

February 16, 2022

Dear Brethren and Friends,

Two years ago, we began to experience circumstances which have changed the world. Now, the Covid-19 pandemic and governmental restrictions continue to stifle the lives of most of this world's population. Beyond the hundreds of millions of infections and the millions of deaths, daily living is no longer the "normal" of previous years. We realize of course that the figures might be inflated, as many who had been counted as having died of corona died *with* corona because of underlying conditions, and that lockdowns and other restrictions contributed to the death of many, as recent research confirms. In any event, the number of people who became sick and died has been staggering.

Certainly, the Church of God has suffered during this time—along with the rest of society. Deaths have occurred and several have been stricken by this infectious disease. Due to governmental lockdowns and other restrictive measures, even the ability to assemble together for weekly Sabbath services or to attend the annual Holy Days, including the Feast of Tabernacles, has been altered and made more challenging. In some areas, even attending on the Sabbath had been prohibited, and Church members had to make a choice as to whom they wanted to obey—God or man.

We have long understood that shocking events would take place as the return of Jesus Christ draws near. Prophetic warnings about the end of this age have been given by God throughout the Bible. While what is mentioned is indeed foreboding and fearful, the people of God—"the elect"—have been given reassurances for these times.

Although the statements by Jesus are plainly written down for anyone to read, few do so with understanding. Jesus spoke of "signs" which would take place in fulfillment of end-time prophecies, and among what we should watch for are these:

"Then He said to them, 'Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven'" (Luke 21:10-11).

Continuing...

"And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near" (Luke 21:25-28).

The Church of God will exist during all of these events! That means, we will experience many of these life-changing, phenomenal occurrences! However, unlike the world, which has rebelled against God and rejected His rule, Christians have been given reassurance for help in these and future times. But we will, as David wrote, face trials of faith:

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4).

In this context, consider what Jesus also 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).

Some members of the Church of God will receive extraordinary protection in the very worst of times ahead of us. These are Christians identified in the message written to the “church in Philadelphia,” and here is the promise from Jesus:

“Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth” (Revelation 3:10).

What is meant when Jesus speaks of persevering?

Of course, it involves being obedient to God and faithfully living our lives by following the example of Jesus Christ, but there is more! The great challenge before us is to bring the warnings of God to this world, and those warnings are part of the commission given to preach the gospel—the GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD! (Compare Matthew 24:14).

It is up to God to open doors for us to do this, and it is up to us to go through those doors. Can we do more in this regard? Yes, and we must! This is a daunting challenge, but we know this, “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, Says the LORD of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6)—and “...with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26)!

Hard to imagine, even unimaginable things are coming! But we know the good news—that God the Father will intervene to put a stop to Satan’s rule and man’s rebellion. He WILL SEND JESUS CHRIST to establish the Kingdom of God on the earth!

Let me close with the words of a twelve-year-old Jesus—the very thing we must be doing: “Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49).

In Christ’s Service,



Dave Harris