

CHURCH OF THE
G O D

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all the nations; and then shall the end come." – Matthew 24:14

June 10, 2009

Dear Brethren and Friends,

In the relatively recent history of this world, wars have engulfed nations so extensively that few people now living have escaped their influence. For some, the level has risen to ethnic and racial genocide. Families have been decimated, and the countless conflicts that now endlessly rage all over the earth continue to destroy the innocent along with the combatants.

War is this world's biggest business!

The extent to which hostility governs this earth and its inhabitants is truly staggering! Fighting between people marks a way of life for this generation, and so it has been throughout man's history.

The Bible shows how this terrible plight of violence began, and it reveals how God will cause it to cease!

The beginning is found in the record of Genesis. It began when Adam and Eve rejected God and chose to follow the deception of Satan. When the devil confronted these people, he did so as his name implies, as an adversary. His goal was to cause the death of Adam and Eve—and he did! In fact, the very first recorded lie is that of Satan when he spoke, saying, "You will not surely die" (Genesis 3:4).

Jesus Christ identifies exactly who Satan is: "He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it" (John 8:44).

Because mankind continued to rebel—as Satan rebelled (compare Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:11-17)—God chose to destroy what He had created on the earth:

"Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the LORD said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them'" (Genesis 6:5-7).

Verse 11 of Genesis 6 adds, "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was FILLED WITH VIOLENCE" (also, compare verse 13).

God put an end to that society, because of their VIOLENT and evil ways of living!

We have been strictly warned beforehand that the END OF THIS AGE will be characterized by the same kind of conditions that led to God's direct and cataclysmic intervention in human society through the Flood.

Jesus spoke of the signs preceding His return to the earth, and among them He revealed this:

“But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matthew 24:37).

Brethren, a multitude of prophecies have been left for us in God’s Word that point to these times in which we now find ourselves living. Times of unprecedented evil along with tumultuous events in nature already clearly mark our generation—and they will grow even WORSE!

Our extraordinary privilege is to understand these things and to prepare for them! Added to this knowledge is our sure conviction that Jesus Christ will be sent back to this earth to personally put a stop to the global devastation that is yet to arise.

Of the time immediately ahead of us, Jesus said:

“For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened” (Matthew 24:21-22).

In years before the Flood, God responded to the faithfulness of Noah by instructing him to prepare for what was about to happen to the world of that age. We find this testimony of Noah’s actions: “By faith Noah, being divinely warned of THINGS NOT YET SEEN, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith” (Hebrews 11:7).

The example of Noah has bearing on our own circumstances. Since we are facing the most difficult time in all of earth’s history, what must we be doing to prepare—to be counted among the elect of God and to “...be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man” (Luke 21:36)?

As Jesus also instructed in verse 36, we must “[w]atch” and “pray always.” How and in what way are we supposed to be watching and praying?

One way is to continue in our calling to Christianity—to NEVER GIVE UP AND TO NEVER QUIT! In His very specific warning for all Christians, for all times, Jesus says, “...he who endures to the end shall be saved” (Matthew 24:13).

For those of His followers who do CONTINUE with zealous fervency, Jesus has given His promise of divine protection—just as He promised to save Noah along with his family:

“Because you have kept My command to PERSEVERE, I ALSO WILL KEEP YOU FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL [the Great Tribulation] which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth” (Revelation 3:10).

Note that these promises of protection are conditional! We must never take them for granted!

Over numerous decades, we have all been warned to WATCH world events and to stay READY for the imminent fulfillment of biblical prophecy. We have been constantly reminded to stay actively committed to OUR PART in the Church of God—and that specifically includes helping to support and participate in the preaching of the Gospel. Remember, Jesus said “...this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then THE END WILL COME” (Matthew 24:14; compare Mark 13:10; Matthew 10:22-23).

Noah, along with his wife, his three sons and their wives, left their former lives behind. It took time for them to complete the work God had given for them to accomplish. However, with sudden swiftness, the day of God's judgment descended, and only these eight people were saved from destruction! Everyone else perished!

For our world and the billions of people who now exist under the wicked and murderous influence of Satan, an end of violence will come! God will, once again, intervene in human affairs, and, this time, He will establish His government on the earth:

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other”(Matthew 24:29-31).

In the glorious reign of Jesus Christ, PEACE will fill the earth (compare Isaiah 9:6-7). Christ shall rule powerfully, and He has given us this promise to look forward to: “He shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, NEITHER SHALL THEY LEARN WAR ANYMORE. But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, And no one shall make them afraid...” (Micah 4:3-4).

In his final recorded letter to the Church, we find encouragement from the apostle Peter that has timeless application—it is something we all must heed:

“Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation... You therefore, beloved, since you KNOW THIS BEFOREHAND, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and forever. Amen” (2 Peter 3:14-15, 17-18).

We are also including a special reprint of our Editorial from Update 397 (June 5, 2009), titled “The Last Days...” In this powerful presentation, Evangelist Norbert Link discusses the critical biblical proof that points to our having entered the prophesied time of the end of the age!

In Christ's Service,



Dave Harris