

A Little While...

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Introduction

As punishment upon wayward Israel during the reign of wicked King Ahab, the sky was shut up for three years and six months (1 Kings 17:1-9; Luke 4:24-26).

1 Kings 17:1-9 ... 1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word." 2 The word of the Lord came to him, saying, 3 "Go away from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 4 "It shall be that you will drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there." 5 So he went and did according to the word of the Lord, for he went and lived by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 6 The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he would drink from the brook. 7 It happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land. 8 Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 9 "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and stay there; behold, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you." (NASB95)

Luke 4:24-26 ... 24 And He said, "Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his hometown. 25 "But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land; 26 and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. (NASB95)

After the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel, the Lord God once again sent rain upon the earth (1 Kings 18:1-2, 36-46; James 5:16-18).

1 Kings 18:1-2 ... 1 Now it happened after many days that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, "Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the face of the earth." 2 So Elijah went to show himself to Ahab. Now the famine was severe in Samaria. (NASB95)

1 Kings 18:36-46 ... 36 At the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today let it be known that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant and I have done all these things at Your word. 37 "Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that You, O Lord, are God, and that You have turned their heart back again." 38 Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. 39 When all the people saw it, they

*fell on their faces; and they said, “The Lord, He is God; the Lord, He is God.” 40 Then Elijah said to them, “Seize the prophets of Baal; do not let one of them escape.” So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there. 41 Now Elijah said to Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of the roar of a heavy shower.” 42 So Ahab went up to eat and drink. But Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he crouched down on the earth and put his face between his knees. 43 He said to his servant, “Go up now, look toward the sea.” So he went up and looked and said, “There is nothing.” And he said, “Go back” seven times. 44 It came about at the seventh time, that he said, “Behold, a cloud as small as a man’s hand is coming up from the sea.” And he said, “Go up, say to Ahab, ‘Prepare your chariot and go down, so that the heavy shower does not stop you.’” 45 **In a little while the sky grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy shower.** And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. 46 Then the hand of the Lord was on Elijah, and he girded up his loins and outran Ahab to Jezreel. (NASB95)*

James 5:16-18 ... 16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. 18 Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit. (NASB95)

After Elijah prayed, a cloud as small as a man’s hand could be seen coming up from the sea. In a little while the sky grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy shower. Let us examine the Biblical occurrences of the phrase “in a little while.” It is descriptive of the things of men and also of the things of God.

Describes the Things of Man

The Brevity of Life

The expression “a little while...” is descriptive of the brevity of life (James 4:13-17; cf. Job 24:22-24; Rev. 17:8-10).

*James 4:13-17 ... 13 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.” 14 **Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.** 15 Instead, you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.” 16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. 17 Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin. (NASB95)*

*Job 24:22-24 ... 22 “But He drags off **the valiant** by His power; He rises, but no one has assurance of life. 23 “He provides them with security, and they are supported; And His eyes are on their ways. 24 “They **are exalted a little while, then they are gone**; Moreover,*

they are brought low and like everything gathered up; Even like the heads of grain they are cut off. (NASB95)

Revelation 17:8-10 ... 8 "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come. 9 "Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, 10 and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain **a little while**. (NASB95)

The Trials of Life

The expression "a little while..." is descriptive of the trials of life (Mark 14:66-72; Luke 4:13; 1 Pet. 1:3-9; 5:6-11).

Mark 14:66-72 ... 66 As Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came, 67 and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Nazarene." 68 But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are talking about." And he went out onto the porch. 69 The servant-girl saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, "This is one of them!" 70 But again he denied it. **And after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too."** 71 But he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this man you are talking about!" 72 Immediately a rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him, "Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And he began to weep. (NASB95)

Luke 4:13 ... 13 When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time. (NASB95)

1 Peter 1:3-9 ... 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 **In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,** 7 so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls. (NASB95)

1 Peter 5:6-11 ... 6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. 8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing

that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. 10 After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. 11 To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen. (NASB95)

The Labors of Life

The expression “a little while...” is descriptive of the labors of life (Ruth 2:1-7; Prov. 6:6-11; Rev. 6:9-11; 14:13).

Ruth 2:1-7 ... 1 Now Naomi had a kinsman of her husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. 2 And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, “Please let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after one in whose sight I may find favor.” And she said to her, “Go, my daughter.” 3 So she departed and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers; and she happened to come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech. 4 Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem and said to the reapers, “May the Lord be with you.” And they said to him, “May the Lord bless you.” 5 Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, “Whose young woman is this?” 6 The servant in charge of the reapers replied, “She is the young Moabite woman who returned with Naomi from the land of Moab. 7 “And she said, ‘Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.’ Thus she came and has remained from the morning until now; she has been sitting in the house for a little while.” (NASB95)

Proverbs 6:6-11 ... 6 Go to the ant, O sluggard, Observe her ways and be wise, 7 Which, having no chief, Officer or ruler, 8 Prepares her food in the summer And gathers her provision in the harvest. 9 How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? 10 “A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest”— 11 Your poverty will come in like a vagabond And your need like an armed man. (NASB95)

Revelation 6:9-11 ... 9 When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; 10 and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” 11 And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also. (NASB95)

Revelation 14:13 ... 13 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, “Write, ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!’ ” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.” (NASB95)

Describes the Things of God

The Promises of God

The expression “a little while...” is descriptive of the promises of God (Isa. 29:17-24; Ezek. 11:14-21; Hag. 2:1-9).

Isaiah 29:17-24 ... 17 Is it not yet just a little while Before Lebanon will be turned into a fertile field, And the fertile field will be considered as a forest? 18 On that day the deaf will hear words of a book, And out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see. 19 The afflicted also will increase their gladness in the Lord, And the needy of mankind will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. 20 For the ruthless will come to an end and the scorner will be finished, Indeed all who are intent on doing evil will be cut off; 21 Who cause a person to be indicted by a word, And ensnare him who adjudicates at the gate, And defraud the one in the right with meaningless arguments. 22 Therefore thus says the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob: “Jacob shall not now be ashamed, nor shall his face now turn pale; 23 But when he sees his children, the work of My hands, in his midst, They will sanctify My name; Indeed, they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob And will stand in awe of the God of Israel. 24 “Those who err in mind will know the truth, And those who criticize will accept instruction. (NASB95)

Ezekiel 11:14-21 ... 14 Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 15 “Son of man, your brothers, your relatives, your fellow exiles and the whole house of Israel, all of them, are those to whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, ‘Go far from the Lord; this land has been given us as a possession.’ 16 “Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “Though I had removed them far away among the nations and though I had scattered them among the countries, yet I was a sanctuary for them a little while in the countries where they had gone.” ’ 17 “Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries among which you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.” ’ 18 “When they come there, they will remove all its detestable things and all its abominations from it. 19 “And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, 20 that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God. 21 “But as for those whose hearts go after their detestable things and abominations, I will bring their conduct down on their heads,” declares the Lord God. (NASB95)

Haggai 2:1-9 ... 1 On the twenty-first of the seventh month, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet saying, 2 “Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people saying, 3 ‘Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? Does it not seem to you like nothing in comparison? 4 ‘But now take courage, Zerubbabel,’ declares the Lord, ‘take courage also, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and all you people of the land take courage,’ declares the Lord, ‘and work; for I am with you,’ declares the Lord of hosts. 5 ‘As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst; do not

fear!’ 6 “For thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘Once more in **a little while**, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. 7 ‘I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the Lord of hosts. 8 ‘The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine,’ declares the Lord of hosts. 9 ‘The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘and in this place I will give peace,’ declares the Lord of hosts.” (NASB95)

The Punishments of God

The expression “a little while...” is descriptive of the punishments of God (Psa. 37:7-11; Jer. 51:33-40; Hos. 1:2-5).

*Psalm 37:7-11 ... 7 Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. 8 Cease from anger and forsake wrath; Do not fret; it leads only to evildoing. 9 For evildoers will be cut off, But those who wait for the Lord, they will inherit the land. 10 **Yet a little while** and the wicked man will be no more; And you will look carefully for his place and he will not be there. 11 But the humble will inherit the land And will delight themselves in abundant prosperity. (NASB95)*

*Jeremiah 51:33-40 ... 33 For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor At the time it is stamped firm; **Yet in a little while** the time of harvest will come for her.” 34 “Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has devoured me and crushed me, He has set me down like an empty vessel; He has swallowed me like a monster, He has filled his stomach with my delicacies; He has washed me away. 35 “May the violence done to me and to my flesh be upon Babylon,” The inhabitant of Zion will say; And, “May my blood be upon the inhabitants of Chaldea,” Jerusalem will say. 36 Therefore thus says the Lord, “Behold, I am going to plead your case And exact full vengeance for you; And I will dry up her sea And make her fountain dry. 37 “Babylon will become a heap of ruins, a haunt of jackals, An object of horror and hissing, without inhabitants. 38 “They will roar together like young lions, They will growl like lions’ cubs. 39 “When they become heated up, I will serve them their banquet And make them drunk, that they may become jubilant And may sleep a perpetual sleep And not wake up,” declares the Lord. 40 “I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, Like rams together with male goats. (NASB95)*

*Hosea 1:2-5 ... 2 When the Lord first spoke through Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, “Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry; for the land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking the Lord.” 3 So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. 4 **And the Lord said to him, “Name him Jezreel; for yet a little while**, and I will punish the house of Jehu for the bloodshed of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. 5 “On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.” (NASB95)*

The Provisions of God

The expression “a little while...” is descriptive of the provisions of God (John 7:32-36; 12:32-36; 13:31-33; 14:16-21; 16:16-22).

John 7:32-36 ... 32 The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him. 33 Therefore Jesus said, “For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me. 34 “You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come.” 35 The Jews then said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He? 36 “What is this statement that He said, ‘You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come?’” (NASB95)

John 12:32-36 ... 32 “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.” 33 But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die. 34 The crowd then answered Him, “We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this Son of Man?” 35 So Jesus said to them, “For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. 36 “While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light.” These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them. (NASB95)

John 13:31-33 ... 31 Therefore when he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; 32 if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately. 33 “Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’” (NASB95)

John 14:16-21 ... 16 “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. 18 “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 “After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also. 20 “In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. 21 “He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.” (NASB95)

John 16:16-22 ... 16 “A little while, and you will no longer see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me.” 17 Some of His disciples then said to one another, “What is this thing He is telling us, ‘A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me’; and, ‘because I go to the Father?’” 18 So they were saying, “What is this that He says, ‘A little while’? We do not know what He is talking about.” 19 Jesus knew that they wished to question Him, and He said to them, “Are you deliberating together about this, that I said, ‘A little while, and you will not see Me, and

again **a little while**, and you will see Me'? 20 "Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy. 21 "Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world. 22 "Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you. (NASB95)

Conclusion

Have you taken advantage of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus (Heb. 2:5-9)?

Hebrews 2:5-9 ... 5 For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking. 6 But one has testified somewhere, saying, "What is man, that You remember him? Or the son of man, that You are concerned about him? 7 "You have made him for **a little while** lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And have appointed him over the works of Your hands; 8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him. 9 But we do see Him who was made for **a little while** lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. (NASB95)

Are you a member of the church/kingdom of Christ (Heb. 12:22-29)?

Hebrews 12:22-29 ... 22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel. 25 See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven. 26 And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven." 27 This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; 29 for our God is a consuming fire. (NASB95)