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The Beginnings of Sorrows Or, How We Can Providentially Tell That Our Rapture Deliverance Is Near

"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows"

(Mark 13:8).

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Preface

In His Olivet Discourse, our LORD Jesus Christ described the signs that indicate that our Pre-Tribulational Rapture Deliverance and-- most importantly-- His Second Coming are near. He described "earthquakes", "famines", and "troubles" as the "beginnings of sorrows" (Mark 13:8). These "sorrows" are also translated elsewhere as "travail" or "pains", as when a woman gives birth. Even the Apostle Paul alludes to the Rapture concept in his use of the phrase the "redemption of our body". "22 For we know that the **whole** creation groaneth and travaileth in pain [birth pains] together until now. 23 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 8:22-23).

We, the Watching and Waiting Body of Christ, have been providentially enabled by the Spirit to sense the nearness of our Deliverance, because of the quickening frequency of the birth pains.

"Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in Thy sight, O LORD" (Isaiah 26:17). It is completely appropriate that we would use the sense of our own personal circumstances, as well as the current events of the world, to tell how close together the birth pains are. "I being in the way, the LORD led me" (Genesis 24:27). And, we are in no danger of an inappropriate focus on watching for our LORD, so long as we "occupy" (Luke 19:13). "Blessed are those servants, whom the LORD when He cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them" (12:37).

First Advent: Israel Brought Forth the Messiah

The reason why the Living God has chosen to create the universe, Israel, and the Church, is simply for His pleasure. "Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11). At each phase of the LORD's revelation of Himself to man-- as Creator, Sustainer, Lawgiver, Saviour, Sanctifier, and King-- it pleases Him to be embraced by His people with all the confidence of a loving faith. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Love has always been the motivation that the "God [Who] is love" (1John 4:16) has expected of His people for trusting Him. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by Love" (Galatians 5:6). Even when the LORD Jesus recounted the foundation of Old Testament Israel's relationship to Jehovah, He emphasized that love has always been the reason for keeping the Law. "37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39).

What then was Israel's role in the manifestation of the Messiah? Specifically, the LORD Jesus Christ was to be born of the seed of David. "The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; He will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy [King David's] body will I set upon thy throne" (Psalm 132:11). The Nation of Israel was to travail to bring forth the Son of Man. Just witness the assembly of players that came forth to experience the travail, pain, and joy of bringing forth the Son of Man, i.e., Simeon, Anna, Elizabeth, Zecharias, Joseph, and Mary. "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, **because her hour is come**: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, **for joy that a man is born** into the world" (John 16:21).

Just as the Old Testament assured David a seed to sit forever upon his throne, the New Testament supports the position that **Israel's birth pains were to bring forth the Messiah the first time**. "1 And there appeared a great wonder in Heaven; a woman [the Nation of Israel] clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: 2 And she being with Child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. 3 And there appeared another wonder in Heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. 4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her Child [Jesus] as soon as It was born. 5 And she brought forth a Man Child, Who was to rule all nations with a Rod Of Iron: and her Child was caught up unto God, and to His Throne" (Revelation 12:1-5).

Second Advent: The Church Brings Forth the King of Kings

The "Head of the Church" (Ephesians 5:23)-- the LORD Jesus-- has ordained His Church to be the vehicle to manifest Himself to the world. "19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 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" (Matthew 28:19-20). This Gospel Age is a constant reminder to the Body of Christ of the soon "Coming of our LORD Jesus Christ" (1Corinthians 1:7) He is Coming back to judge the world and consummate His Kingdom. "7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the LORD Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our LORD Jesus Christ" (2Thessalonians 1:7-8).

One of the foundational ordinances of the Church, the LORD's Supper, is intended as a remembrance of the LORD Jesus, as well as an expectation of His soon return. "25 After the same manner also He

took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the LORD's death till He come" (1Corinthians 11:25-26). To return to the pilgrim character of the Church, we must again look for that "Better Country", and "be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1) of the attachments of this world. "But now they desire a Better Country, that is, an Heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a City" (Hebrews 11:16).

The Apostle Peter sets forth the Church's role in the manifestation of the Messiah the second time. "Looking for and hasting [literally, hastening] unto the Coming of the Day of God" (2Peter 3:12). How do we hasten the "Coming of the Day of God"? **The promotion of the Gospel to save and sanctify, hastens His Coming.** "Blessed is that servant, whom his LORD when He cometh shall find so doing" (Luke 12:43). Intercessory prayer begs God to move His hand that His "will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven" (Matthew 6:10), so that He will come quickly. All necessary and good works promote the Kingdom and soon return of our LORD. "And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful" (Titus 3:14).

Again, the Apostle Paul gave us the foundational understanding that **the Church's birth pains are to bring forth the Messiah-- the King of Kings-- the second time**, i.e., "Thy Kingdom come" (Matthew 6:10). "20 For our conversation is in Heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the LORD Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Philippians 3:20-21). Understanding that the "whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now... even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:22-23), **we know that we travail in anticipation of not just our Rapture, but the manifestation of the King of Kings.** "14 Until the appearing of our LORD Jesus Christ: 15 Which in His times He shall shew, Who is the Blessed and Only Potentate, the KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords" (1Timothy 6:14-15).

The Value of Sorrows (or, Travail)

Physically:

to give birth to a child-

- Gen. 38:27 "And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb."

Spiritually:

to give birth to a Godly transformation-

- Gal. 4:19 "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again **until Christ be formed in you.**"
- Eph. 4:13 "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, **unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.**"

- Eph. 1:17 "That the God of our LORD Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of **wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.**"
- Phil. 3:10 "**That I may know Him**, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made **conformable** unto His death."
- Col. 1:28 "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man **perfect in Christ Jesus.**"
- Heb. 5:14 "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised **to discern both good and evil.**"
- Col. 1:9 "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might **be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.**"
- Phil. 1:9 "And this I pray, that **your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment.**"
- Jer. 9:24 "But let him that glorieth glory in this, **that he understandeth and knoweth Me**, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD."
- John 17:3 "And this is life eternal, **that they might know Thee the Only True God, and Jesus Christ**, Whom Thou hast sent."
- Phil. 3:8 "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss **for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my LORD**: for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."
- Gal. 6:14 "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our LORD Jesus Christ, **by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.**"
- Rom. 6:6 "Knowing this, that **our old man is crucified with Him**, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."
- 1 Cor. 2:2 "For I **determined** not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

to give birth to a Godly deliverance-

- Num. 20:14,16 "Thou knowest **all the travail that hath befallen us...** And when we cried unto the LORD, He heard our voice, and sent an angel, and hath **brought us forth** out of Egypt."

- Ex. 18:8 "And Moses told his father in law **all that the LORD had done** unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, **and all the travail that had come upon them** by the way, **and how the LORD delivered them.**"
- Ex. 15:16 "**Fear and dread** shall fall upon them; by the greatness of Thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; **till Thy people pass over, O LORD**, till the people pass over, which Thou hast purchased."
- Ex. 4:23 "And I say unto thee, **Let My son go**, that he may serve Me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will **slay thy son**, even thy firstborn."
- Mic. 4:10 "Be in pain, and **labour to bring forth**, O daughter of Zion, **like a woman in travail**: for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon; **there shalt thou be delivered**; there the LORD shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies."

to give birth to a Godly repentance-

- Is. 53:10-12 "Yet it pleased the LORD to **bruise** Him; He hath put Him to **grief**: when **Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin...** He shall see of **the travail of His soul**, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My righteous servant **justify many**; for He shall **bear their iniquities**. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and **He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.**"
- 1 Thess. 2:9 "For ye remember, brethren, our **labour and travail**: for **labouring night and day**, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, **we preached unto you the Gospel of God.**"

to give birth to Godly fruit-

- Eccl. 3:10-11 "I have seen the **travail**, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it. He hath **made every thing beautiful** in His time."
- John 16:21 "A woman **when she is in travail hath sorrow**, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is **delivered of the child**, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world."

i.e., patience-

- Luke 8:15 "They, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the WORD, **keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.**"

- Luke 21:19 "In your patience **possess** ye your souls."
 - Rom. 5:3 "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that **tribulation worketh patience.**"
 - 2 Cor. 6:4 "But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, **in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses.**"
 - Col. 1:11 "Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, **unto all patience and longsuffering** with joyfulness."
 - 1 Thess. 1:3-4 "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and **labour of love**, and **patience of hope** in our LORD Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God **for your patience** and faith **in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure.**"
 - James 1:3-4 "Knowing this, that **the trying of your faith worketh patience.** But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."
 - James 5:10-11 "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the Name of the LORD, **for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.** Behold, we count them happy which **endure.**"
 - Rev. 1:9 I "John, who also am your brother, and **companion in tribulation**, and **in the kingdom and patience** of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the WORD of God, and for the **testimony** of Jesus Christ."
 - Rev. 2:2-3 "I know thy **works**, and thy **labour**, and thy **patience**... And hast **borne**, and hast **patience**, and for My Name's sake hast **laboured**, and hast not fainted."
 - Rev. 3:10 "Because thou **hast kept the WORD of My patience**, I also will keep thee from the Hour of Temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."
- i.e., wisdom-**
- Eccl. 1:13 "And I gave my heart to **seek and search out by Wisdom** concerning all things that are done under heaven: **this sore travail** hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith."
 - Prov. 18:1 "Through desire a man, having separated himself, **seeketh and intermeddleth** with all **Wisdom.**"

to give birth to God's judgment-

- Ps. 48:6 "**Fear** took hold upon them there, and **pain**, as of a woman in **travail.**"

- 1 Thess. 5:3 "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then **sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child**; and they shall not escape."
- Jer. 4:31 "For I have heard a voice **as of a woman in travail**, and the anguish as of her that bringeth forth her first child... that bewaileth herself, that spreadeth her hands, saying, Woe is me now! for my soul is wearied **because of murderers**."
- Jer. 6:22-26,30 "Thus saith the LORD, Behold, a people cometh from the north country, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth. They shall lay hold on bow and spear; **they are cruel, and have no mercy**; their voice roareth like the sea; and they ride upon horses, set in array as men for war against thee, O daughter of Zion. We have heard the fame thereof: our hands wax feeble: anguish hath taken hold of us, **and pain, as of a woman in travail**. Go not forth into the field, nor walk by the way; for the sword of the enemy and fear is on every side. O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning, as for an only son, most bitter lamentation: for **the spoiler shall suddenly come** upon us... Reprobate silver shall men call them, **because the LORD hath rejected them**."
- Jer. 13:21-27 "What wilt thou say **when He shall punish thee?...** **shall not sorrows take thee, as a woman in travail?** And if thou say in thine heart, Wherefore come these things upon me? For the greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts discovered, and thy heels made bare. Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil. **Therefore will I scatter them as the stubble** that passeth away by the wind of the wilderness. **This is thy lot, the portion of thy measures from Me**, saith the LORD; **because thou hast forgotten Me, and trusted in falsehood**. Therefore will I discover thy skirts upon thy face, that thy shame may appear. I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, and thine abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?"
- Eccl. 2:23,26 "For **all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief**; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night... For God giveth to a man that is good in His sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: **but to the sinner He giveth travail, to gather and to heap up**, that He may give to him that is good before God. (4:4,6) Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour... Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit."
- Is. 13:7-13 "Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: And they shall be afraid: **pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth**: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames. **Behold, the Day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate**: and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And **I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity**; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the

golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the Day of His fierce anger."

Conclusion

The Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:9,13,22) leads us by His Spirit to expect His Appearance and our Rapture-- the "Coming of our LORD Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him" (2Thessalonians 2:1)-- to be soon. Since watching and waiting for the LORD are continually enjoined in the Scriptures-- "And the LORD direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ" (3:5)-- it is utterly unthinkable that the Holy Spirit would lead us to interpret the birth pains into a course of action that would cause us to be "ashamed and confounded" (Psalm 40:14). "Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a Chief Corner Stone, Elect, Precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded" (1Peter 2:6). By faith, God will preserve us from falling into the "great transgression" (Psalm 19:13) of a "castaway" (1Corinthians 9:27) life. "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on Thee" (25:21).

Even so, come, LORD Jesus.

Maranatha!