

Power *for a* Finished Work



Repentance, Revival, and Reformation

J. L. Shuler



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Introduction

Elder J. L. Shuler has given a lifetime to evangelism, recognizing that “this gospel of the kingdom must be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” Matthew 24:14. But how long must God wait for the heart preparation of His saints—a prerequisite for the sending of the latter rain? Wherever Elder Shuler has preached in recent years, including some of the largest of our camp meetings, his hearers have urged him to publish his message so that all may hear. This book is in response to that plea.

Elder H. M. S. Richards, Sr., seconds this action. He says, “I believe Elder Shuler has done a good job in compiling this book about the finishing of the work. It would be good counsel for our people everywhere. I hope it can have a wide circulation in our churches. Chapters five and six alone are worth much. A careful and prayerful reading by our people would help them to understand the work of preparation that must precede the finishing of the work of the gospel in this age.”

Elder Neal C. Wilson says, “I do feel that Elder Shuler has in a succinct and abbreviated way conveyed a convincing and timely emphasis on our needs in the church. We cannot overemphasize to our people the message contained in this manuscript.”

On our part, here at the Pacific Press[®], we feel we have been called to proclaim just such a message as this book contains. Our prayer is that it may fulfill its destiny.

Ivan Crawford, editor

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Two Crucial Developments

A group of travelers stand with faces upturned to Big Ben in the clock tower of the Houses of Parliament in London, England. The hour hand is at twelve midnight, and the minute hand is closing in. Within minutes the two hands will be in alignment at the top of the dial. What then? We hear Big Ben send forth twelve resounding peals.

With bated breath we also wait for God's clock to strike the climactic hour for the Son of God, and His Father, and all the holy angels to leave the city of God in the third heaven and appear in the air above this earth. Then the saved in all lands and from all generations will be gathered to meet the Lord in the air and be forever with Him in His heavenly home. See 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17; Matthew 24:30, 31. Jesus said concerning His coming, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." Matthew 24:36. But we know His coming is near.

Two interlocked developments work together for the finishing of the mission of the gospel, to usher in the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. First, the final phase of the everlasting gospel will be proclaimed to all the people in the world. Jesus said: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Matthew 24:14.

Notice that the end of time is inseparably connected with the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom to "all

Two Crucial Developments

the world for a witness unto all nations.” Every soul in every land will have the opportunity to respond to God’s gracious invitation for eternal life, as set forth in the final phase of His everlasting gospel. This gospel proclamation to all nations prepares the way for the Lord Jesus to come with His reward, “to give every man according as his work shall be.” Revelation 22:12.

A second crucial development which rings down the curtain on civilization coincides with this first one. As this gospel of the kingdom is proclaimed to all nations, converted people are being made ready to meet the Lord at His appearing. Those who truly accept God’s message are progressively transformed by the inworking of the Holy Spirit until they fully reflect the spiritual image of their Savior. So it is written: “We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 3:18.

These prepared people submit to complete sanctification so that their “whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thessalonians 5:23. Robed in Christ’s righteousness, they “are without fault before the throne of God.” Revelation 14:5. This full transformation into the spiritual image of Christ is the essential preparation for having their bodies fashioned like unto Christ’s glorious body at His coming. See Philippians 3:21. Each candidate will be an outstanding demonstration of what the saving grace of God can accomplish in sinful humanity and will unmask Satan’s lie that God is unjust in expecting obedience to His law.

This making ready of such a people is inseparably connected with the hour of Christ's second advent. "Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. *When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.*"—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 69. Emphasis supplied.

Notice that the perfect reproduction of the character of Christ in those who are called out by His final gospel message will mark the time for the Lord to appear and gather them unto Himself.

So it is that the prepared way and the prepared people are God's two appointed features for the finishing of the work of His gospel and for ushering in the second advent of His Son. As the clock strikes twelve when the two hands come into alignment at the top of the dial, even so when the prepared way and the prepared people come into God's appointed alignment, Jesus will return to consummate the plan of salvation.

When the Son of God appeared as the Messiah at His first advent, a prepared way and a prepared people formed a part of God's predetermined plan. Before John the Baptist was born, the angel of the Lord declared that John would be the divinely appointed forerunner of the Messiah. "He [John] shall go before him [the Lord] in the spirit and power of Elias [Elijah] . . . to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Luke 1:13–17. After John was born, Zacharias, his father, by the Spirit foretold the career of John in these words: "Thou, child, shall be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways." Luke 1:76.

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Seven hundred years before John was born, God had foretold that John would be called to prepare the way for the Messiah, and to make ready a people to receive Him. So it is written in Isaiah 40:3, “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” This prophecy was fulfilled in the mission of John the Baptist. See Matthew 3:1–3; John 1:19–23.

In John’s preaching, the time, the man, and the message combined and synchronized for the salvation of every soul that would believe and obey. The vast majority of the Jewish people, however, did not heed this call to repentance. Hence they were not prepared to accept Christ. So the result was, “He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” John 1:11. But God had a remnant who truly accepted His message, and they were ready to receive the Lord Jesus. See John 1:35–40.

When John’s preparatory message sent conviction to a remnant who were prepared to receive Jesus as the Messiah, the hands of God’s clock reached the zenith. Christ left the carpenter shop at Nazareth. He gave up His private life. He stepped out from the quiet hills of Nazareth and made His way to the Jordan to be baptized by John the Baptist. There He was anointed for His mission by the Holy Spirit, and a voice from heaven proclaimed, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Matthew 3:13–17. Then John presented Jesus to the assembled multitude as the promised Redeemer and Messiah. “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” John 1:29.

Then Jesus went forth “preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.” Mark 1:14, 15.

Jesus made a dramatic appearance in the synagogue in His hometown in Nazareth. The scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to Him. He turned to what we call Isaiah 61:1, 2, a prophecy of what the Messiah would preach and do when He appeared among men. He read, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.” Luke 4:18. Then He said, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.” Verse 21.

Jesus read the precise prediction of the mission of the Messiah. He was there at the right time with the right message, doing the right work, as God had ordained. This was sufficient evidence for the people to accept Him as the promised Messiah. Unfortunately, only a very few did.

It is established that at our Lord’s first advent, when the prepared way and a prepared people came into alignment, the Messiah appeared and began His mission. So it will be at His second advent.