

the word of a worldwide pandemic hit the News. But the Christian does not fear the same way the non-Christian does. We do not fear as ones without hope of deliverance.

Paul writes in **Romans 8:22**, **“For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.”** As things ramp up and the “labor pains” get progressively worse, that is, further removed from the goodness of how God created things in the Garden of Eden, the Christian must see with the eyes of faith that the fullness of Christ’s redemption is drawing near. Things are progressing even though from our experience it’s a lot slower than a woman in labor. Yet any woman who has gone through natural labor for the first time experiences this change. As she measures progressively towards that 10 centimeter benchmark, the contractions intensify. Until she experiences it for herself, she knows not the extent of the agony that is coming, which is why labor is so unnerving.

So also, you and I as Christians do not know the extent of creation’s labor until we experience it. So, yes, things will keep intensifying unless Christ comes first. The writing is on the wall that Christ could return any time. In the meantime, if God delays, things will keep getting intensifying. But remember, God delaying is not because He is slow to act. **2 Peter 3:9**, **“The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”** The Lord is patient in returning because He wants all people to repent and be saved (**1 Tim 2:4**). If the Lord is patient in returning, we must be patient, too. **James 5:7-8**, **“Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.”**

For the Christian, then, the end of the world and the coming of the Lord is not daunting. Instead it is something we eagerly wait for! **Romans 8:23**, **“And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”** We know how the story ends. **Galatians 5:5**, **“For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.”** The laboring mother knows that soon she will get to hold her child, and all the pain and suffering will be worth it. The Christian knows that the trials and tribulations that we endure here on earth will be worth it. Our reward is in heaven. Salvation is the hope of righteousness! That doesn’t take away the sting of death. For the sting of death is sin (**1 Cor 15:56**), and we will still dwell among it. But we know that the grave has no victory. Christ has the victory.

It is with the eyes of faith that when these things begin to take place that leave the world in fear and confusion, we look to Jesus, our deliver. When the writing is on the wall that the world is coming to an end, we repent, and we look to what is written in God’s Word for our comfort, which enables us to straighten up and raise our heads. God’s Word exhorts us to look up to He who was hung on the cross, He who rose again from the dead, He who ascended into heaven to prepare a place there for every single one of you. For when He who ascended returns, He will come to bring you to that place with many rooms. In the presence of God there will be no more fear or foreboding, no more perplexity and uncertainty.

The writing is on the wall. You’ve heard the phrase before and I have said it several times already. It comes from the Old Testament book of Daniel. In Ch. 5, Belshazzar, king of Babylon, threw a feast in which he took vessels removed from the temple in Jerusalem, filled them with wine, and toasted to the pantheon of Babylonian idols. Listen to what happens. Beginning at v. 4: **“They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone. ⁵ Immediately the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace, opposite the lampstand. And the king saw the hand as it wrote. ⁶ Then the king’s color changed, and his thoughts alarmed him; his limbs gave way, and his knees knocked together.”** You see, he saw the sign, the hand writing on the wall, but he could not interpret it. He knew, though, that it was bad news. So he offered great riches to anyone in the land who could tell him what it meant. No one could except Daniel. And Daniel told him what was written. **V. 25**, **“And this is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN. ²⁶ This is the interpretation of the matter: MENE, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; ²⁷ TEKEL, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; ²⁸ PERES, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.” ²⁹ Then Belshazzar gave the command, and Daniel was clothed with purple, a chain of gold was put around**

his neck, and a proclamation was made about him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. ³⁰ That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed.”

This story teaches us that God is not slow to act. He can raise up and tear down in a day according to His will and His time. The story of the hand writing on the wall also teaches us that God’s Word always comes true. Belshazzar didn’t live another day. Now sometimes, we’d like God to act as quickly as He did in Daniel 5, but He’s much more patient than we are, because He wants everyone to repent and be saved. He will act, though, as He has promised. Christ is coming again. And it’s sooner now than when we first believed. So repent, straighten up, raise your heads, and cling to Jesus who came once to save you from your sins, and is coming again to bring you the fullness of your redemption. In Jesus’ name, Amen.