

I simply want to encourage all of God’s people, or as many as I can, to simply check our own hearts and make sure that we do not get “caught up” into all these things-one way or another. We must all simply turn to God and continue to pray and seek after Him.

I guess what I simply want to share is that there are three things that we all must remember no matter what we may be going through or no matter what may be happening around us or no matter what may be taking place in this world. Those three things are: 1) We must always be secure in our salvation that only comes through a personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as our own personal “Savior.” 2) The next thing that we must know and make sure of is that it is settled within your heart that Jesus is your personal “Lord.” 3) The last thing is to constantly be willing to live for and tell others about Jesus (evangelism).

As mentioned, the very first thing that we must never forget and never get dissuaded from is the fact that Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of Man, came in the flesh over two thousand years ago; that He died on the cross for all of mankind’s sin; that He took our place in receiving the rightful punishment for our sinful lifestyle which was a destination in eternal hell...

But... three days later... He defeated satan and all the forces of darkness; He rose from that place of death and destruction; He rose and went to the Father in heaven to present Himself as that perfect sacrifice for all of man's sin. Yes, Jesus is now seated at the right hand of the Father. He is waiting to return at the appointed time that is set by the Father.

The second thing, and this is most important, is that Jesus is Lord – the absolute, supreme and final authority over all things. But... and this is vital... is Jesus the Lord in **your own personal life**. This is so key. Yes, Jesus took the sins of the whole world, those prior to His crucifixion, those at the time of His crucifixion and all of those after that, up to this day and up to the day of His return. Every sin was “paid for” by His blood.

Jesus took all of the “wages of our sin” upon Himself. He took the punishment for everyone's sin. The only thing that any individual needs to do is to believe and accept that Jesus died for all our sin. But... and this is so very important... have you made Him your Lord – the absolute, supreme and final authority in your life? Is Jesus **YOUR** Lord???

Generally speaking, a “lord” is someone with authority, control, or power over others. To say that someone is “lord” is to consider that person a master or ruler of some kind. After Jesus' resurrection, the saying, “Jesus is Lord,” became a way of declaring Jesus' deity – that Jesus is God, the second person of the Triune God – the Father, Jesus (the Son) and the Holy Spirit. It began with Thomas' exclamation when Jesus appeared to the disciples after His resurrection: “*Thomas said to him, ‘My Lord and my God!’*” (John 20:28)

This is so very vital. A person must believe and know within their heart that Jesus is their Savior and their Lord **and** that He is God. In Romans 10:9, Jesus' “lordship” is linked to His “saving power as it states, “*If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*”

Jesus is Lord-Lord of all. We all must make sure that He is our own personal Lord. We **MUST** keep Him in that position throughout our lives. This is vital for our eternal salvation. Yes, we must accept that Jesus saved us from our sin. However, we must never forget that we have chosen Him to also be the absolute, supreme and final authority in our life – now and forever. Yes, **Jesus is Lord over all** and He is my Lord and He is your Lord, forever and ever.

That is the truth, whether or not people accept or acknowledge that fact, it is the absolute truth. Jesus is more than the Messiah (for the Jewish believer), more than the Savior (for all believers); He is the absolute, supreme and final authority. Jesus is the Lord of and over all. Let us never forget what Philippians 2:9–11 tells us, *“God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

The last thing I would like to mention is that we must be ready and willing to share that Good News of salvation through Jesus to anyone and everyone we can. This could happen at work, at school, within our own homes and family, our friends and yes, even within our churches. The truth of the matter is that the Bible makes it clear that God has called every believer to share the Good News of salvation in Jesus to others and to make Him their absolute, supreme and final authority, their Lord, in their life.

We must understand and believe that God desires every person that was ever born to know him. It started with Adam and Eve. God had relationship with them until they separated themselves from Him because of their sin. God, in His infinite love, chose to give man a way to set themselves right with Him. He put into action the plan of salvation that could only come through the death, burial, punishment in hell and then the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

God desired for those who would truly believe and accept Him to become children of His. It tells us in Ephesians 1:4, *“Having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will...”* This simply means that God wanted us to be His children even before we were created. We were all created to be His children. We were ultimately created for His pleasure and for God’s joy.

God created all of us. He desires everyone of His created beings to receive His grace, mercy, His peace, His salvation and to be brought back to Him. That is the essence of God’s love. Jesus’ mission was “to seek and to save the lost.” Now as His people, we have been given that same mission, that same assignment, to seek those who are lost in their sin and in their rejection of their Savior and allow them the opportunity to see their Savior and to accept and receive Him as their Savior and their Lord.

Evangelism, telling others about Jesus, is every believer's responsibility. Evangelism is a privilege that our God has given to every believer. 2Corinthians 5:20 reminds us that we have the privilege of being "Christ's ambassadors." We are to represent Him and bring Him to others. Most importantly, telling others about Jesus shows our gratitude for what Jesus has done for each of us.

We must all grasp the fact and truly understand that God desires no one to perish. God desires for no one to go to hell. (2Peter 3:9) Will all people be saved? No. However, we do not know which ones will be or won't be. We all simply need to live out our lives as true believers and children of God for all to see. Those that truly want to change; those that truly want to know God; will see Him in you.

You do not need to be a "witnessing machine." Some people are and some people are not. To be honest, I am not. But, people see the Jesus in me and I can then witness His love grace and mercy to to them – sometimes in words or sometimes in acts or actions. Whether they accept Him or not is totally up to them. I just need to be there if they do want to receive Jesus.

The truth is, we don't know when Jesus will come back. Jesus makes it very clear in Matthew 24 that no one knows the date of His return. However, we do know what will happen first. Jesus will be preached to all nations and to all tongues. Matthew 24:14 tell us "*And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*" However, the scripture just prior to that one states, "*But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.*" (Matthew 24:13)

Will we endure? We will we stand fast in our faith? It is vital that we all keep in mind these few things that I mentioned in this brief essay. Yes, we must make sure that we have believed and accepted the fact that Jesus saved us from eternal damnation in hell. We were all in sin and we were all sinners destined for hell. Jesus took the punishment of all our sins. Three days later He then defeated the devil and stripped him of the keys of death and life. Jesus then rose from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of the Father waiting to return. Do you truly believe that?

Until, He does return, we have been placed here as His ambassadors, His representatives, to tell others the Good News of salvation in and through Jesus. If Jesus is your Savior and if He is your absolute, supreme and final authority, your Lord, then we are all called to live our life by showing and telling others about the possibility of them also accepting Jesus as their own personal Savior and Lord and then they can tell others.

The “cycle” will continue until the day when Jesus does return. The time is getting short. We are to tell as many as we can. Matthew tells all those whom Jesus is their Savior and Lord, *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”*

We are to live our lives as children of the most High God. You may suffer persecution for this way of living your life. However, always remember, “great will be your reward,” for your reward will be an eternity with your God – the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit!!!

We must never forget that we are saved; that Jesus is our personal Lord and that because of that, we must share that Good News with anyone and everyone that may come our way!!!