

MSB238

MORE Seed and Bread

BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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A WORLD IN CRISIS: ARMAGEDDON OR DIVINE GOVERNMENT?

By John C. Ribbens

We have all been spectators at several recent world events. Columbine, 13 murdered, 23 wounded; North Korea: 250,000 people, 10 percent of the population died from famine in three years; Sub-Saharan Africa: each day 5,000 people die because of AIDS-related causes; Zambia: life expectancy reduced to 37 years; Taipei, Taiwan: 1,400 dead, 3,500 injured in earthquake; Kosovo: 20,000 killed in ethnic cleansing. The world population is over six billion, increasing by 78 million people a year, expected to reach 12 billion people near 2100 AD.

What are we talking about? Terrorism? Famine? Natural disasters? Health risks? The collapse of human governments? There can be absolutely no doubt in the mind of any thinking person that this world is gravely ill. We read in John's gospel of a man named Lazarus, who became gravely ill. The illness prompted his sisters Mary and Martha to appeal to the Lord saying . . . **Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that, He said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby** (John 11:3-4).

Consider the significance of this statement in the context of the present world conditions. This promise of God takes on greater importance in recognition of the condition of life in the closing days of the dispensation of

grace. Regardless of the enormity of these problems and the gravity of world conditions, God's word holds out the promise of world salvation. John's gospel declares, **For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved** (John 3:16-17). This is the irrevocable guarantee that this world will not perish and will, by God's power, be preserved. The urgency of this condition is seen in the words of the Apostle Paul, who wrote, **I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior: who will have all men to be saved, and come into a knowledge of the truth** (1 Tim. 2:1-4). In this exceedingly important passage, the apostle is urging men to adopt a manner of life in the context of a critical situation. If ever men needed to pray on behalf of world leaders, this is the opportune time.

The preservation of humanity on a global scale is now at great risk. Problems involving the ability of nations to provide a stable government, adequate health care, sufficient food supplies, and a peaceful environment defy the solutions of men. In order to place these concerns in proper perspective, we need to examine what I perceive to be five major international problem areas:

1) Natural Disasters. As I have already inferred, mankind within the past several decades has fallen victim to a broad array of extremes in weather; hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, droughts, earthquakes and the like. Paul, the apostle, wrote, **"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now"** (Rom. 8:22). No nation on earth today is proven immune to these natural disasters. Earthquakes, whether in Greece, Turkey or Taiwan, have been devastating. Many parts of the world, including the United States, have been hit by unusual flooding and drought, making the production of food supplies a major concern.

2) Moral Pollution. A recent national newspaper stated, "Television is leading children down a moral sewer. Are you as disgusted as I am at the filth, vulgarity, sex and violence TV is sending into our homes? Are you fed up with the steamy unmarried sex situations, filthy jokes, perversion, foul language, killings, etc?" The correlation between school killings and video

arcade games, indulging in methods of violence, cannot be disputed. Young people and adults are now being victimized by purveyors of pornography on the Internet, under the guise of "freedom of expression." As the result of these devious means to influence the life and thinking of men, lives are being destroyed and the family structure is disintegrating. The Psalmist David spoke, **The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and do good. He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good; he abhorreth not evil** (Psa. 36:3-4).

3) Social Melt-down. We are today witnessing the fragmentation of society in the anarchistic forms of terrorism, crime, drug trafficking, the lack of civility with unchecked rage, and the insane desire for financial success. These all are gradually eroding the quality of life for everyone. Men worship other gods and call it "muticulturalism." We engage in perversion and call it "alternative lifestyle." We exploit the poor and call it "the lottery." We kill our unborn in abortions and call it "choice." Some businesses and government abuse power and call it "political savvy." These practices constitute the destruction of the fabric of civilized society.

4) Fragmentation of Society. Today we are faced with a proliferation of single-parent homes, depriving children of having a Christian mother and father to instruct and guide their innocent lives. Likewise, **Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor thy father and thy mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long upon the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord** (Eph. 6: 1-4). How are parents and children to respond to this injunction, when satanic influences are being directed to destroy the family structure? Instability within homes, as well as schools lacking properly trained and committed teachers, has led to anger, hate and frustration. Under divine government, there will be a reconstitution of the family structure with God at the head, joining the parents together with children and sanctifying their union. David declared, "God setteth the solitary in families" (Psa. 68:6). No child, privileged to live in the Kingdom of God, will fail to enjoy living in a family environment influenced by the Spirit of God. This will in part be due to the work of Elijah the prophet, of whom it says, **And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse** (Malachi 4:6). The gracious work of God will create an entirely new family structure.

5) Spiritual Deprivation. A man's face is the mirror of his soul and spirit. Life, for many living today, has lost real meaning. This is equally true of rich and poor, alike. There is little understanding of the plan or purpose of God and almost complete ignorance of the greatest fact in the universe, which is that God has spoken. The record we possess, the living word of God, the Bible, is vilified as poor literature and bad history by academicians, and hence is ignored and not read by the vast majority, even among Christians. The greatest need of mankind today is to acquire a genuine knowledge of God through His written word by regular reading and study.

Rather than being taught in the Word, they are involved in a thousand and one social programs. Instead of growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18), they fall victim to "every wind of doctrine, by the sleight, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lay in wait to deceive" (Eph. 4:14).

In view of the enormity of these universal problems, what hope remains for mankind? It is becoming apparent that the vast majority of men living today are of the opinion that this world is heading toward a global catastrophe, marked by a mythical battle between Christ and the antichrist called Armageddon. This hideous doctrine stands in bold contrast to the future dispensationalists, who proclaim, as I do, that God's next move is a five-hundred-year-long period of divine government, preceding the second coming of Christ. This event will result in "Eonian " Times," in which God will flow out to mankind and the nations in a tidal wave of physical, material and spiritual blessings before the millennium, called the premillennial Kingdom of God.

Whereas the "rapturist's" scenario spells out doom for mankind; the futurists proclaim a message of hope and deliverance from the present bondage of sin and death. In this scenario every conceivable need of mankind will be provided by God. Consider Psalm 46:8-10, which says, **Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations (astonishing things) He hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen (nations), I will be exalted in the earth.**

Divine intervention will come in an hour of critical need. I freely admit that I am incapable of assessing all the critical needs of mankind. But to

insist, as so many so-called dispensationalists believe, that the solution to this worldwide dilemma is the rapture of the church, followed by the battle of Armageddon, is a false and misleading doctrine. God's response to the overwhelming needs of mankind today is stated in Isaiah 59:19, which declares, **So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.**

No sincere and God-fearing man, reading Psalms 96-98, can fail to perceive a glorious future for mankind and this majestic planet Earth. So we state this fact that earth, not heaven, is clearly mankind's future home and destiny. Once God openly assumes sovereignty, men **shall speak of the glory of Thy kingdom, and talk of Thy power; to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Thy dominion endureth throughout all generations. The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down. The eyes of all wait upon Thee; and Thou givest them their meat in due season** (Psa. 145:11-15). May God in His grace hasten this day.

END

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