

The Handwriting Is On The Wall (1995)

The Church and the World

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We're going to begin in II Timothy 3:1 and 13. These are very familiar and they are the kind of scriptures I think that most of us are able to at least give the sense of without even turning to them.

II Timothy 3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

And then in verse 13, concluding this paragraph:

II Timothy 3:13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

I think that we would all agree that the prophesied hard times that are going to occur before Christ returns are either upon us or they are right on the threshold of being upon us. I don't think that we have reached the place yet where they are as bad as they are going to get, but I think that you would agree that they are pretty bad even now, so much so that you wish that things were already changed because they are oppressive to you, at least to some degree.

When Paul said in verse 13 "worse and worse," it more literally means, "*proceed to the worst.*" This would really be a better translation of that—"evil men and seducers shall proceed to the worst." Human nature is no worse than it ever was. However, in the past, the cultural restraints held it in check. What I mean is that back in the '40s and '50s, there were enough restraints on people, social things, things that you were expected to do or not do, things that you were expected to restrain yourself from. Well, those barriers came down during the '50s and '60s and '70s and now people feel free to do things that back in the '40s and '50s they would have been ashamed to do. So evil men are proceeding to the worst.

We're coming to the time when human nature is going to feel free to expose itself to the fullest. Jesus, in Matthew 24, drew attention to the days of Noah, and most specifically to those days just prior to the flood.

Genesis 6:5-7 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repents Me that I have made them.

Genesis 6:11-13 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

I don't think that we have reached the depths to which these people had gone, but I think that you will agree that news reports indicate that we are well on the way. It says, "And God saw." It's so interesting because I think you will agree that most people live life as though God (if there is a God) has turned His back, that He is not paying attention, that He is not watching, that He is not cognizant of what is going on, and that He's not impressed by the evil that is going on. But you and I know better than that.

It says in the Psalms that His eyelids test the sons of men and that He is watching, He is waiting, and the only reason that He hasn't intervened yet is that in His wisdom and in His love, He has deemed that it is not yet time. The wickedness of the Amorites is not yet full, and if He intervened now, it would not have the effect that it is going to have when He finally does intervene. I think that you and I will fully agree that it has got to get to the place where everybody is going to admit that if God hadn't intervened, it would have been too late, and that repentance may very well would have been impossible. We aren't there yet.

It was so evil that the Hebrew more literally says that "*man was evil every day*." Even the most evil people, we think, have good days. But in those days mankind was evil every day. It went on without any intermission.

The reason that this was occurring was because there was no fear of God before their eyes. There was nothing to restrain human nature. It was so bad in verse 7 it literally says, "*I will wipe man from the face of the soil*." It is such a strong statement it indicates that one time you see mankind, and then a minute later mankind is gone.

Anthropologists, biologists, and paleontologists are aware that the dinosaurs disappeared almost in a flash. It was like one day they existed, and the next day they were gone. They died so rapidly and were buried so rapidly that they were put into a state of preservation. Other animals died so rapidly and were buried frozen so rapidly—quick frozen—that even to this day every once in awhile someone discovers a woolly mammoth or a mastodon somewhere in Siberia, and its fur hasn't even deteriorated, and it even has its latest meal in its stomach undigested.

That's what it indicates. "I will wipe man from the face of the soil." Was God aware? He sure was. There's going to come a time when He is going to intervene in events during our lifetime. In verse 13, He summarized then why He was going to bring the flood—because the earth was filled with violence. And that is the fruit of human nature without restraint. That was the effect of Satan virtually having complete access to the control of men's minds.

What we're seeing here is the culmination of mankind's refusal to live within the God-given bounds. What began in the Garden of Eden with what seems like such a little sin—they desired the fruit, they took the fruit, they ate the fruit—and it ended this way. The seed was sown, and then without restraint, 1,656 years later came the flood. It took awhile to build up, but once the ball got rolling it didn't stop.

It's good to go back and review this because we are living in times that are parallel with what we read here in Genesis 6. I'm going to quote to you something that came from a cover letter that arrived with a direct mailing to

our home. Probably every one of you gets these kinds of things. "Buy our newsletter and we're going to make you a millionaire because we are going to give you the inside tips on what to invest on in these times and we're going to give you summaries of the news, and the news is going to tell you, invest here or invest there. Just give us your money and we'll make you rich." It was that kind of a mailing. Here's what the man said:

There is a madman on the loose on the other side of this world. Last February Kim Song Il, the erratic dictator of North Korea, held an execution to dispatch a dozen military officers accused of plotting to overthrow him. He rounded up a thousand party officials and citizens to witness the event. Then he had the offenders tied to stakes, doused with fuel oil and one by one set on fire. And that's what he's willing to do in public. I tell you this story just to give you a slight idea of what he is like. But it's what he is up to behind the scene that's really scary. He's a bitter dictator presiding over a wrecked economy. He hates Japan. He hates the United States, and he needs money badly. So he's making deals with Arab fundamentalists, waging terrorist holy wars, and greedy would-be billionaires spoiling for control of over \$13 trillion dollars in oil under a small patch of ground in the Middle East. The deals are North Korean missiles for oil.

Now it's been just one year and three weeks since we last began a Feast of Tabernacles, and the world scene doesn't look any better now than it did then. In fact, I think that you would agree almost unanimously that the quality of life continues to deteriorate into more uncertainty in this world. For some, life deteriorates right into the pit, even after it's barely begun.

Is evil restricted to the leadership of nations? Absolutely not. It's the leaders, people who are in positions of authority, whose deeds are clearly seen because the media focuses on them. But we are warned in Isaiah 1:6 that Israel is sick from the sole of its feet to the top of its head. From top to bottom we are rotting away. He uses very picturesque language to describe what is going on.

Daniel 5:5 In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall

of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

In verse 22 Daniel is now speaking. He's giving a little sermonette before he tells Belshazzar what was written and why it was written.]

Daniel 5:22-23 And you his son, O Belshazzar [he was actually the grandson but descended from Nebuchadnezzar], have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this but have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you, and your lords, your wives, and your concubines, have drunk wine in them; and you have praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand your breath is, and whose are all your ways, have you not glorified:

Remember this is being spoken to a Gentile king, not an Israelite king that you would expect would know better. God held this Gentile king responsible simply because he was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. He should have known better than do what he did. Do you think God doesn't see what is going on?

He chose at this time to dramatically intervene to let you and I know that He knows what's going on and when His holy things are not held with the respect that they should be held, then He begins the machinery in motion to take action. Now here He did it more quickly than is normally done, but I just read this to you because I want you to understand that He's aware of what's going on. He's marking time until certain things are accomplished.

Daniel 5:24-26 Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it.

This incident has given rise to the cliché, "The handwriting is on the wall." That indicates that the signs of imminent doom are all around. This was dramatic in an understated way. There were no lightening bolts that came down from heaven. There were no sounding of trumpets, no stamping of

feet, no earthquakes, no hail, no great windstorm—just silently, suddenly, in the midst of a celebration when everybody was a little bit stoned having a happy time, giggling, joking back and forth, drinking wine out of God's holy vessels, showing disrespect, no fear of Him in what they were doing—and then suddenly the fingers of a man's hand appears and begins to inscribe MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN which means, "Belshazzar, you've had it."

So Daniel tells him what and why. And of course, as we know, that very night it was carried out. When was it?—October 10th or October 9th, very close to this date right now in 539 BC. We are almost at the anniversary of what we are reading right there. I'd say we are within a day or two. Some of you might have it written in your Bibles.

We can understand a great deal more of that because it's been revealed to us. What this particular prophecy meant was very quickly revealed because the consequences appeared that very night. They occurred very quickly. But with most prophecies the doom is apparent only to those who know what to look for because it's been revealed to them, and they have been given eyes to see and to understand events whose consequences would escape others. And though others may see the events occurring, they don't understand exactly where they are headed.

So we live in a time during God's purpose when His work is being conducted on a worldwide basis because His church is a worldwide organization. God's plan is gearing up to include people from all nations on a much larger scale than we see it today because we are moving toward the millennial judgment. Thus the prophesied events are occurring on a worldwide basis, and they are going to bear witness regardless of where a person lives or what race he is a part of.

Last year I began the Feast with a message whose title was, "The Handwriting is on the Wall." I thought that I would do that again this year. In that message I gave statistics that clearly and conclusively show that Matthew 24:7, the statement bearing on earthquakes, is coming to pass and that it is being fulfilled at an ever accelerating pace. This year we're going to

take a brief look at another narrow area of prophetic concern that shows how much the quality of life and the appreciation of life is deteriorating to tragic and horrifying levels.

I'm going to begin this with a cover letter from William J. Bennett, whose name you may recognize, that came from the *Index of Leading Cultural Indicators* published by the Heritage Foundation.

Since 1960 (that's only 35 years ago) population in the United States has increased 41%. The gross domestic product has nearly tripled and total social spending (talking here about Social Security, Medicare, all the welfare programs) by all levels of government measured in constant 1990 dollars has risen from \$143.7 billion to \$787 billion, more than a five-fold increase. The population has only increased 41%. Social spending has increased 500%. Does that begin to indicate something is wrong? Inflation-adjusted spending on welfare has increased 630% and inflation-adjusted spending on education has increased 225%. Notice the disparity. But during the same 30 year period there's been a 560% increase in violent crime, more than a 400% increase in illegitimate births, a 400% increase in divorce, a 200% increase in teenage suicides, and a 80 point decrease in SAT scores. Do you know the only thing that is holding the SAT scores up even reasonably high? They're making them easier. They're making the tests easier. Everything is a fake, or at least have elements of hypocrisy within them. We are hiding our degeneracy. In so many different ways we're going down the tubes. Not only morally, we're going down educationally. And the more money we throw at social programs, the less it seems to accomplish, and the more dependent people become upon those things because they are losing their sense of responsibility, among other things.

People like William J. Bennett and those in the Heritage Foundation who worked with him in order to produce these things can clearly see that something unprecedented in the history of the United States is taking place, and they are alarmed. They feel that the solution is to turn the deterioration of American culture around. If they can just get it back to the level it was even in 1960, they would feel as though they had accomplished something

very great. But they can't do it because they are hamstrung; and they are hamstrung because they don't believe God.

I'm sure that they're going to make a sincere effort. That mailing that I received is part of that effort, but it is doomed to failure because the root cause lies in the mind of each and every person under the influence of Satan. How can it be successful when very many, especially the intellectual leaders of the United States, people in positions of power in government, education, science, industry, and the arts, don't even believe that there is a literal devil? And above all, they don't believe that he is the ruler of this world. The spiritual confusion is so great that even God in His wisdom has deemed it necessary to allow man to bring itself to the very brink of destruction in order to get the mind conditioned to where it will accept truths that it has rejected for almost 6,000 years.

Who do you think is the world's greatest murderer? Perhaps you would nominate Adolf Hitler and put his name over top of the some 50 million people who died as a result of the Second World War. Perhaps you would nominate Joseph Stalin who it is said is responsible (because he was the leader of the nation) for 20 million fellow Russians who died during his regime in order to keep him and the Communist Party in power. I just read that the estimate of the number of people killed by Communist state governments since 1917 in nations like Russia, China, Eastern Europe, Vietnam and Cambodia totals to somewhere near 100 million people. Is the earth violent?

Those responsible come into positions of power when technology had reached the point at which people can be much more efficiently eliminated than at any other time in the past. But who was the greatest is really a moot point, because the same nature, which drove Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin and all the others in the past, is working in the minds of Mr. and Mrs. Average American as well. The only thing that is lacking is the inclination of a lust for power and the opportunity to use it in that manner.

Hosea 4:1 Hear the word of the LORD, you children of Israel: for the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

You wonder how can he prophesy something like that when we have churches on so many corners? You see, they don't know God. They know about God. They believe in the existence of a god, but they aren't really acquainted with God. They don't really love God. They don't really fear Him, because if they did, these things wouldn't be happening. If they feared Him there would be enough respect in them to restrain themselves regardless of what anybody else did.

Do you understand that is the solution to the problem? Each individual has to restrain himself regardless of whether he sits on the throne, is a part of the Parliament or the Congress, whether he is in the Supreme Court, whether he works in a hospital, whether he is a policeman, whether he is an athlete, an entertainer, or whatever, the responsibility of everybody is to restrain himself. It's not the responsibility of the police. It's the responsibility of the person. And we are never going to live in a society without violence, without corruption, without thieving, without raping, without illegitimate children, until the individual takes it upon himself to restrain himself and live within the limits of the law of God because he fears God.

The problem is right here. The problem is with me. It's not Joseph Stalin all by himself. It's not Adolf Hitler. It's me. And that's where people have to begin to look to the solution. Let it begin with me, and then it will begin to stop.

Hosea 4:2 By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood touches blood.

So many crimes, it seems like the blood on the ground doesn't even get dry until a new puddle of blood forms to touch the blood that was just spilled.

Hosea 4:3-6 Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwells therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yes, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away. Yet let not man strive, nor reprove another: for your people are as they that strive with the priest. Therefore shall you fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with you in the night, and I will destroy your mother. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject

you, that you shall be no priest to me: seeing you have forgotten the law of your God, I will also forget your children.

Ezekiel 7:23-27 Make a chain: for the land is full of bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence. Wherefore I will bring the worst of the heathen, and they shall possess their houses: I will also make the pomp of the strong to cease; and their holy places shall be defiled. Destruction comes; and they shall seek peace, and there shall be none. Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumor shall be upon rumor; then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients. The king shall mourn, and the prince shall be clothed with desolation, and the hands of the people of the land shall be troubled: I will do unto them after their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

In this section, along with Hosea, God indicts the children of Israel. The Bible uses *children* in the sense of either "*descended from*" or "*one showing the characteristics of*." If one is called a "child of Israel" or "the children of Israel" in the Old Covenant, it is like saying "Christian." That similarity exists with Christian under the New Covenant.

You might recall that Jesus in John 8 chided the Jews by saying, "If you were Abraham's children, you wouldn't do what you're going to do. Abraham wouldn't want to kill Me." And the very fact that they didn't behave like Abraham was proof that they were not really Abraham's children because they didn't show the characteristics of Abraham. Paul says to you and me, "Let every one who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity (II Timothy 2:19)." God has a controversy with the children of Israel because they don't conduct their lives like Israel did.

We live with violence on a daily basis. It's all around us and it causes all of us a measure of anxiety to the extent that we're very careful about where we walk, especially at certain times of the day. We want to be safe at all times so we avoid areas and we keep our doors locked in certain areas of the city. But the violence that is inflicted and the blood spilled has reached the point where it has now gone right into sanitized rooms and the hallowed halls of hospitals and clinics and is performed by distinguished people, gowned

people upon the most helpless of all with the consent given by your next door neighbor. "Make a chain" God says, "for the land is full of bloody crimes."

Do you know why He says, "make a chain?" Because I'm (God) going to lead you chained into captivity. Since abortion began on a grand scale in the United States, 34 million babies have been surgically aborted from Mr. and Mrs. Average American. How does that begin to compare to Adolf Hitler? Joseph Stalin? We've already outdone Joseph Stalin. He killed 20 million Russians. We've killed 34 million American babies. That figure, as bad as it sounds, only begins to compare, though, on a worldwide basis. About 34 million abortions take place every year, worldwide.

Were you outraged and were you shocked when 169 people died when that bomb went off in Oklahoma City? Let me give you a little measure of something that might help you to get a better grip on abortion. The same day that 169 people died in Oklahoma City because of one bomb blast, 4,300 babies died in American hospitals, aborted. You weren't shocked about that. Most of us hardly ever stop to think about something like that. Violence is being inflicted upon the weakest of all, with the consent of the government, and with the consent of the mother and the father in many cases. Do you think we aren't ready to go into captivity?

I'll make you feel good. While Americans abort about 1.5 million babies a year, in Russia the figure is usually between 8 and 10 million, and by the time a Russian woman is through her child bearing years, they have aborted an average of 12 to 15 babies, and that doesn't even begin to compare to what's going on in China. Little girls are being killed left and right simply because they are girls.

Brethren, American's perception of life and our responsibility to those living has become so warped it's almost unimaginable. Now late term abortions called D & E and D & X are taking place. In a D & X the doctor pulls the fetus out of the birth canal feet first until just the head remains inside and then he punctures the skull at it's base with a pair of scissors, thus making a hole in the skull into which he sticks a suction tube and proceeds to suck the babies brains out. With a D & E the fetus is dismembered within the womb and then the pieces are pulled out of the birth canal.

But even worse things are beginning to appear on the horizon. Apparently it's not happening in the United States yet, but it is happening, at least in China. And if it's happening there, can it be very far behind in the United States? Do you remember the movie *Soylent Green*? You probably thought that was pretty far out when you saw it. Charlton Heston was the star of that movie. It is one of those futuristic science fiction pictures that made the rounds a number of years ago. Anyway it made the outlook for the future look quite depressing. The primary food item that everybody ate was something called soylent green, and everybody wondered what it was. Finally the hero discovers that what they were eating were reconstituted human beings.

What is already reported happening on a fairly common basis in China, seems to be even more gruesome.

Deuteronomy 28:53-58 And you shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and of your daughters, which the LORD your God has given you, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith your enemies shall distress you: So that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave: So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat: because he has nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith your enemies shall distress you in all your gates. The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, And toward her young one that comes out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith your enemy shall distress you in your gates. If you will not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD YOUR GOD.

This is describing events that will happen during the siege when the food supply is cut off. What is happening in China is taking place without benefit of a siege. I'm going to read from Dr. McBirney's newsletter of August 1995. Dr. McBirney incidentally just died. This is hot off the wire.

But we haven't even begun to dredge the miserable depths of Chinese brutality toward the unborn. Recent reports claim that aborted fetuses are being sold as health supplements and that some doctors in Chenchiang hospitals are eating dead fetuses after doing abortions saying the embryos make the skin smoother, enhance body strength, and are good for the kidneys and general health. Reports have circulated that hospital cleaning women were seen fighting each other to take the treasured human remains home to eat as a nutritional supplement. Some hospitals allegedly sell the fetuses to the sick. The going rate is \$10, but when the supply is short, the price is \$20. Some clinics, however, are making a killing (pardon the pun) [he says] selling fetuses for as much as \$300 a piece. A Hong Kong man claimed he has been eating fetus soup for more than six months and that it has cured his asthma. Debate continues over the morality of conducting fetal tissue research to find cures for debilitating diseases, plus many believe in mandated abortions for "imperfect" fetuses, those with physical handicaps and /or mental retardation. Abortion is a billion dollar industry in the United States alone, excluding the sale of fetal body parts for research and for use in cosmetics as collagen. The bodies of aborted babies are now sold for up to \$5,000 per pound in the United States, sales of hysterectomy-aborted babies removed alive up to nine months old fetch \$1 million annually. The sale of fetuses from late term elective abortions netted a Washington DC general hospital between 1966 and 1976 income, which was used to purchase TV sets, soda and cookies for visiting professors. President Clinton signed an executive order, which created a panel to establish guidelines for live embryo research. The order suggests the acceptability of D & X abortions in which the brain tissue of live babies up to nine months old is suctioned out of the scalp for use in Alzheimer research. For now the panel has decreed that embryo research can only be carried out on embryos up to fourteen

days old because the human nervous systems begins to develop at that point. This immoral, horribly demeaning of the value of human life has dangerous repercussions for us all. Perhaps someday people will be required to be euthanized at age 60 because they are deemed to be no longer useful for society.

That will happen if things go on long enough. It's the next step to abortion. You begin one, you win acceptance for it, and then the next begins to occur.

Genesis 4:10-12 And He said, What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries unto me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened her mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand; when you till the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto you her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shall you be in the earth.

Did you ever think in your wildest imagination that God is unaware of what is going on and that He will not take retribution? My King James Version Study Bible says in the margin of this verse, "Thus God's judgment is on those who by whatever means [D & X, D & E, a simple abortion] abort human life." The cry in verse 10 is for vengeance, and in Proverbs 26:2, it says, "The curse causeless shall not come."

If God cursed Cain, what kind of a curse do you think is on this nation?

Proverbs 3:33 The curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked:

Mr. and Mrs. Average American do not like to think of themselves as being wicked. It's always the other guy, because what I do is not quite as bad as what the guy next door is doing. Are you aware that Adolf Hitler, who everybody considers to be so evil, liked dogs? And anybody who likes dogs can't be all that bad. He loved to have photographers take his picture with his dog and to have it distributed through the news media.

Revelation 6:9-11 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a

loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, do you not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

This, brethren, is where the violence is headed. When people begin killing the Christians, they are not going to feel any sense that they are wrong in so doing any more than the people who are aborting babies. Because by that time the justifications will have been made in the mind, the mind will have adjusted, and "we have got to get rid of these people because they are a threat to society," or "because they aren't worth living."

Do you think those people over in the Mid East can't find justifications for killing one another? Do you think that Kim Song Il cannot find justifications for killing those 12 or 15 men, burning them to death in fuel oil? The mind adjusts, the conscience adjusts, and when that time comes, people are going to be justified in what they are doing.

I bring this to our attention because this is no time to allow ourselves to get distracted. We might not yet be in the worst of it, but we are right on the horizon of it. Things like abortion are evidence that we are right on the edge of it—when people can kill the most innocent and helpless with hardly a thought of what they are doing. It's no longer a moral issue to most people who are aborting their babies. It is simply a choice. So a potential god goes down the toilet or becomes part of a health food supplement.

This world badly needs to be prayed for and we need to begin this Feast of Tabernacles with an understanding of the kind of times that we live in and to be geared up and to be serious about our responsibilities. We need to pray every day that God will give us the faith to do what is necessary to fulfill our responsibilities so we will be prepared to face whatever that day's trials and problems are. If you do that you're going to grow, and you'll have the faith for each occasion as it arises.

I know that I personally do not want to be among those who are required to give my life as a martyr. But since Christ bought and paid for me just as He

did for you, we must be willing to be used in any way that He determines, because if He determines that we are used that way, it is going to be best for His purpose.

Now there is every reason to be hopeful, because not only does He tell us to watch and pray that we may be accounted worthy to escape all these things, He has given us wonderful, clear and hope-filled examples.

What a contrast we have with what I recently read in an article in *The Los Angeles Times*. I found this a little hard to believe, but the man seemed to know what he was talking about. The article reported the average age of people attending the mainline Christian churches (Protestant, Catholic) is 65. The average age of the entire population in the United States is 36. Do you know what that indicates? It indicates we have a whole generation of people without moral guidance.

Do you think that's not true what God says in Hosea 4:1, 6 that there is no knowledge of God in the land? That's why it's so easy for abortion to take place. And that's why it's going to be so easy for the Christians to be martyred. A godless government like Communism can put people to death virtually on a whim because it's a government that lives only for those things that are material and God is not material. There's no fear of God.

In Genesis 6:8 it says that Noah received grace. He found grace in God's eyes. So have we. Noah found grace, but he had to apply himself. And as he applied himself, he was producing the very means of his safety during the coming storms. It shows us in Genesis 6:22 that Noah was obedient. But even if he had been obedient, and he was, Genesis 8:1 shows that even when things got at their worst, God was still there with him. Throughout all that he was going through, God was still giving Noah grace. He never left him.

There is hope because if God allows these times to parallel the days of Noah, He will also have things paralleling what He did for Noah. So He gives us that hope. And if we're alert and we pray always, meaning we're always in contact with Him, we pray to Him every day, we ask Him for the faith, we ask Him for the love, we ask Him for the guidance, we ask Him for the correction, we ask Him for whatever gift we need, He will give it so that we can rise to the occasion and glorify Him with our lives.

What we have here is just a small foretaste in this Feast of Tabernacles of the times of refreshing that are now just over the horizon. Let's do what we do here with all of our might, never forgetting the purpose to which God has called us and that His preparations will find us ready for whatever He purposes for us.