

Where Are We in the End Times?

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It's no secret that we are living in unprecedented times. We are experiencing a pandemic that is unique. As I mentioned before it can be infectious without symptoms and the fact is, this whole issue is going to have long-lasting social effects and long-lasting economic effects that are not yet totally apparent. Then we have these terrible fires in the West; as I said the rate of growth is unprecedented. I talked to one of the fire bosses about the fire that was in our area, about ten miles north of us, and he said,

“Normal firefighting rules just don't apply. It's too hot and it's moving too fast and the techniques we're having to invent on the spot because the old ones aren't working.”

Several towns have been destroyed and if you watch or listen to the news, several victims have described it as Armageddon. If you're familiar with Dante's Inferno and those wood cuts that are part of that book, the videos we have of California and Oregon remind you of these. Many people have lost everything they had and a number have lost their lives.

We have ongoing riots and unrest in our cities. Yes, there are peaceful protestors and yes, they have legitimate concerns but there are others who are there to loot and destroy. Obviously, there is something more behind all of this and time will tell what the motives behind this are. I think some of it is obvious.

Then we have our national debt. People don't talk about that because it's inconvenient. The U.S. debt now is over twenty-two trillion dollars. We're going to add three trillion just this year. That means that each one of us—man, woman, child, newborn baby in the United States—owes almost a million dollars each.

Then there is increasing polarization in our government and in our society; that is not new. The prime motivation of our executive branch and of the legislative branch is to get re-elected. Not to serve the people who elected them, but to keep the power and the perks which they have and that comes first—just gross selfishness. Our colleges and Universities are largely controlled by those who despise and demonize religion. These do not even acknowledge the existence of the Almighty and they despise and demonize our country. That has been going on for decades but it's coming to critical mass. For decades the Universities have been turning out students who want to remake society into a secular, godless, anything goes, nation. As I said, it's hitting critical mass, it's coming to pass right before our eyes.

The fact is, and you can see it on the media, that today few people really listen to what the other person is having to say. Few people are willing to talk reasonably. Rather, you see a lot of irrational screaming, and screaming a godless ideology back and forth. As I

said, selfishness is abounding. We indeed live in unprecedented times. I've had many inquiries over the phone and emails saying, "Is this the beginning of the end? Are we starting the Tribulation? Where are we?" So, I thought it might be good to look at that subject today, especially on this day of Trumpets. James very graphically told us out of God's word what we can expect. This day of Trumpets looks forward to the Almighty's wrath and establishing His direct rule over mankind, to a world that, increasingly, does not even know Him. So, I thought it might be profitable to answer the question: where are we in these end times? Where are we prophetically in the end times? To answer this, we are going to do three things:

- Look at pertinent scriptures,
- Draw conclusions from those scriptures and
- Look at what we need to be doing in light of those scriptures.

1. Let's look at some pertinent scriptures.

Turn to Matthew 24—you knew we were going there, but please place a marker there because we're going to bounce around to other scriptures and then come back to Matthew 24—we will begin in verse 3. This will be out of the King James unless otherwise noted.

Matthew 24:3 *And as he [referring to Christ] sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the world? (KJV)*

The Greek word for *world* is *aeon* from which we get our English word *eon* and it just means "an age". When it's going to be the end of this age. In verse 4.

4) *And Jesus answered and said unto them, [first thing He said] take heed that no man deceives you.*

5) *For many shall come in my name (KJV)*

Just look around today and look at the number of the churches that have the name Christ in their name.

5 continued) *... saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. (KJV)*

There will be those that acknowledge Christ as the Messiah but in the process of acknowledging Christ they will deceive many. We have to be prepared for that—we know that. How is that going to occur? It's through Satan induced blindness because he has blinded the whole world, we know that. So, Satan induces blindness in the hearts of those that proclaim to be religious in order to lead them astray. They misrepresent who Christ is and, in many cases, weak, effeminate, they emphasize His love to the exclusion of all else, they ignore Luke 19:27—let's turn there. Keep your marker in Matthew 24. Christ is speaking something profound that tells you about Him and His nature and what

He is like. Notice what He says. This is not often read, especially by those who emphasize the love of Christ.

Luke 19:27 *But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring here, and slay them before me. (KJV)*

Christ says, "I want to watch their destruction, I want to watch their death". People can misrepresent who Christ is. Then there are others who promote Him above His Father. So-called Christ-centered religion and that has crept into the churches of God over time. They ignore John 5:30. Those who would promote Christ above His Father and it is done subtly these days; not saying it outright but just not mentioning the Father all that much and focusing almost exclusively on Jesus Christ and ignore John 5:30. This is out of the NLT.

John 5:30 *But I do nothing without consulting the Father. I judge as I am told. And my judgment is absolutely just because it is according to the will of God who sent me, it is not merely my own. (NLT)*

It is not merely My own. The One who sends is superior to the One who has been sent. The One who tells is superior to the One who is told. Many are going to be deceived as a result of this, not knowing who Christ is, not knowing His relationship with His Father and therefore not knowing who the Father is. People are deceived.

Back now to Matthew 24:6.

Matthew 24:6 *And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: [don't be troubled by this, don't be worried or afraid by this] for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. (KJV)*

Then verse 7 begins four signs that Christ gives that the end is approaching.

7) For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: (KJV)

This has been going on since before the Noachian flood, we understand that. Since we are in the end times, let's take a look at the last 100 years, going back to World War I and look at the number of deaths from war, including World War I until today. Keep in mind that when you list the deaths, typically in a war the number of wounded are five times greater than the number of deaths. We are just going to talk about deaths and understand these are just estimates. Only God knows the truth—the actual facts. This is what is estimated from our viewpoint today. In World War I, which started in 1914 and ended in 1918, it has been estimated that 50 million people died—mostly military because World War I was fought in the trenches and didn't spread to cities and towns and hamlets. After that we have Stalin's purges and he systematically starved whole areas of his country to death. That started in 1924 and ended in 1953 with his death. There were somewhere between eight and forty million died in his purges. Then we come to World War II, which started in 1939 and ended in 1945. Including the six million

Jews of the Holocaust, there were somewhere between 55 and 85 million deaths in World War II. Then after that, Mao Zedong came to power in China and he began to purge his own country from 1958-1962. He killed 45 million of his own countrymen to establish his power. He waged war on his own countrymen. Then the war in Korea came along, 1950-1953—I remember that as a young kid. One and a half to four and a half million died—we'll never know how many died on the Chinese and North Korean side. Then Vietnam, 1961 to 1975, somewhere between two and a half million and four and a half million died during the Vietnam era. Then a little-known civil war—the Nigerian civil war—from 1967 to 1970 killed 1.3 million Nigerians. Think about that. I can remember this too, India verses Bangladesh, just in one year—1971—three million people died in that war. Then we have the Iraq-Iran war, 1980-1988, over a million died there—slaughtering each other. Then again, not a well-known war, the second Sudanese war, began in 1983 and lasted until 2005 and killed somewhere between one and two million Sudanese. Then you have the first and second Congo wars, started in 1996 and ended in 2000 and killed between two and three quarter and five and half million were killed. Then of course, familiar to all of us is the war in Afghanistan. It began with the Soviets in 1978 and continues to this day and somewhere between one and a quarter million and two million have died in Afghanistan as a result of that war.

I have left off all the wars with less than a million deaths and there are dozens and dozens. Like the current Syrian civil war where Assad is killing his own people, somewhere between 400,000 and 600,000 Syrians have been killed/murdered in that civil war.

Then of course we come to the Cold War. That started in 1947 and ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. But as we know, that was the first time in the history of mankind that man had the ability to destroy all humanity from the face of the earth. I was in the military as that was on going. That is why Matthew and Mark both state that except the Lord had shortened these days, there would be no flesh left alive. The fact is—I'm going to give you two examples just to show you how close we came to annihilating mankind.

The first is the Cuban missile crisis and I think everybody knows how close we came. That was thirteen days in October in 1962 but what most people don't know is that when the U.S. sent a task force to blockade Cuba, there was a Russian submarine nearby that was tracking the U.S. task force, which included an aircraft carrier and that submarine had nuclear tipped torpedoes. There were three Russian generals on that submarine and their rules of engagement were that if they were going to attack the task force and take out that submarine, all three generals had to agree. As the task force came into Cuban waters, that submarine was prepared to attack and those three generals had a meeting in that submarine and two were vehemently wanting to take out the aircraft carrier and thankfully one Russian general said no, we just can't do that—it will lead to a holocaust—a worldwide conflagration. So, they held to their rules, the sub went to deep waters and then sailed out of the area and we came really, really close. There were other really close calls in the Cuban missile crisis.

A second example—not as well known—occurred on November 9, 1979. I think you've heard of the name NORAD; North American Air Defense Command. It's headquartered in this giant granite mountain—Cheyenne Mountain—west of Denver. It was built there because it could handle a direct hit from a nuclear weapon. On November 9, 1979, the NORAD early warning system showed that the Soviet Union had launched 250 ballistic missiles toward the United States. The NORAD commander on duty there, notified (they have a hot line to the President's desk in Washington) Jimmy Carter that this was happening and that he needed, if he was going to retaliate at all, to make a decision between three and seven minutes from that phone call, because the NORAD showed them they had already been launched. Jimmy Carter declared DEFCON 2—DEFCON stands for defense condition. Defense Condition 1 is all out war; that means the missiles are launched from the submarines and the missiles in the United States. So, they came right up to DEFCON 1, declaring DEFCON 2. That means all the sac B52s were scrambled, the underground ICBM's and the submarines—ballistic missile subs—were prepared to launch, just waiting for DEFCON 1.

Then what happened after that, was that the NORAD computers placed the number of incoming missiles at 2200. That means it was an all-out attack. Now we were within three minutes of President Carter pressing the button. About one to two minutes before decision time, satellite and radar images showed that this attack was a false alarm. We came that close and a later investigation found that a training scenario was loaded into an operational computer by accident. What they assumed was real was actually a training scenario that they would normally use as a drill. I assume some heads rolled on that account. The fact is, twice we have come very close to total annihilation. When you think about it, wars and rumors of wars, take on an entirely new meaning when we see how close we have come.

Today, the world nuclear stock pile is held by nine countries. There is a total of 13,355 nuclear warheads held by nine countries. The U.S. and Russia account for 92% of those warheads. The largest of those warheads is Russian. You remember the bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima. This Russian nuclear warhead is 3,800 times more powerful than the bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima. During a test—when they tested that bomb—it broke windows 550 miles away. You can imagine how powerful and how destructive that weapon is.

So currently, wars and rumors of wars—we have Russian and Ukraine. Russia is trying to annex Ukraine, certainly, the eastern part of it in Crimea. We have the U.S. and Russia. We have the Arabs and Israel. We have the U.S. and Iran. Iran scrambling to get nuclear weapons to put on missiles. We have China and Taiwan, which is a hotspot. Then we have the U.S. and China.

Then of course, talking about wars—and this is what aggravates me just about more than anything—is the unspoken war on unborn babies. We have a worldwide war on unborn babies. The average right now is 56 million deaths per year. That means in one year, we kill more babies than all the deaths in World War II, but we do it in one year. Of course, everybody sweeps that under the rug saying that's women's choice.

Have we already experienced wars and rumors of wars as of this date? Increasingly so, you bet we have. Now go back to verse 7, continuing on with the second sign that tells us there shall be famines. A U.N. report in September 2018 brought forth new evidence to indicate that the number of hungry people in the world is growing. In 2018, the estimate was that 821 million suffered famine the year before in 2017. Today it is estimated that one out of every nine humans on this earth wakes up hungry and goes to bed hungry. Famines? You bet. Going on in verse 7, third sign—*pestilences*; “plague or disease”, the Greek means.

For some background on pestilences, look at the most fatal pandemic in human history. It was spread by fleas from infected rats and that is the Black Plague of the mid-1300's. The Black Plague began in the 1300's and it was the most fatal one in human history. It was spread by fleas from infected rats and new research into that—through DNA and other ways—showed that it began in the spring of 1346, in the Step region northwest on the shores of the Caspian Sea and then spread into Southern Russia. It took seven years to spread throughout Europe because there was no mass transit back then—people were on foot or horseback or donkey. It took seven years to spread throughout Europe and the deaths are estimated between 50 and 200 million, from the Black Plague. It killed approximately 60% of Europe's population, 30% of the world's population and the fact is, there were over thirty waves of the plague after the first wave. The last outbreak—it's been documented—occurred in 1654. That's over 300 years after the start. That's a scary thought for us today. The only reason I bring this long ago plague up, is to show you what has already happened and what can and is prophesied to happen again. We just have a hint today from the Coronavirus. That's just a little hint.

With that in mind we will go to the 1919 flu, I think called the Spanish flu by many. It killed more people than World War I did. It is estimated that somewhere between 50 and 100 million were killed. That was 20% of the world's population in 1919 and what most people don't know is that it began in Oklahoma in the United States. A bunch of farmers got together and were burning manure—great piles of manure that had accumulated. The fire got out of control and these huge plumes of smoke were drifting east into neighboring states and it wasn't long after that when people began to show flu-like symptoms, downwind of that burn. Then people began to be infected by this flu. But the United States at that time, was calling up troops to go to Europe, to France, to fight in World War I. The U.S. troops took it into France and it spread to the English, the French and the Germans and then it circulated around. Remember they were in trenches, very close quarters—no such thing as social distancing and wearing masks back then. It circulated among the troops and then the U.S. soldiers returning from World War I brought it back. That flu killed 45,000 U.S. soldiers, which is almost as many as died in combat; 53,400 died in combat—real close.

Today we have the 2020 Coronavirus and there is some evidence to suggest that it began in a biological weapons plant in Wuhan China. Or at a minimum due to unsanitary conditions at a wild animal market—no one knows for sure, someday we'll find out. The fact is, it spread around the world, not in a matter of years or months, but

in a matter of weeks. Primarily due to wide spread air travel—people running to and fro. As you know the worldwide deaths are pegged at around 900,000. The U.S. deaths are approaching 200,000 and I do understand the problems with statistics. The number of deaths is underreported because there are a great many illegals that have come down with covid—they will not go to a hospital because they and their families don't want to be deported, so they die in silence so to speak. I also know in other areas it is over reported. As with any flu virus, it will mutate and continues to mutate. As I mentioned earlier about the Bubonic Plague, it could mutate and come back year after year, just as the common flu does—we don't know. The fact is, it's devastated the world economy and we have yet to feel the full effects of that devastation. It will probably have a greater impact on humanity than the disease itself—meaning the economic cost of this.

Back to Matthew, now verse 7, the fourth sign, earthquakes in various places. This hasn't happened yet, the proceedings of the National Academy of Science in 2012 examined the frequency of large magnitude earthquakes from 1900 to 2011 and they discovered that the frequency of earthquakes 8.0 and greater is slightly elevated since 2004; at a rate of about 1.2 to 1.4 per year but that is not statistically significant. It's clear that earthquakes have yet to dramatically increase but the fact is, it could happen overnight. My wife and I are perfect witnesses to that fact because we were seventy miles directly downwind from Mount Saint Helens when that mountain blew and we didn't know it was going to blow. Within a couple hours, certainly a half a day, our world changed radically. That's a story in and of itself.

Now in verse 8.

8) [Christ says] *All these are the beginning of sorrows.* (KJV)

The Greek word for *sorrows*, if you look at Helps Word Studies, it's the Greek word *odin* and it means the "pain of child birth"; figuratively "the pain necessary to open up or introduce something new". So, the beginning of sorrows is going to open up something new for the rest of the world and I think we know what that is.

The question is, are we in the beginning of sorrows? Looks like we've been there for quite some time to me. The last 100 years are just 1.7% of recorded history. Are these the last days? I reckon so.

Now we will go to verse 9 because Christ comes to the church.

9) *Then shall they deliver you [He's talking to the disciples in verse 3] up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.* (KJV)

Good time to ask the question, what is Christ's name. We won't turn there, Matthew 16:16, Christ said to the disciples, who do people say I am? Peter says, You are the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Son of the Living God. This obviously

happened to the early New Testament church and it happened in the Middle Ages but it has yet to happen in our time. But that is coming.

I saw a recent sermon—somebody sent me a recent sermon from a prominent Protestant Evangelist—one of the heads of one of these mega churches and he was giving a sermon and he asked, what is the definition of a Christian. What is the litmus test of being Christian? I thought, this is going to be interesting, to see what the man said. He said the litmus test of being a Christian is a belief in the trinity. Of all things he could have said, this one came out of left field—but you can understand given their training, their education and all of that. It is the belief in the trinity. I'm just speculating, could this be where the line is drawn in the future as far as a beast power or a false prophet persecuting non-Christians? A non-Christian could be somebody who does not believe in the trinity—be it Muslim or anybody else.

10) *And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.* (KJV)

We often think of being offended as somebody getting their feelings hurt, somebody possibly becoming angry or walking away in a snit. That's what we think of today as being offended. But the Greek word for *offended* is Strong's #4624 and it's the Greek word, *skandalizo* where we get our English word, to scandalize. It has a different meaning to what we think of with the word *offended*. It means "to entrap, to trip up, to stumble, to entice to sin or entice to apostasy, enticed to turn away from true doctrine"—true teaching. This tells us that many are going to be tripped up. Enticed to sin or believe in false doctrine and that has been ongoing, as we know, since the first century. It began creeping into the modern-day Church of God in the 1950's. Today, apostasy in or out of the church is much more wide-spread. We are being told it will ultimately lead to betrayal and to hate as a result, as some have already experienced in our time. Going on in verse 11.

11) *And many false [not a few] prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many.* (KJV)

The Greek word translated for *false prophet* just means a "religious imposter". Religious imposters have always existed because Satan never rests. But it will get worse, to the end that we will have THE false prophet in Revelation 16. There are a bunch of false prophets running around but there will be a coalition resulting in THE false prophet.

12) *And because iniquity [the Greek means "violation of the law or wickedness"] shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.* (KJV)

That is the result of not following God's law. Mark 13:12 adds to this narrative, so let's turn there and keep your marker in Matthew 24.

Mark 13:12 *Now the brother shall betray the brother to death [this is serious stuff], and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. (KJV)*

That's happened before, sometimes in the Middle Ages it wasn't all that common but it has happened before. This is going to be something new and something serious. John 16 also—Christ warns—John 16:2, let's turn there. Christ warned the disciples on the last night He was alive, spending time with them.

John 16:2 *They shall put you out of the synagogues [moving that forward to today, you will be expelled from the church/churches, organization, whatever it is]: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. (KJV)*

This happened during the Inquisition in the Middle Ages, it's happened down through the centuries and it will happen again as we get closer to the end. It's just a fact. In fact, if we had lived in the Middle Ages, some today would have already been burned at the stake for some of the things that are being preached.

Back to Matthew 24:13. Despite all of this, Christ says to us:

Matthew 24:13 *But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. (KJV)*

It's an endurance race. James Smyda keeps reminding me, because by nature I tend not to be that way. James reminds me that we are in a marathon, not in a sprint. He will say, "Rick, you're in a sprint, slow down a little bit." I take the admonition and we all need to keep it in mind. Sometimes we sprint as fast as we can and fall to our feet in exhaustion, we take a couple breaths and start sprinting again.

14) *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached [Greek word is "published" or "proclaimed"] in all the world for a witness to all nations; and then shall the end come. (KJV)*

That was done to a small extent by the Worldwide Church of God; it reached a peak thirty-five years ago. This current generation has not received that warning, either in the Western countries or in the world. It will happen in the future. Mark Mickelson mentioned that in a recent sermon, talking about the two witnesses doing so in Revelation 11. In addition to that, there will be an additional way that it will happen. Go to Revelation 14:6 and see that there is going to be a miraculous way and see that God is going to have the Gospel preached regardless of what human beings do or do not do.

Revelation 14:6 *And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, [notice this] having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and [notice this] to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people ... (KJV)*

This is an angel.

7) *Saying with a loud voice, [what is the everlasting gospel this angel will preach?] Fear God, and give glory to him; [what a concept] for the hour of his judgment is come: worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. (KJV)*

Notice the focus of the warning; it's on the Father, to fear Him, glorify Him and worship Him—first commandment. Think about that. That's the focus of the warning. The point is, the Gospel is going to be proclaimed—two witnesses and this angel. But at present, during this age and frankly since the demise of Worldwide, it's apparent that right now that the Father does not want it done. There are several clones of Worldwide that are trying to do that and reinvent Worldwide, to do the work and preach the gospel but there have been no results from that. No appreciable results at all. The point is, that God will have the gospel preached, when and how He chooses and He can raise up stones to do it anytime He wants to. We need to keep that in mind.

Back to Matthew 24:15 out of the NIV.

Matthew 24:15 *So when you see standing in the holy place, the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of through the Prophet Daniel, let the reader understand. (NIV)*

The Greek word for *abomination* means “a detestation”. It would be something we would detest—we just can't stand. A detestation that is especially idolatry. There is an abomination idolatry that causes desolation. Idolatry, as we know, is a common thread since Adam and Eve. We are going to see that this causes a desolation and we will see how this plays out. We need to keep our eyes open. Matthew 24:16-30 says very clearly that if you are in Judea, you had better get out. Luke 21 adds, when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, you had better get out. Now to verse 21 of Matthew 24.

Matthew 24:21 *For then [after all of this happens] shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. (KJV)*

The Greek word for *tribulation* is [Strong's #2247](#) and it means “pressure”, literally or figuratively; it means “affliction, anguish, burdened, persecution or trouble”. It's interesting that the Hebrew word is almost exactly the same meaning. The words *Great Tribulation* are only mentioned three times in the Bible. Once here and twice in Revelation. The word for *great* is the Greek *me-gas*, from where we get our English word mega and it means, literally or figuratively, “big plus exceeding fear”. It's a word that has two meanings. It means “large” but it has a concept of “exceeding fear”. It means “mighty” plus “to be sore afraid”. So, we see that this word *great* has a component of “fear” mixed into the definition. We see that pressure, persecution, trouble, coupled with

fear, is coming our way. Not a pretty scene but we know it has to come. Of course, we don't want to be caught up in fear and we will talk about that as we go on.

Now verse 22.

22) *And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: [we are in those days because mankind can destroy himself off the face of the earth] but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*

23) *Then if any man shall say to you [he's speaking about the church in the future], Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.*

24) *For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, [here's the key] and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive [meaning these signs and wonders shall deceive or trip up] the very elect. (KJV)*

The fact is, we need to heed these warnings and prepare ourselves for a time when a religious entity is coming on the scene and there will be unbelievable miracles and signs and wonders that if you just look at those, the common man is going say, "This is from God; this is the man. We should fall down and worship this man or this system". We are being warned in advance of that event.

25) *Behold, I have told you before.*

26) *Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. (KJV)*

Verse 27 out of the NLT gets it right.

27) *For as the lightning lights up the entire sky, so it will be when the Son of Man comes. (NLT)*

Christ is saying, when I come it is not going to be in secret. It's going to be wide open and the whole world is going to know. Going on in verse 28 out of the NLT.

28) Just as the gathering of vultures shows there is a carcass nearby, so these signs indicate that the end is near.

Go to verse 35.

35) *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. [Because we are reading them right now.]*

36) *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*

Christ is saying, "I don't know; I'm waiting for My Father to tell Me". How many times have we said, this is such clear evidence that there are two Beings, they are separate Beings and one knows something that the other doesn't? The one who knows

something that the other doesn't, the one who knows it, is supreme. At some point in time, the Father will turn to the Son and say, "It's time, let's go." Then all of this will happen.

We've looked at some of the scriptures in the first part of the sermon. Now in the second part, let's see what conclusions we can draw from what we have read. Obviously, there are dozens and dozens of conclusions but we are just going to hit four of them.

1. It's obvious we have been in the beginning of sorrows for quite some time.

When we look at the last hundred years, we've had two World Wars that have killed over 120 million people and then five times that have been maimed, injured. Then we have had untold millions of babies murdered in the last hundred years; it's been institutionalized by government. We've had two pandemics—the one we have now and the 1919 flu. Then, we have real famine going on today. We have seen that we are in the beginning of sorrows and have been there for a hundred years.

2. We see that the conditions are set for the time of the end.

Go to Daniel 12, talking about our time.

Daniel 12:1 *And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, [same definition in the Hebrew as the Greek; "adversity, affliction, anguish, distress"] such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time [notice this] thy people shall be delivered [that is a promise], every one that shall be found written in the book. (KJV)*

Verse 4.

4) But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: [notice what he says, what are the characteristics at the time of the end] many shall run to and fro [number one], and knowledge shall be increased [number two]. (KJV)

Today we have a graphic example of how much running to and fro can spread a pandemic. People are running to and for and look what we have. It also says knowledge shall be increased. Let's look at the accumulation of knowledge and see if that's not the case here in these days.

In 1982 there was a futurist and inventor, you might have heard his name, Buck Minster Fuller. He was asked, if you take all the knowledge since man's recorded history up until 1 A.D.—all that knowledge over thousands of years—and put it together, how long did it take that knowledge up to 1 A.D. to double. Fuller began to analyze that and his estimate was, it took (for that accumulated knowledge, prior to 1 A.D. to double) until 1500 A.D. 1500 years to double; several thousand years to accumulate in the beginning

and 1500 years to double. It was followed by another doubling in only 250 years. That brings us to about 1750. By 1900, another 150 years later, Fuller estimated that the amount of knowledge had doubled again; in only 150 years. Then at the beginning of the twenty-first century, roughly twenty years ago, it was estimated (and I remember that) that knowledge was doubling every one to two years. In 2017, it was estimated that knowledge was doubling every few months if you can imagine that. Of course, that is due to worldwide research, development and intervention and the fact that worldwide computers are hooked together through the internet so people learn from each other faster and faster and faster. Of course, you have artificial intelligence helping this along.

The point is, like Babylon, we get to the point with knowledge doubling this fast to where what the Father said about Babylon—He said nothing will be restrained from them. Today we are on the cusp of genetically modifying human beings to prevent disease or clone human beings, to basically have a recipe and pick the child of your choice—that is on the horizon. We have artificial intelligence that is capable now of changing the world in ways we can't even comprehend and most of those are frankly, pretty scary.

We see the fulfillment of Daniel 12:4, is occurring before our eyes. We see that conditions are set—they are coming into place for the time of the end.

The third thing we can learn is:

3. Our Father is giving us a taste of how fast conditions can change.

To prepare us. Covid-19; the world was fat, dumb and happy before March and you look from the beginning of March until today how fast has the world changed in so many aspects; just about every aspect. How fast the world has changed. Our Father is giving us a taste of that. Our personal lives can change. I remember Jack and Marie Elder had a nice home and a few hours later, that home burned to the ground. So, you go from having a nice home to homeless in a matter of hours. Things can change very, very quickly. Go to 1 Thessalonians 5:1.

1 Thessalonians 5:1 *But of the times and the seasons, brethren, [talking about now] ye have no need that I write unto you.*

2) For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. (KJV)

When not expected; but the Father is giving a taste to us about how fast things change as a warning to His children.

The fourth thing we can learn:

4. Typical of mankind, man is going to ignore all the warnings.

Man is just going to blithely go on; as long as I have my malls and my NFL, I'll be fine. Matthew 24:37, I think you know where we are going.

Matthew 24:3 *But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (KJV)*

Christ is describing how those days were; verse 38.

38) *For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,*

39) *And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so, shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (KJV)*

We have all talked about that we are facing a new normal as we go forward because of this pandemic and the financial ramifications and the job ramifications and all of that; the societal ramifications. Going forward there is going to be somewhat of a new normal but this tells us that whatever that normal will be, will become the normal and people will think it is the normal and life is going to go on, until it doesn't. Until the Father and the Son return.

That leads us to the third and final section of the scripture. What should our response be—what should we be doing—in light of this coming reality? Which should be our priorities? The first thing is to alleviate fear. We have to realize that our Father is in control of everything. Once we deeply understand that the Almighty—and that title is there for a reason—is in control of everything, then we, as His people, can take a deep breath and relax a little bit. Go to Matthew 10:29, Christ is speaking to His disciples. I'll read this out of the NLT. The disciples were apparently worried because they had given up jobs, they had left their homes, they left their families, they had been following this guy all over these towns and they probably had a little fear or anxiety or a little worry.

Matthew 10:29 *What is the price of two sparrows—one copper coin? But not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it. (NLT)*

My personal speculation is that somehow, some way, through the Spirit, that all life is connected together. If life stops, the Father knows.

30) *And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. (NLT)*

Who wrote the DNA? Who designed all that? There is a great program on NOVA about DNA and what they are finding. You just scratch your head and say, these guys are delving into this and the only conclusion you can draw is that somebody designed it. It didn't just happen on its own.

31) [Here's the answer] *So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows. (NLT)*

The fact is, nothing happens without the Father's knowledge, or His approval, His consent—nothing happens. What he causes or what He allows to happen to us is for

our ultimate good. Romans 8:28 says that—all things work together for good for those who love our Father. We can take great comfort in that. So, we have to realize that the Father is in control when these calamities come upon us.

Secondly, our responsibility—what we should be doing—is to draw nearer to the Father and to His Son. To be more like Them. To put our total trust in Them. It's time to get our minds off petty squabbles and petty issues. Look at what is looming ahead and we're going to get our nose down in the weeds and worry about this blade of grass and that blade of grass. Is that what our Father wants us to be doing now? We have to see the big picture—our Father's picture. We look at the world through soda straws. We only see just a little bit. These words encourage us to open our minds and look at what's on the horizon; look at what's happening. Maybe our current problems or current issues we face don't seem quite as great. In Deuteronomy 4:26 we are going to see something that kind of surprised me. I had forgotten about this—Moses is giving us a prophecy for today, in part. He is obviously also talking to the Israelites before they entered the Promised Land. Moses is right in the middle of a condemnation here.

Deuteronomy 4:26 *I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it [not a pretty picture]; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed.*

27) And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you.

28) And there ye shall serve gods [not the Almighty], the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. (KJV)

Notice verse 29.

29) But if from there thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul [or your being or your life]. (KJV)

That is a promise; if we seek the Father with all our heart, we will find Him.

30) When thou art in tribulation [they were going to be in tribulation, we're facing tribulation—the Great Tribulation], and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days ... (KJV)

I believe Moses is taking this message to Israel and he knows, in the latter days (the Father must have told him) that a similar thing is going to happen.

30 continued) ... if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice;

31) (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them. (KJV)

These words were spoken 3500 years ago. They are repeated—we won't turn there—in Hebrews 13:5. We are told that the Son and the Father say to us, "never will I leave you; never will I forsake you". So as time progresses, if we are to survive, we have to draw near to our Father, we have to obey the two Great Commandments and we have to draw near to His Son in all humility. We have to look to Him and we can have peace.

The third is that we need to become serious, and at the same time be calm in the midst of a trial. You have to be serious minded and you have to be calm. Conditions are being set for the mark of the beast. For someone to promise mankind that all is going to be good, there will be peace, there will be safety and I can guarantee that. Then mighty signs and mighty wonders will accompany that. Let's go to 1 Thessalonians 5:3, we were there in verse 1 and 2 a little while ago. This is something we need to keep in mind. New King James.

1 Thessalonians 5:3 *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.* (NKJV)

Just like in the days of Noah.

4) *But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that 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.*

5) *You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.*

6) *Therefore, let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.* (NKJV)

What does that mean? Not drink alcohol? Be sober? No, that's not what it means. Helps Word Study Dictionary talks about being *sober* as the Greek word, *napho* and it refers to "having clear judgement, to be self-controlled, to have one's faculties about them when the opposite is being irrational". To be sober is to be under self-control and not be irrational. To have clear judgment about what to do, what to say, what not to say. In other words, we need a calm, cool head going forward.

7) *For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.*

8) *But let us who are of the day be sober [self-controlled, clear-minded], putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.* (NKJV)

So, we see here, being serious, being sober, growing in faith, that our Father will look after us and take care of us. We are to be growing in love to our neighbor, our fellow man, our brothers and sisters in the church and above all, love for the Father and His Son. Then this gives us the helmet of hope that we will desperately need. The point is,

that our Father is in control of everything and we have to draw near to Him and near to His Son and we need to be calm when calamity approaches; calm and serious.

Let's conclude, before we run out of time. Where are we in the end times? We are well past the beginning of sorrows but not yet into the Great Tribulation obviously. But Here is the reality—we talked about this before services—God's children are in tribulation every day. In case people haven't noticed. We are in tribulation every day, increasingly so. We have not been promised a rose garden. In Acts 14:21 in the NLT tells us that Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel and the good news in Derbe and made many disciples. They came to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch and Pisidia. Now we pick up the story in Acts 14:22.

Acts 14:22 [They are in Antioch] *where they strengthened the believers* [that's us]. *They encouraged them to continue in the faith* [long suffering], *reminding them that they must enter into the Kingdom of God through many tribulations.* (NLT)

Paul was reminding the brethren. Will it get worse in the future? It will get much worse in the future. But there is an antidote for these tribulations found in Romans 12:12—let's go there.

Romans 12:12 [We should be] *Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation* [meaning this too shall pass, there is an end to it]; *continuing instant in prayer;* (KJV)

So, the antidote for tribulation is hope, patience and prayer; we will need those in abundance. There is great hope through the Forerunner of our salvation, Jesus Christ. Look at John 16:33. Christ is speaking to His disciples the night He was betrayed; He knew what was going to happen to them because He knew what was going happen to Himself and yet His mind was on them, not on His suffering. His mind was on them and we can learn from that. He was facing unspeakable pain and yet His mind was not on Himself.

John 16:33 *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation* [trouble coupled with fear]: *but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.* (KJV)

He overcame the world, He set us an example to follow in His footsteps. If we do likewise, we will be there with Him. What example did He set for us? What did He say? What are the two Great Commandments? Love Your Father—My Father—with all your being and all your might and love your neighbors as yourself. His mind was on His Father. His mind was on two things—His Father and those He was serving. It wasn't on Himself. We can take a lesson from that. This is not the time to be selfish. We need to have our minds on our Father and His Son and on our brothers and sisters and not on ourselves. What is the sign of the times? Lovers of their own selves. That's creeping into the church big time and we cannot allow that to happen.

For a final scripture go to Romans 8:34. Paul asks a question, starting off in Romans 8:34.

Romans 8:34 *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. (KJV)*

We have our Father and His Son. His Son makes intercession for us at the very right hand of God the Father. They exist. They are here. They know everything. They know us. They want us to be His children eternally.

35) *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (KJV)*

All part of the Great Tribulation, all part of the life that we face ahead of us.

36) *As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*

37) *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. (KJV)*

Again, His mind was not on Himself, but on those He loved.

38) *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,*
39) *Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, [spiritual or physical] shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (KJV)*

The only thing that can separate us from the love of our Father is us. That's the only thing that can separate us. If we get so off track, so involved in the world, so involved with what's going on, with carnal pursuits, that we turn away from God in these last days. So, we indeed are facing an unprecedented time of trouble. We are going to be tested as never before and we must draw close to our Father and have the mind of His very Son. We need to be calm and serious about what we face. The reality is—the good news is—the Almighty and His Son Who has been through this already, are going to take each one of us by the hand and will lead us to salvation.