

**Week 48,  
Living In The Silent Years  
Various Scripture**

**Key Verse:** “Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 1:13, NASB

**Introduction**

Since we understand that we have much in common with the people who lived during these 400 years of silence—this intertestamental period—what should we learn from them? How can we make sure we do not find ourselves so far removed from God that we don’t even recognize Him when He returns?

It seems that a good place to start is to consider the challenges that faced them, and consequently also face us. There were many, but a few stand out as major and facing them will be nearly impossible if we are not prepared. They encountered, and we either are now or will encounter:

- Unmet expectations
- Waiting for the Lord
- Persecution for our faith
- Time to worship God
- Need to be ready for the Lord’s return

**Day 1, Unmet Expectations**

1. Ever heard the phrase, “Don’t get your hopes up”? Why would someone say that to us?

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The people alive at the end of the 400 years of silence were waiting for the Messiah, but they were expecting a king so nearly all of them missed Him. Jesus did not meet their expectations so, in spite of all the miracles and fulfilled Scripture, they did not believe in Him. Just like them, when our expectations are not met, we can be easily disappointed, discouraged and deceived.

2. God’s people become discouraged when we believe things about God that aren’t really true. What are some misconceptions about God that cause new believers to become discouraged?

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3. Knowing what Jesus said about His relationship with us, life on earth until He returns, and the events that will take place between now and then will help protect us from unmet expectations. Two key truths we should keep in mind about God are Isaiah 55:8 and Hebrews 13:20-21. What are these truths?

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4. How can these truths correct the misconceptions discussed earlier.

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5. As followers of Jesus Christ, what can we do to have accurate expectations of Him?

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The books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are called the Gospels because they focus on the ministry of Jesus while He walked this earth. Studying His life and His relationships with His followers and His Father will help us know Him and His expectations of His followers.

**Prayer focus:** Ask God to show you a misconception you have about Him and His Son. Find a verse that speaks the truth to the lie you have believed (feel free to ask a friend for help). Commit to memorize that Scripture.

**Day 2, Waiting for the Lord**

Waiting! Most of us aren't very good at waiting for anything or anyone. In the Silent Years, the people waited 400 years for the next prophetic word and for the Messiah. Since the birth, ministry, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have been waiting nearly 2,000 years for His return. In addition, we have difficulties in our lives and the lives of those we love that we are waiting for God to act or we're waiting for His instructions. God is Sovereign and He will act in His time—the right time. In the meantime, God has given us some priceless instructions about waiting.

Scripture	What do we do?	What does God do?
Psalm 27:14		
Psalm 33:18-22		

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Psalm 37:7-9		
Psalm 37:34		
Psalm 40:1		
Psalm 119:114		
Psalm 147:11		
Proverbs 20:22		
Isaiah 40:31		
Lamentations 3:25-26		
Micah 7:7		

6. Think of a situation you are waiting for God to work out in your life, what will you do to apply these verses to that circumstance?

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**Prayer:** The chart above can be used as your prayer guide. Ask God to increase your faith in Him to do the things you are supposed to do while you wait; praise Him for doing the things He will do when you wait for Him.

**Day 3, Persecution for Our Faith**

Will Christians really have to endure persecution? Yes! Scripture tells us that Jesus’ followers will be persecuted for their faith. Jesus said, “If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you” (John 15:19).

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7. Read Matthew 13:3-9 and 18-23. Who is the one that did not endure through persecution?

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8. It seems that person had some unmet expectations. Read 2 Timothy 3:12-16. Based on these verses, what should we expect about persecution?

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9. Since persecution is sure to come, we should probably take steps to prepare for it. Re-read 2 Timothy 3:14-16. What are some practical steps we can take to prepare for persecution?

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10. Read Luke 6:46-49. What do these verses tell you about the house that stood?

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11. What do the verses say is the reason the house fell?

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12. Hearers AND doers of the Word are the survivors of persecution. Read Ephesians 4:25-32 and Colossians 3:1-3 and 12-17. What are Christians supposed to be doing?

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13. Read Romans 8:35-39. What do these verses say about persecution of believers?

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It would be nice if we could end this day’s study with a verse that tells us persecution will be easy if we do a certain thing or that there’s a way to avoid it altogether, but Scripture does not tell us that. Scripture does tell us that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ and that if we will be hearers and doers of the Word, we will be able to endure our persecution. We know that Jesus said, “I am with you always even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). Perhaps there is some relief to remember who is really being persecuted when we are being persecuted for Christ.

14. Read Acts 8:1-3 and Acts 9:1-6. What is Saul doing?

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15. Who confronts Saul about the persecution?

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16. Who does Jesus say Saul is persecuting?

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If you read the rest of that chapter, you will discover that Saul became a follower of Jesus Christ; if you continue reading in the New Testament, you will discover that Saul’s name was changed to Paul, he was used to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles (that’s us), and he is the author of much of the New Testament.

17. Paul suffered much persecution for serving Christ. What was his conclusion about suffering for Jesus (See Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 4:17)?

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18. James 1:2-4 tells us the result of our various trials. What can we look forward to after we endure various trials of our faith in Jesus Christ?

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19. Read Matthew 5:10-11 and 44. What does Jesus say about persecution endured for Him?

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**Prayer focus:** Hopefully we have learned today that we prepare for persecution by being hearers and doers of the Word. Ask God what He wants you to start doing (or stop doing) that will better prepare you for whatever comes your way. In Matthew 5:44, Jesus tells us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. Today would be a good day to start praying for your enemies every time they come to your mind.

**Day 4, Time to Worship God**

As doers of the Word, we are to spend time worshipping God. This includes worshipping Him daily throughout the week (see 1 Chronicles 23:30) and gathering with other believers to worship together as a member of the body of Christ (see Hebrews 10:25). It takes time to build relationships and as followers of Jesus Christ we are to have a close relationship with Him. Think about it, don't you enjoy spending time with those you truly love?

20. Based on your own experience and last week's study, what are some of the benefits of spending time alone with God?

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21. Based on your own experience, what are some of the benefits of spending time worshipping God in church with other believers?

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There are a few important things we should know about ourselves and the church:

- We, the followers of Jesus Christ, are the church – “So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another” (Romans 12:5).
- Every member of the church has a place of service – “He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love” (Ephesians 4:11-16).

22. Read Ephesians 5:25-27. What did Jesus do for the church, and why?

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23. The book of Revelation reveals to us important events that will happen between the time of its writing and the beginning of eternity; it also tells us the outcome of those events. Who are the intended recipients of its message? See Revelation 1:11.

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The letters to the churches in Revelation 2-3 give us important information about Jesus, some things that please Him in the church, some things that displease Him in the church, and rewards for doing God’s will in the church. Let’s hear what Jesus has to say to His church.

Read Revelation	How does Jesus describe	What pleases Jesus?	What displeases Jesus?	What is the reward for
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	Himself?			faithful obedience?
2:1-7				
2:8-11				
2:12-17				
2:18-29				
3:1-6				
3:7-13				
3:14-22				

24. What speaks to you the loudest from the information in the chart above?

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25. What will you do in response to what you have learned?

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**Prayer focus:** Use the chart to praise Jesus for His revealed attributes, confess any contribution you have made to the things that displease Him, thank Him for the eternal rewards of faithful obedience to Him.

“Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a **new** song, *And* His praise in the congregation of the godly ones” (Psalm 149:1).

**Day 5, Be Ready for the Lord’s Return**

We do not know when Jesus will return for us, but we know He will. What a day that will be when we hear Him say, “Well done.” In order to hear those words from Him, we need to be living our lives to please Him. But, what does He want? Do we know how to please Him? We learned some of that when we looked at the things that please and displease Jesus about His church. Since we are Christians, His child, there are a few more Scriptures we may want to consider since we carry His name.

26. What new commandment did Jesus give in John 13:34-35?

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27. What did Jesus tell His followers to be doing until His return? See Matthew 28:18-20.

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28. Read 1 Peter 1:13-16. What are Jesus’ followers supposed to be and what are some things we should do in our growth toward holiness?

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29. Why should we be faithful to Christ and what should be our feelings toward Him? See 1 Peter 1:3-9.

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**Prayer focus:** Thank God for sending His Son to die in your place that you might have salvation. Commit to learn more about Him by being in His Word daily.

**Psalm 37:23-24** “The LORD directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives. Though they stumble, they will never fall, for the LORD holds them by the hand.”