

“If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?”
-- Psalms 11:3.

The Beginning of the Great Tribulation

2011 has begun with a convulsive spasm of world trouble and torment. Riots, revolution, earthquakes, tsunamis, drought, flooding, wild fires, food shortages, radiation leaks, nuclear meltdown, civil war – the nations are raging. Where are we in Bible prophecy, now?

William F. Dankenbring.

Mark these words spoken on by NBC’s Lawrence O’Donnell last week on his program.

“The book of Revelation is a *work of fiction* describing how a truly vicious God would bring about the end of the world. No half smart religious person actually believes the book of Revelation. They are certain that their God would never turn into a malicious coercer and mass murderer beyond Hitler’s wildest dreams.”

Lawrence O’Donnell does not know God. He does not know the meaning of judgment, nor does he understand that God is a real being who is far greater than the human being can comprehend and understand. Lawrence O’Donnell is going to find out in the next few years that the book of Revelation is right on and that it is the revelation of a holy God who is angry with the wickedness and cruelty of this world.

It is not God who is cruel and vicious, but the rulers of this world who are vicious and cruel. God is a God of love and compassion, but He is a God of judgment and wrath against those who love themselves and *refuse* to love their neighbor and keep God’s holy commandments as He commands.

God reveals Himself in the pages of His scriptures (Bible--Torah). In Revelation, He reveals what this world is coming to in this final generation, *because of the wickedness of man*, not because He is vicious or a torturer. Man does these things to himself.

World Troubles Escalating

How close are we to the end? Have we really entered the first stages of the final stages of the end and the time of Jacob’s Trouble? Have world troubles begun to increase exponentially this year?

It seems to me, brethren this year of 2011 has become a year of significant changes in the world for the worst. The world is becoming fragmented, divided and increasing unstable—warlike. Plagues are beginning to descend upon the world greater than ever. We look at the time table of the Bible and there are so many ways that we can look at the final days.

Let's take a brief look at the latest "news."

On the financial front, "Over 40 million Americans are currently on food stamps. That's over 10% of the population that ostensibly already can't afford to feed themselves. What happens if food outlets stop accepting food stamps? I don't think many people expect the dollar to lose its reserve status anytime soon, but we are really just one minor civil war, disaster or unpredictable chain of events away from seeing the dollar dethroned. It is time for us to prepare for hard times coming and get out of debt."

In the Middle East, Israel's Defense Minister Ehud Barak addressing a convention organized by friends of Israel Defense Forces in New York, said that 2011 has proven fateful for Israel, as it faces "on the one hand an 'historic earthquake' in the Middle East, on the other hand a diplomatic 'tsunami' that is rising against Israel."

He declared, "It will culminate in September this year with the intended recognition of a Palestinian state along the '67 lines followed by a wide effort aimed at de-legitimization of Israel." Referring to the threats he considers Israel to be facing, Barak cited " Hamas in Gaza, the Hezbollah in Lebanon," adding that, "in the background, Iran still presents a major threat to world order." "Israel is clearly an island of stability", Barak added. "An outpost of the free world values in a tough neighborhood where there is no mercy for the weak, no second opportunity for those who cannot defend themselves. Thus we must remain strong."

Notice he is pointing to September 2011, a little over six months from now.

Obama's Gay Agenda

The U.S. is demanding gay rights at the U.N. body. The Obama administration will introduce its first statement calling for the United Nations' top human rights body to combat discrimination against gays and lesbians around the world, completing a U.S. reversal from years of ambiguity on the subject during President George W. Bush's administration. The U. S. declaration will be made Tuesday at the Geneva-based Human Rights Council and has the support of more than 80 countries. Although it is not in the form of a binding resolution, the American push for U.N. action has helped win over a handful of new countries to the cause. A resolution could be brought to a vote later this year.

Why is Obama pushing this? His history includes a documented account of bisexual conduct. Teachers will lose their jobs if they do not teach the new endorsement of social

interaction and alternate forms (lifestyles—gay and lesbian) of sex education laws and guidelines in grade school classrooms. When I saw this documentary video it made me nauseous.

The Japanese Horror

The earthquake that struck Japan On March 11 quake causing a horrendous tsunami let over 27,000 dead and missing. The magnitude 9.0 temblor on Japan's northeastern coast was the country's worst disaster since World War II. Just in Miyagi prefecture some 15,000 people lost their lives. Some 360,000 people have been evacuated from their homes and most of them are being housed in 2,200 temporary shelters, some of which do not have electricity or basic food items. Among those people in shelters are 200,000 who were evacuated from within several miles of the Fukushima nuclear plant, where technicians and soldiers are working day and night to reduce the temperature of the reactor cores to prevent a massive leak of radioactive particles.

More than 600 aftershocks have shaken Japan after the original quake without serious damage so far, but add to the nervousness felt by the people in the region. Estimated damages are over \$325 billion dollars, in this leading cosmopolitan, industrial nation in the world whose economy is teetering on the ropes after this disaster. This is the most costly disaster in financial terms in human history.

Says the *Wall Street Journal*, 3/16/11), "By day 5 of the earthquake/tsunami/meltdown disaster, significant parts of Japan are experiencing shortages of food, fuel and water. This is not Chile, China or even Haiti. We're talking about one of the world's most advanced economies with arguably the best distribution networks in existence. Japan also exhibits among the most law-abiding and orderly cultures in the world. This disaster underscores the dire circumstances every Westerner could find themselves in with even a minor sustained disruption of food, gas or water supply. Simply put, almost no one living in the United States or Europe is at all prepared for more than a few days of slowed or halted supply of staples. That's the nature of the modern consumer based distribution system we have in place."

Why Did It Happen?

The Word of God says, "The curse causeless shall not come" (Proverbs 26:2). There is a cause for every effect. The prophet Amos wrote, "If a trumpet is blown in a city, will not the people be afraid? *If there is calamity in a city, will not the LORD have done it?*" (Amos 3:6).

Why would God punish Japan with such a devastating earthquake and tsunami, and destruction of its nuclear plants? The world says it its heart it was mere "time and chance" – bad luck, poor "karma," or any number of excuses. But to acknowledge the Hand of God? Never!

A new survey conducted on the heels of Japan's devastating earthquake and tsunami finds that few Americans think natural disasters are signs from God and that even fewer believe God punishes nations for the sins of its citizens, as some suggested after the Japanese disaster.

At the same time, most Americans believe God is responsible for everything that happens in the world, according to the survey, which was released Thursday. The survey was conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute in partnership with the Religion News Service.

Fewer than 4 in 10 Americans (38%) believe that earthquakes, floods and other natural disasters are a sign from God, while roughly 3 in 10 believe that God sometimes punishes nations for the sins of some citizens, according to the survey.

Shortly after the Japanese quake and tsunami, the governor of Tokyo said publicly that the disaster was divine punishment for Japanese egoism, though he apologized for the remarks a day later.

Is Calamity the Hand of God?

The world as a whole has forgotten God. The Japanese have never turned from their idolatry and embraced the God of the Bible. All nations today are deceived and following the wrong path (Rev.12:9). So why would God punish Japan at this time? What is the purpose of this Divine “spanking”? Of course, it does get their attention.

Consider the following: On March 11, 2010, one year to the day before the earthquake, the government of Japan declared: “The Government of Japan deplores the decisions of the Government of Israel to give permission for the construction of 1,600 housing units in East Jerusalem in addition to 112 units in West Bank just after the Israeli and Palestinian leadership’s acceptance of the start of indirect talks. The Government of Japan does not recognize any act that prejudices the final status of Jerusalem and the territories in the pre-1967 borders. Japan demands that the plans should not be implemented.”

On March 1 of this year the Palestinian National Authority announced that it had signed an agreement with Japan to provide \$32.5 million for a project of treating waste water in the Palestinian-occupied town of Jericho. It was reported as one of the biggest projects aided by Japan in the Palestinian territories to supply industrial areas with water. The PLA noted in the announcement that since 1993, Japan had given the PLA more than a billion dollars, including \$40 million in developing the Jordan Valley area in the West Bank. The PLA said that the agreement is “vital, strategic and important to help the PLA finalize building the institutions of the future Palestinian state.”

Japan is firmly committed to support the establishment of a viable Palestinian state, and believes that for achieving such goal, a solid basis of sustainable Palestinian economy is indispensable. Japan will support this project of as part of the PLA Government Program “Homestretch to Freedom”, through continuously working together with the Palestinians as well as with the other partners of Israel and Jordan, in order to start its operation by the end of 2012.

It should be obvious. Japan as set itself to help build a Palestinian state on the West Bank, on land belonging to the people of Israel since time immemorial – the land given to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This is the ancient land of Judea and Samaria. Yet Japan is critical and demanding Israel to stop building housing units for its own citizens. On January 11 this year, Japan’s Foreign Ministry said it “condemns the demolishing of a part of the Shepherd’s Hotel in East Jerusalem with a view to constructing new housing units for Jewish people.” So Japan has insinuated itself into the strife between Israel and the Palestinians, and opted to side with the Palestinians, like most of the world’s nations.

A month later on February 10, Japan's Foreign Ministry said Israel's plan to build housing units for "Jewish people in Sheih Jarrah of East Jerusalem" is against efforts of the international community to resume peace negotiations. A month later, Japan was struck by a historic 9.0 catastrophic earthquake and tsunami, with waters rolling miles inland, sometimes 40-70 feet high, creating a "war-zone" of destruction and debris.

God's eternal promise to Abraham was: "I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make our name great; and you shall be a blessing. *I will bless those who bless you, and I will CURSE him who curses you;* and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen.12:1-3).

Does God mean what He says? Are his promises sure? God says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts nor are My ways your ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:7-9). The lesson which should be learned from the recent devastation in Japan is that God will not be mocked; there is retribution for sin; there is a penalty for "cursing" the people and nation which God has established; there are dire consequences for condemning Israel!

Most people do not believe that natural disasters are tied in with divine judgments. When the United States forced Israel to give up the Gaza strip and forced the evacuation of Israelis, by the thousands from Gush Emunim, God struck New Orleans and the Southern shores of the Gulf states with hurricane Katrina, displacing hundreds of thousands, causing massive damage to New Orleans and other coastal communities, which has never been rectified or rebuilt.

The Word of God thunders, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Gal.6:7). God declares, "They sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind" (Hosea 8:7).

Threats to the United States

The United States and western world are also headed into a period of divine judgment and calamity.

There are 15 indications that bad times are about to hit the U.S. economy. There are all kinds of indications that big trouble is ahead for the U.S. economy. So far financial markets are weathering all of the chaos around the world fairly well, but just as there were huge flashing warning signs before the 2008 financial crisis there are also huge flashing warning signs now.

The price of oil is soaring, the U.S. housing market is experiencing huge problems. The cost of living in America recently hit a new record high and each week the globe seems to become even more unstable. The truth is that the financial system was never "fixed" after the crash of 2008. If anything, it is more vulnerable today than it was back then. Even as you read this, major imbalances are building up in the global financial system, and at some point a "tipping point" will be reached.

Study the following "15 tipping points" which point to a meltdown in the U.S. economy such as we have never experienced in over 200 years as a nation!

The Tipping Points

1. The price of gasoline is about to cross the psychologically important \$4 a gallon threshold in some areas of the U.S.
2. The price of oil moved up close to the \$105 mark by the end of the day today meaning more gasoline increases for American consumers.
3. In February, food prices in the U.S. rose at the fastest rate in 36 years.
4. According to the U.S. Labor Department, the cost of living in the U.S. hit a brand new all-time record high in the month of February.
5. According to the National Association of Realtors, sales of previously existing homes in the U.S. dropped a stunning 9 percent in February, the lowest it has been in 9 years.
6. The U.S. is already in the midst of a real estate crash that never seems to end and likely to drop another 20 % according to housing analyst Gary Shilling.
7. According to the Mortgage Bankers Association, at least 8 million Americans are at least one month behind on their mortgage payments at this point.
8. The U.S. Census Bureau affirms the number of new building permits declined 20.5 percent in February on a year over year basis—usually an indication that a recession is coming (John Carney CNBC—all 9 recessions since 1959 have seen a year over year decline in building permits).
9. 31% of homeowners that responded to a recent Rasmussen Reports survey indicated that they are “underwater” on their mortgages (owe more money than their house is presently worth).
10. Millions of American families are drowning in debt and debt collectors are becoming increasingly aggressive.
11. America is still going to see a wave of municipal bond defaults worth hundreds of billions of dollars warns Meredith Whitney even though it may take longer than originally projected.
12. The war in Libya is putting upward pressure on the price of oil, it is yet another drain on U.S. government finances, and it is raising tensions across the globe. Vladimir Putin has called the NATO operation in Libya a “crusade” and China is calling for an immediate cease fire. Financial markets do not like instability of this nature.
13. The rest of the Middle East is melting down as well. Forty Yemen demonstrators have been killed and the president of that county has declared a state of emergency. Egyptian government buildings are being set on fire. Ivory Coast is in the midst of a full blown revolution, and there are ongoing protests in about a dozen other nations across North Africa and the Middle East. This is really bad for global economic stability.
14. The damage from the tsunami in Japan continues to affect more American workers. GM has just announced that they are going to temporarily lay off workers at a Buffalo engine plant due to a shortage of parts from Japan. When supply chains are going to get fully

back to normal is anyone's guess. GM has also temporarily shut down a facility in Shreveport, Louisiana due to supply problems.

15. There continue to be indications that the amount of radiation being released by the damage Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plants is much higher than we have been led to believe. "Radiation exceeding 400 times the normal level was detected in soil about 40 kilometers from the troubled Fukusima Daiichi nuclear power plant.", says Japan's science ministry. This is something that should be taken very seriously.

All these signs are pointing to a very nervous, calamitous year ahead in 2011. But can we know for sure?

The apostle Peter tells us, "And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place. . . . Knowing this first, hat no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet.1:19-21).

Israel – 1947-48

One of the key marks to understand Bible prophecy and its final fulfillment is the establishment of the state of Israel in the Middle East in 1948. Israel became a nation on May 14, 1948 after not being a nation since the Roman Empire when they were sent into captivity (the diaspora) for almost 2000 years.

The Bible says that in the last days Judah would once again inhabit the coastlands of Judah in the Middle East. That is where Israel is reestablished today. Therefore 1948 is a very significant year in terms of the "end times". Jesus Christ said in the Mt. Olivet prophecy found in Matthew 24 that *this generation* would not pass before the Son of man returns. A generation in the Bible can either be forty years or 70 years. In Psalm 90 it speaks of the life of man being 70 years. If we count 70 years from 1948 we come to the year 2018. If we count from 1947, when the United Nations mandated the establishment of the state of Israel and divided up the Middle East, it brings us to the year 2017.

This is very interesting, because if we count 50 years (which is a Jubilee cycle of years) from 1917, when Britain captured the Holy Land and the Balfour Declaration permitted Jews to return to their ancient homeland, it brings us to 1967 which is the year of the Six-Day War when Israel conquered the surrounding Arab nations – Egypt, Syria, Jordan-- miraculously. Israel captured the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights of Syria, the West Bank of the Jordan River, eastern Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. That, you might say, would be first Jubilee period after 1917.

Going backward from the year 1967 a Jubilee period of 50 years, you come to the year 1917, the year General Allenby defeated the Turks and recaptured Jerusalem and basically

moved the Ottoman Empire out of Israel in World War I which saw the collapse of the Ottoman Empire of Turkey. Palestine became a British mandate.

So then we have a Jubilee cycle from 1917 to 1967, then another one 1967 to 2017. The question in my mind is, will Christ possibly return on a Jubilee cycle year 2017? I don't claim to know all the answers. I do think it is very possible that we have begun the final countdown to the coming of the Messiah.

This past January I entered my 70th year which is the equivalent of a generation, and maybe now I am on overtime. I just read today that the average life span of men in the U.S. today is 78 years. Well, some people live beyond 70 years.

“This Generation”

We are the generation living during the time of the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the establishment of Israel in 1947-48. This is the generation that Christ was speaking of in Mathew 24 that are written for us today. Messiah said, beginning in verse 32, “Now learn a parable of the fig tree;” The fig tree is a type of Israel. “When his branch is yet tender and puts forth leaves you know that summer is near: so likewise you, when you shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.”

This refers to the coming of Messiah. “Surely, *this generation* shall not pass, until *all these things be fulfilled*. This generation is the one that sees these things come to pass--Israel reestablished in the Middle East (fig tree). Counting a generation of 70 years from 1948 it brings us to 2018. If that is the case, and I believe it is, then where are we today?

Daniel's 70 “Shavuot”

In Daniel 9 we read about the 70 weeks (70 Shavot) prophecy. Verse 24 declares, “Seventy weeks are determined upon your people (Israel) and upon your holy city, to

- finish the transgression, and
- to make an end of sins, and
- to make reconciliation for iniquity, and
- to bring in everlasting righteousness, and
- seal up (conclude) the vision and prophecy, and
- to anoint the most Holy.”

The word for week is “shavua”, and the plural is Shavuot (weeks). Shavuot is also the name of the Feast of Pentecost (Shavuot—the Feast of Weeks). Shavuot is an annual holy day. If we take this prophecy in terms of 70 *festivals of shavuot* (70 weeks – annual days of Pentecost) determined for the people and the holy city (Jerusalem) to complete these six purposes listed (verse 24) to conclude the prophecy and bring in the kingdom of God, then what do we have?

We have 70 YEARS from the going forth of God's command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem – the 1947 UN mandate that established the state of Israel allowing Jews to return to the Middle East and begin to restore Jerusalem in 1948.

Verse 25 says, “know therefore and understand from the *going forth of the commandment* to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall *be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks (62 weeks)*; the street shall be built again and the wall, even in troublous times.” That is 62 weeks out of the 70 weeks (70 years). Counting 70 years from the year 1947 brings us to the year 2017. Counting 62 weeks (years) brings us to the year 2010 which is year that President Barack Obama began to turn away from the state of Israel to favor and bring in Muslims into the White House placing them in high positions of government security and threaten the state of Israel. He is compelling Israel toward acceptance of a treaty by September 2011 that carves a state out of Israel's borders for the terrorist ridden Palestinians which the U.N. will immediately acknowledge as a state. This Palestinian state will be recognized and very likely be admitted into the United Nations, perhaps by September 2011 – this very year!.

The final “week” (seven years) of Daniel's prophecy, seven Shavuot (7 years), would be 2011 to 2017. We read in Vverse 27 that the end-time world leader (the “beast” – the one known as the “Antichrist”) “shall confirm the covenant (treaty-agreement) with *many* (nations) for one week and in the midst of the week (3 ½ years) he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation (offerings) to cease, and on the wing of abominations (set up object that desecrates the temple) he shall make it (temple) desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolator (destroyer).”

In the book of Revelation this figure is called *Abaddon* in Hebrew and *Apollyon* in Greek. Both words mean “Destroyer.”

He will be a destroyer of nations. God's Word declares of him, “But it is in his heart to destroy, and cut off not a few nations” (Isa.10:7). The Amplified has this, “but it is in his mind to destroy and cut off many nations.” Moffatt puts it, “But other plans has he, and other aims! His thought is to exterminate the nations far and wide.”

‘The Destroyer’

This destroyer is also spoken of in Habakkuk 1. The prophet cries out to God of violence before him on the earth: those that raise up strife and contention. Wicked surrounds the righteous and twisted judgment continues. The law goes powerless and justice never goes forth.

God tells Habakkuk in chapter 1, verse 5, “Look among the heathen, and watch and wonder marvelously: for I will work a work in your days, which you will not believe, though it be told you. I am raising the Chaldeans [end-time “Babylon the Great,” the “New World Order”], a bitter and hasty nation which shall march through the breath of the land, possess the dwelling

places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful: their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves.”

God is talking about the end times and the New World Order, modern day Babylon that includes Europe and North America as the basis. They shall come all for violence and gather the captivity as the sand. They scoff at kings, scorn princes and deride every strong hold. In chapter 2 Habakkuk says he will stand his watch and see what God will say to him and what he will answer when He is reproved.

God tells Habakkuk to write the vision plainly, so that whoever reads it may RUN, for it is *yet for an appointed time* at the end. Wait for it, for it will surely come for it is true. This is something that we are to read, heed and take action that we may live through these intensified times.

A World Writhing in Torment

One of the signs Jesus Christ predicted that would foreshadow the Great Tribulation and set apart the days preceding His Coming, is increased earthquakes around the world. He declared of the days prior to His arrival, “And there will be famines, pestilences, and *earthquakes* in various places” (Matt.24:7). Luke 21:11 says “And there will be GREAT earthquakes in various places.”

Are earthquakes intensifying and increasing around the world? In the last 25 years, the number of world earthquakes has increased from 11,000 to 32,000 a year, almost a 300 percent increase (source: U.S. Geological Department website). In the past ten years alone earthquakes that register 5.0 have increased 36 percent, above 6.0 by 34 percent, and above 7.0 by 39 percent.

Yeshua declared, “All these are the beginning of sorrows” (Matt.24:8).

The Year 2011

The year 2011 began with a BANG – not a whimper. It charged out of the starting gates like a thoroughbred horse in the Kentucky Derby.

Already, after only three months this year, we have seen massive amounts of birds and fish dying round the world, violent revolution in the Middle East, civil war raging in Libya, and the threat of growing world instability around the globe. What is happening? Is this the fulfillment of the long awaited Biblical prophecies for the “end time” – the “crisis at the close” that the Moffatt translation calls it (Daniel 12:9).

What does Biblical prophecy say?

Jeremiah

The prophet Jeremiah tells us about this time which he calls “the time of Jacob’s Trouble.” We read, . “The days are coming, says the Lord that I will ring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it. I hear a voice of trembling and of fear, not of peace. *Why do I see men with paleness of face with his hands on his loins as though in travail like a woman in labor giving birth?* Alas! That day is great, so that *none is like it*: it is the **time of Jacob’s trouble**; but he shall be saved out of it” (Jer.30:3-4).

Daniel

The prophet Daniel also talks about this same time of Jacob’s Trouble, We read in verse 1 of chapter 12, “At that time shall Michael stand up the great prince which stands for the children of your people: and there shall be *a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time and at that time your people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.*”

Daniel is told by God to shut up the words, and seal the book **UNTIL** the TIME OF THE END. “Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased. Many shall be refined and turn to righteousness others shall continue to do wickedly (will not change-don’t get the point). But the wise shall understand.”

Who are the wise? The wise are those who fear God and keep his commandments; do not mock or doubt prophecy, or scoff at the word of God, but believe and follow Christ. Job declares, “Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom and to depart from evil, is understanding” (Job 28:2).

It is simple If we desire to escape the traumas and horror soon to engulf this planet, and to be protected through the harrowing days ahead, then we must turn to God; we must determine to obey all of God’s commandments. In principle, we are to obey any commandment that God gives.

In Matthew 4:4 Christ said, “it written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God”. Christ taught obedience to the Torah. He said in Matthew 5:17 “Think not that I am come to destroy the law [the Torah] or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.” He came not to nail the law to the cross, or do away with the law. He came to show us how beautiful the law is, and how to keep it in order to receive life. He came to **MAGNIFY** it and to make it honorable (Isa.42:21).

The Olivet Prophecy

Matthew 24:12 also speaks of the end of the age. Here, Christ, the Word, Yeshua the Messiah says to His disciples (and especially those of us living at the end of the age today), “Because sin (lawlessness) shall abound, the love of many shall wax (grow) cold.” He

continues, “But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

“When you therefore shall see the ABHOMINATION OF DESOLATION, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso reads this let him understand) those who are in Judea flee into the mountains.”

“Pray your flight be not in winter or on the Sabbath day. For then *shall be great tribulation*, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. *Except those days should be shortened*, there should be no flesh saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.”

These frightful days have begun. The plague has begun. The time of Great Tribulation has begun. The beginning of the Great Tribulation is here . . . *now*. The year 2011 began with a BANG – not a whimper! As the poet Yeats in “The Second Coming” wrote:

“Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.”

Luke’s Prophetic Warning

The gospel of Luke also talks about the end of the age. Speaking of these tremulous times of uproar and instability, Christ declared, “In your patience possess your souls.”

We must learn patience. I find that patience is one the hardest lessons for people to learn. They want things, and they want it NOW. Our society has gotten used to “instant” gratification – coffee, potatoes, puddings, microwaveable food, and automats to name a few items.

He continues, “When you see Jerusalem encompassed about by armies, you know the desolation is near.” Today, Israel is surrounded by Arab nations that hate the Jews and are united in desiring to wipe out the nation of Israel.

These are the beginning days of the Great Tribulation and the days of vengeance!

These are the days of Daniel’s 70th week in Daniel 9. The final seven years of this age appear to be upon us now. I know people say we can’t understand or know the time of Messiah’s return, but they don’t pay close attention to the word of God and prophecy. Fear of the Lord is the beginning of understanding and wisdom. Christ declared, “When Jerusalem is surrounded by armies, know (RECOGNIZE) that the desolation (the time of its destruction) is near. Let those

who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart (get out of the city), and let not those who are in the country enter the city. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. For there will be GREAT DISTRESS in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

“And there will be *signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars*; and on the earth distress of nations with *perplexity* (not knowing what is happening), the *sea and waves roaring*: men’s hearts will fail them for fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then all will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now *when these things begin to happen*, look and lift your heads, because your redemption (salvation—kingdom of God) draws near” (Luke 21:21-28).

In the *NLT*, it has it, “For those will be the days of God’s vengeance, and the prophetic words of the Scriptures will be fulfilled.” In the *NIV* we read: “For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”

Great signs are beginning to occur in the solar system, and many more solar flares and large coronal storms are predicted to occur in 2011-2013. These storms can knock out the world’s electronics and destroy the world’s communication systems.

A Final Warning

After telling his disciples about the signs of the end of the age, Christ then told them the parable about the fig tree and all the trees. “When they are budding, you see and know of your own selves that summer is near at hand. Likewise, when you see these things taking place, know (recognize) that the Kingdom of God is near at hand. I assuredly say to you, *this generation* (the generation that sees these things) shall not pass away, until all these things take place (are fulfilled). Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words by no means will pass away.

“Take heed to yourselves (watch your heart) lest at anytime your hearts be weighed down with dissipation (wasting life, drunkenness, cares and anxieties) of this life, and that Day will close on you unexpectedly (catch you unawares) like a trap. It will come upon everyone who dwells on the face of the earth. Therefore, **WATCH! PRAY always** (continually and consistently daily) that you may be one of those counted worthy (may have strength) to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man” (Luke 21:29-36).

We have begun to experience plagues today— the Gulf Oil Spill, birds and fish dying by the masses in unexplained deaths; the 9.0 earthquake followed by a Tsunami in Japan followed by radiation leakage from nuclear powered generators.; revolution in countries throughout the

Middle East—Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Syria, Libya, and on-going wars in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Surely the end has come. The plagues have begun. The end is here. As the Messiah said, “All these are the beginning of sorrows” (Matt.24:8).

Moffat has this: “For nation will rise against nation, and realm against realm; there will be famines and earthquakes here and there. All that is but the *beginning of the trouble.*”

The Living Bible: “But all this will be only the *only the beginning* of the horrors to come.”

The Amplified-Parallel Bible: “All this is but the beginning [the early pains] of the *birth pangs* [of the intolerable anguish].”

The Greek word translated “sorrows” here in the New King James Version is *odin* and means, “a pang or throe, especially of childbirth – pain, sorrow, travail.”

When you see a storm coming, the prudent thing to do is to make preparations. *Prudence* is the use of caution or good judgment in the conduct of one’s business.

- Proverbs 16:25—“there is a way that *seems right* to a man; but its end is the way of death.”
- Proverbs 14:15—“a simple man believes anything, but a prudent gives thought (carefully considers) to his steps.
- Proverbs 19:16—“he who keeps the commandments keeps (protects) his soul; but he who is careless (reckless and despises commandments) will die.”
- Proverbs 22:3—a prudent man foresees evil (recognizes danger) and hides himself (takes precautions); the simpleton (SIMPLE-MINDED) goes blindly on and is punished (suffers the consequences).” (see also Proverbs 27:12)
- Proverbs 28:12—when the righteous rejoice (triumph), there is great glory (elation); but when the wicked rise to power, men hide (literally –“will be searched for”) themselves. Don’t want to be found.

Are you thinking ahead? What would you do if there were no food or water supplies in Walmart, Safeway, or other major food stores? Do you have an emergency supply on hand? Think about growing and preserving your food.

Wise king Solomon saw that “man also, does not know his time (when his hour will come). Like fish taken up in a cruel net, like birds caught in a snare, so the sons of men are trapped (snared) by evil times that fall unexpectedly (suddenly upon them)” (Ecclesiastes 9:12). In the Amplified Bible, we read: “Man knows not his time of death. As fishes are taken in an evil

net, and as birds are caught in the snare, so are the sons of man caught in an evil time when calamity (tragedy) falls suddenly upon them.”

In an earnest, final warning, Jesus Christ, Yeshua, said to His disciples, particularly for those living in our age, today: “Take heed to yourselves and be on your guard, lest your hearts be overburdened and depressed (weighed down) with the giddiness and headache and nausea of self-indulgence, drunkenness, and worldly worries and cares pertaining to (the business of) this life, and (lest) that day come upon you suddenly like a trap or a noose. For it will come upon all who live upon the face of the entire earth.

“Keep awake then and watch at all times (be discreet, attentive, and ready), praying that you may have the full strength and ability and be accounted worthy to escape all these things (taken together) that will take place, and *to stand in the presence of the Son of Man.*” (Luke 21:34).

The apostle Peter declares, “But the end of all things is at hand. Therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things, have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins” (I Peter 4:7-8).

“Now the end of all is near. Steady then, keep cool and pray! Above all, be keen to love one another, for love hides a host of sins” (Moffatt).

“But the end and culmination of all things has now come near; keep sound minded and self restrained and alert therefore for [the practice of] prayer. Above all things have intense and unflinching love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins [forgives and disregards the offenses of others]” (Amplified-Parallel Bible).

The apostle Paul declared, “For when they say, ‘Peace and safety!’ then SUDDEN DESTRUCTION comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

“But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.

“Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us WATCH and be sober [margin, “self-controlled”]. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be SOBER, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thess.5:3-8).

The time of Great Tribulation has indeed opens its voracious, yawning, gaping, devouring Mouth, with gleaming, wicked teeth, to consume the raw material of this wicked, self-destructive world. Its destruction rushes onward like a thundering freight train in the night.

Are you spiritually prepared?