

JUDGES 6:6-10
THE WARNING OF GOD!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Judges chapter 6 as we continue our study through the book of Judges. And keep in mind we are taking our time going through this book, trying to glean all that we can so that we may grow in the Lord!

We began Judges chapter 6 last week and we looked at the subject of *SIN NEVER PROFITS!*

For the children of Israel, they had once again turned from the Lord, went after the pagan gods and thus, God brought them into judgment by the hands of the Midianites.

They must have thought that they were gaining some advantage by doing this, by turning from the Lord and doing their own thing, but their sin did not profit them, it brought them into bondage. And that truly is what sin does. We think it is going to bless us, make us prosperous, make us happy, and it may for a time, but in the end, it does not profit!

Also, keep in mind that this apostasy in Israel did not happen throughout the entire nation at one time.

We have looked at the southern region of Israel affected by apostasy in Judges 3:5-31 and the Judges that God raised up to deliver them.

Then we looked at the northern region of Israel affected by apostasy in Judges 4:1-5:31 and we saw the Judge that God raised up to deliver them.

And now, in Judges 6:1 through Judges 10:5 we see the central region of Israel affected by apostasy and we will see the Judges that God raises up to deliver them from their bondage, a bondage that they placed themselves in!

And here in Judges chapter 6, as I have said, it is the Midianites that were oppressing them, and what they did was ingenious!

The Midianites were nomads and they could travel long distances by camel, some 100 miles per day. And since they were nomads, they did not plant many crops because they kept moving. Thus, they would sell their products to purchase fruit and grain.

But now, they had a better idea. They would come down at harvest time and steal the grain that the children of Israel were harvesting, and it was devastating to the children of Israel, as you can imagine.

One writer put it like this regard what they had to endure. He wrote,

You have a garden, and you work hard all spring and summer to make that garden produce abundantly. But every year, just about the time you're ready to gather in the harvest, your neighbors swoop down and take your produce away from you by force. This goes on year after year, and there's nothing you can do about it.

If you can image that scenario, then you'll have some idea of the suffering the Jews experienced every harvest when the Midianites made their annual raids. For seven years, God allowed the Midianites and their allies to ravage "the land of milk and honey," leaving the people in the deepest poverty.

- Warren W. Wiesbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary*, p. 440

In our study this morning, we are going to look at ***THE WARNING OF GOD!***

Now let me be clear on this. It is not that they had no warning, they just ignored the warning and now were suffering the consequences! They were in bondage for seven years by the hands of the Midianites!

Even before they entered the land of Canaan, the Promise Land, God had warned them through Moses what would happen if they turned from God.

Then, when they entered the Promise Land, God warned them through Joshua what would happen if they turned from God.

In fact, at the end of his life, as he was trying to encourage the children of Israel to follow the Lord and not turn from Him, he told them in Joshua chapter 23 beginning in verse 1, and we are just going to read through this chapter so that you will clearly see the warning that God gave the children of Israel and now it was up to them to obey the Lord or do as they pleased. And the consequences for not obeying is bondage, it is not good.

This is what Joshua said to them, **“Now it came to pass, a long time after the Lord had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was old, advanced in age. And Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers, and said to them: ‘I am old, advanced in age. You have seen all that the Lord your God has done to all these nations because of you, for the Lord your God is He who has fought for you. See, I have divided to you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from the Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, as far as the Great Sea westward. And the Lord your God will expel them from before you and drive them out of your sight. So you shall possess their land, as the Lord your God promised you. Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, and lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you. You shall not make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause anyone to swear by them; you shall not serve them nor bow down to them, 8 but you shall hold fast to the Lord your God, as you have done to this**

day. For the Lord has driven out from before you great and strong nations; but as for you, no one has been able to stand against you to this day. One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the Lord your God is He who fights for you, as He promised you. Therefore take careful heed to yourselves, that you love the Lord your God. Or else, if indeed you do go back, and cling to the remnant of these nations - these that remain among you - and make marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you, know for certain that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the Lord your God has given you. Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed. Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all the good things have come upon you which the Lord your God promised you, so the Lord will bring upon you all harmful things, until He has destroyed you from this good land which the Lord your God has given you. When you have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your God, which He commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed down to them, then the anger of the Lord will burn against you, and you shall perish quickly from the good land which He has given you.” Joshua 23:1-16.

Joshua wants them to remember what God has done for them. That He has fulfilled all the promises that He has made to them and now they need to walk accordingly. If they turn from the Lord, judgment will come, not might.

And as you get to Joshua chapter 24, they agree to follow the Lord, but as we saw as we opened up the book of Judges, we are told in Judges chapter 2 what they ended up doing. We are told, **“So the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord which He had done for Israel. Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died when he was one hundred and ten years old. And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres, in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel. Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baals; and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the Lord to anger. They forsook the Lord and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. Wherever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for calamity, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed.”** Judges 2:7-15.

God warned them, they thought they knew better, and, in the end, they found that they didn't, and they suffered the consequences for their actions!

Now it is easy to be hard against the children of Israel for their actions, but we ignore warnings all the time because we think we know better. Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

I was in the north of England in 1881, when a fearful storm swept over that part of the country.

A friend of mine, who was a minister at Evemouth, had a great many of the fishermen of the place in his congregation. It had been very stormy weather, and the fishermen had been detained in the harbor for a week.

One day, however, the sun shone out in a clear blue sky; it seemed as if the storm had passed away, and the boats started out for the fishing ground.

Forty-one boats left the harbor that day.

Before they started, the harbormaster hoisted the storm signal, and warned them of the coming tempest. He begged of them not to go; but they disregarded his warning, and away they went.

They saw no sign of the coming storm. In a few hours, however, it swept down on that coast, and very few of those fishermen returned.

There were five or six men in each boat, and nearly all were lost in that dreadful gale.

In the church of which my friend was pastor, I believe there were three male members left.

Those men were ushered into eternity because they did not give heed to the warning. I lift up the storm signal now and warn you to escape from the coming judgment!

That is what we will be focusing on this morning, ***THE WARNING OF GOD!***

I have broken down these verses we will be looking at this morning into three main points. They are:

THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD – JUDGES 6:6

THE CRY OF THE PEOPLE – JUDGES 6:7

THE REBUKE OF THE LORD – JUDGES 6:8-10

So with the remainder of our time this morning, let's begin reading in Judges chapter 6 beginning in verse 6, and let's see what the Lord has for us as we look at ***THE WARNING OF GOD!***

JUDGES 6

VERSE 6

So as they turned from the Lord, God brought this oppression upon them by the hands of the Midianites. And as you read that you may be wondering, ***“Hey, I thought these were God’s people. Why would God do that to His people? That does not seem right. That does not seem fair!”***

It is very true that these were God’s people. And it is also true that God brought them into this bondage. And, like it or not, if God ignored their actions, ignored their rebellion against Him, it would show that He did not love them.

On the other hand, because He brought this chastening upon them, it showed how much He loved them, cared for them! He was not going to let them continue in this condition because it would destroy their lives.

That is exactly what Spurgeon said, “The Lord does not permit His children to sin successfully.”

Now, as much as I may not always like that, I do know that it is what is best for my life, God is trying to protect me and not let continue down that path that will hurt me. But I do have a choice, to listen to Him and return to Him, or ignore Him and do my own thing. But that is never a good thing to do, not listen to God!

Listen to what we are told in Proverbs 3:11-12, some very wise words. Solomon wrote, **“My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor detest His correction; For whom the Lord loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights.”**

Chastening, correction shows that you love that person.

We live in a society today where parents want to be liked by their children, they want to be buddies with them. And let’s face it, we all want to be liked, and especially by our kids. But, to do that, you have to let them do what they want, ignore what they do wrong. I am not saying that all children will hate their parents, but every child will not like the discipline, the rules that parents make from time to time.

And if you really don’t love your children, you will let them do what they want when they want. But if you feel that way, understand that you are going against what the Scriptures are telling you to do. We are to train up our children.

Why is that? Because without training they will be out of control! Thus, we love them, and we discipline them so they can grow and mature to be healthy adults.

And the same is true with the Lord. If He did not love us, He would do nothing!

We do see this stated again in the book of Hebrews, and the point is this. If you can do things and you are not chastened by God, be concerned. He chastens those that are His children, not in a punitive way, but in a corrective way, because He loves us.

Listen to what we are told in Hebrews 12:5-11, “**And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: ‘My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.’ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.**”

Let’s be honest here. How many of us, when we were growing up, liked it when our parents disciplined us or told us that we could not do something that we wanted to do?

I am sure the answer to that is – ***NONE OF US!*** We were kids, we were learning what is right and what was wrong and when you are in the middle of a scolding or punishment from your parents, you just don’t like it.

But let's fast-forward to the present, for me, some 50 plus years have gone by, and as I look back at what my parents did for me, the discipline that they gave me, even though I did not like it back then, I am thankful now because it helped make me into the man that I am today!

In fact, Job puts it like this in Job 5:17-18, "**Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty. For He bruises, but He binds up; He wounds, but His hands make whole.**"

All that God is doing in our lives is to make us whole and to make us into holy people! Don't lose sight of that!

That is what He is doing here with the children of Israel. They forsook the Lord, and the Lord allowed them to go down that path away from Him, not to destroy them, but that they would see what that kind of life brought them and that they would repent and return to Him!

One writer summed it up like this for us. He wrote,

Chastening is evidence of God's hatred for sin and His love for His people. We can't conceive of a holy God wanting anything less than His very best for His children, and the best He can give us is a holy Character like that of Jesus Christ.

Obedience to the Lord builds character, but sin destroys character, and God cannot sit idly by and watch His children destroy themselves.

Israel had already experienced forty-three years of suffering under the harsh rule of the neighboring nations, but they hadn't yet learned their lesson and turned away from the heathen idols.

Unless our suffering leads to repentance, it accomplishes no lasting good, and unless our repentance is evidence of a hoy desire to turn from sin, not just escape from pain, repentance is only remorse. Chastening assures us that we are truly God’s children, that our Father loves us, and that we can’t get away with rebellion.

- Warren W. Wiesbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary*, p. 440

How true that is. God will not let us get away with anything because He loves us and again, that is what He is doing here with the children of Israel.

So we see here ***THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD*** which will lead us into our next point, ***THE CRY OF THE PEOPLE***, and that really begins with the last part of this verse here in Judges 6:6, “**... and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD.**” Let’s read on and see how this plays out.

VERSE 7

Frist of all, why did the children of Israel cry out to God?

I don’t believe it was because of their sin. I think it was because of the bondage that they were in by the hands of the Midianites, the oppression they were bringing upon them.

We see this even today. Christians, who get themselves in all kinds of trouble because of the things that they are doing, and their life is a mess and they say things like, “***Lord, if you will just get me out of this mess I will never do it again!***”

And that is great, but the real issue is their sin and their acknowledging of their sin. You see, they want out of the situation and yet, “***I will never do it again!***” is not really the issue.

As soon as things get better, as soon as things go back to what we might call normal, they are back doing the same things all over again.

I will give you this example.

Some of you may remember Jim Bakker, he was the former reigning king of charismatic television. And it was not a good thing!

Jim and Tammy-Faye Bakker were the darlings of Christian television and Paul and Jan Crouch, Pat Roberson, Jerry Falwell and Robert Tilton all stood in the shadow PTL cast.

But then came the scandal, his one-night affair with Jessica Hawn, who had been being sexually abused by her pastor, who passed her on to Jim.

He was also mishandling money that was sent in and he was sent to jail for forty years, only serving several of those years before being released.

And while in prison, Jim's life changed. He renounced all that he had done in the past. In 1997 he released a book called, "I Was Wrong!" and in this book he explains how the garbage he was portraying as Christianity, was wrong.

One writer gave us this insight. He wrote,

This book chronicles Bakker's rise and fall in a fairly honest fashion. Jim acknowledged that the "prosperity" message was unbalanced and confessed to his sexual sin and other failings. At the end one is left to believe that five years in the Federal prison changed Jim Bakker.

From a multi-millionaire, to basically a homeless guy when he emerged from jail sans [minus] Tammy Faye, who divorced Jim and married Jim's best friend Roe Messner in 1993 (the same year Roe divorced his wife & married Tammy).

Bakker seemed totally humbled by his "fall" from super stardom.

Frankly, one would imagine that after what he experienced and learned in prison; he would know how to avoid many of the snares set by Satan to entrap him (**2 Tim. 2:26**).

Sadly, the lessons he may have begun to learn in prison were fleeting at best and the ‘birds of wisdom’ have flown the coop in Bakker’s case.

- <https://bit.ly/2QuN8Dd>

Jim was working with the homeless in Los Angeles when he was released from prison. It truly looked like he had changed.

But make no mistake about it, that admission that he was wrong has changed and Jim is back to his old ways, making money off of people, gullible people who did not learn the lesson the first time.

And I think that is exactly what we are seeing here with the children of Israel. They were in trouble, they cried out to God, and yet, it was not from the heart. They just wanted freedom from the bondage that they were in!

Now you may be thinking, *“How do I know that they did not repent of their sin?”*

That is simple and as we will see, God will send a prophet to rebuke them and if they truly repented of their sin, He would not have sent this prophet to do that!

I am not sure why we think we can hide our sins or fool God into thinking we are truly sincere about things. He is all-knowing or omniscient and there is nothing that can be hidden from Him!

We are told this in Hebrews 4:13, **“And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”**

And yet, people still think they can get away with it, and they can’t!

Remember the story of Achan in Judges chapter 7?

Joshua and the children of Israel had just defeated the fortified city of Jericho, wiped it out!

And the Lord told them that the firstfruits of this battle belonged to Him. They were not to take any spoil from this victory.

And as we get to Joshua chapter 7, we see that famous and destructive word when it is applied to what we do, ***BUT!***

Listen to what we are told in Joshua 7:1, **“But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the Lord burned against the children of Israel.”**

Achan disobeyed the Lord and he thought that he could hide these spoils of victory and no one would know!

No one knew but God and his sin did affect the entire nation. You see, the next battle was against Ai, not a very strong city, easy to take and yet, they lost because of their disobedience to the Lord! Achan's sin affected the nation! No soldiers were lost in the battle against Jericho, but now, about thirty-six men lost their lives at Ai just because of this sin!

Make no mistake about it, your sin will find you out. Listen to what takes place in Joshua 7:16-22 and you will see this played out for us.

We are told, **“So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken. He brought the clan of Judah, and he took the family of the Zarhites; and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man, and Zabdi was taken. Then he brought his household man by man, and Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. Now Joshua said to Achan, ‘My son, I beg you, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.’ And Achan answered Joshua and said, ‘Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I have done: When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it.’ So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver under it.”**

Achan thought his sin was covered, it was not a problem, he hid it well. But God sees all things and thus, God exposed the sin of Achan!

And look at how long it took Achan to confess his sin, he waited until it was exposed, that he was the one who brought this reproach upon Israel!

And I don’t believe he was truly sorry, that he truly repented for his actions, but a, ***“Yes, I did this”*** response.

It is as Paul said in II Corinthians 7:9-10, **“Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.”**

It is more of a sorry that they got caught but like Achan, it was not a sorrow that lead to true repentance!

And that is what I think is going on here with the children of Israel as we will see that ***THE CRY OF THE PEOPLE*** leads to ***THE REBUKE OF THE LORD!*** Let's read on and see what the Lord has to say about their repentance.

VERSES 8-10

So as the children of Israel cry out to the Lord, the Lord sends them a prophet. That is interesting to me. He does not send them a deliverer, not yet.

Now, who is this prophet that God sent?

We don't know and the reality is, this is not the issue, God is!

Like this prophet we are servants of God, instruments used by God for His glory. It is not about us, but about the Lord. May we not forget that!

And notice what this prophet does. This prophet reminds the children of Israel of the love of God and how He brought them out of their bondage in Egypt.

He reminds them of the power of God and how He not only delivered them from the Egyptians but from all those nations who oppressed them.

Then what is the problem here?

The problem is not God, it is never God.

The problem was the children of Israel. As you can see, this prophet tells them that God is telling them, "**But you have not obeyed My voice.**"

You see, they refused to obey God and now they can't figure out why this oppression has come upon them. They blamed the Midianites but the reality was, it was their own sin that brought them in bondage and that is true in our own lives!

And like it or not, I don't think we are much different folks.

When we are oppressed, we tend to blame others for the mess we are in instead of examining our own hearts and repenting before the Lord!

The reality is this. Our actions, our behavior needs to reflect the one we love and the evidence for that is our obedience to Him.

Jesus said in John chapter 14, **“If you love Me, keep My commandments. . . . If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.”** John 14:15, 23-24.

It is our choice but if we love the Lord then we need to obey Him!

Now, look at our nation, look at the things that are happening in this world and do you think something big is coming?

I hope so because Jesus is coming!

And man, living in his own world, justifying his sin, ignores what is happening, but you truly can't ignore it that much longer, can you? I hope not.

It is amazing how sinful we have become. We flaunt our sin in the face of God, as a nation, and we don't think there are consequences to it. We don't believe in God and thus, we can do our own thing. But look at the children of Israel and see what their sin did in their lives, it brought them into bondage and I think we see that happening in our nation as well!

And here's the thing, how we can apply this to our lives. You see, we are that prophet or spokesperson for God warning the people of the coming judgment.

And the tragedy is that many don't want to hear of the warning of the coming judgment and the love of God for them that is seen in Jesus and the work He did on the cross of Calvary, paying in full the penalty for our sins. And thus, many are on the run from God.

Let me explain it like this. We are told,

Several years ago, an eastern paper reported this story:

One evening a woman was driving home when she noticed a huge truck behind her that was driving uncomfortably close.

She stepped on the gas to gain some distance from the truck, but when she sped up, the truck did too.

The faster she drove, the faster the truck did.

Now scared, she exited the freeway. But the truck stayed with her. The woman then turned up a main street, hoping to lose her pursuer in traffic. But the truck ran a red light and continued the chase.

Reaching the point of panic, the woman whipped her car into a service station and bolted out of her auto screaming for help.

The truck driver sprang from his truck and ran toward her car. Yanking the back door open, the driver pulled out a man hidden in the back seat. The woman was running from the wrong person.

From his high vantage point, the truck driver had spotted a would-be rapist in the woman's car. The chase was not his effort to harm her but to save her even at the cost of his own safety.

Likewise, many people run from God, fearing what he might do to them. But His plans are for good not evil - to rescue us from the hidden sins that endanger our lives.

- Source Unknown

God is not trying to hurt us, harm us but He is trying to rescue people from the danger that is coming. God gets no pleasure in the death of the wicked, and thus, He warns people over and over again.

And the Lord tells us in His Word, He sends prophets out into the world, and when I say prophets, I mean people that are speaking forth the Word of God, not adding to it or taking away from it. The office of a prophet has past off the scene, but in the broadest sense of the word, we are all prophets speaking forth the Words of God, sharing them, warning them!

And we are the ones, Christians, who are to go out into the world with the message of Christ and really, the warning of John the Baptist, to repent and turn to the Messiah, to Jesus Christ!

I know, you are thinking that this guy is one of those conspiracy nuts. No, I am not a conspiracy nut, I just know what the Bible has to say about the days we are living in and they are coming to pass before our very eyes. And we are to share that with others.

Years ago, when you talked about Bible prophecy, things moved very slow but today, they are happening all the time.

Let me show you what I mean and hopefully this will encourage you to be a witness to the world that Jesus is coming and they need to prepare their hearts, they need to repent of their sin and come to saving faith or they will experience the wrath of God.

In Matthew 24:3-8 we are told, **“Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’ And Jesus answered and said to them: ‘Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, “I am the Christ,” and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.’”**

The disciples are asking Jesus when all these things are going to take place and that is what Jesus is answering. They are thinking Kingdom Age now, but before the Kingdom Age comes, Jesus must pay in full the penalty for our sins and before the Kingdom Age there is the Church Age, which we are in right now.

Then, when the Church is caught up to be with the Lord, the seven-year Tribulation Period will start, and it is here we see the wrath of God being poured out upon a Christ rejecting world!

And in these verses we have read here in Matthew chapter 24, they are dealing with the first 3½ years of the 7-year Tribulation Period also known as **“the beginning of sorrows.”**

This is literally saying *“the beginning of birth pangs.”*

Now ladies, when labor starts it usually is not very difficult, some minor pains and they are far apart. And that is what we see for those first 3½ years, minor pain with false Christ's, wars, rumors of wars, civil wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes. This will start out mild but as the labor progresses the pains get more and more intense and they get closer together prior to giving birth. The birth of the *KINGDOM AGE* where Jesus Christ will rule and reign for one-thousand years!

Keep in mind that we are not here, the Church, the Bride of Christ, for any part of the Tribulation Period.

Now, in saying that, how come we are seeing some of these things that Jesus spoke of happening in our day? Some would argue that the Tribulation Period has come! No, it hasn't!

The Church, like I have said, will be raptured first and then the man of sin, the Antichrist will be revealed!

Then what are we seeing here because these signs that Jesus spoke of seem to be coming to pass before our eyes?

Please understand that these are false labor pains or what we might call Braxton Hicks contractions that are preparing the way for the true labor that is coming – ***THE TRIBULATION PERIOD!***

And notice how Jesus starts out, "**Take heed that no one deceives you.**"

So Jesus starts out with a warning about deception that is related to religious practices, wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes!

Now I am not saying that these things will not happen, but don't be deceived by them, don't fall prey to where they are leading you, to the Antichrist and away from God!

Let's deal with the religious aspect first. We are seeing today a proliferation of false doctrine coming into the church that I believe is leading the church into a One World religion. But that really is not what this is speaking of here. It is speaking of false Christ's and they have been around since the time of Christ.

But there is more to it than that. Listen again to what Jesus said, "**For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.**" I believe there is something that He is hitting on that may blow you away.

The Greek word for "**many**" is POLUS and it speaks of a very great number, as in millions and millions of people, not just a select few and they will claim to be god, they are false Christ's!

And look at the teachings of New Ager's; of health, wealth and prosperity teachers, The New Apostolic Reformation and what they are teaching, and many are falling prey to this idea that they are god! I think that is what Jesus is speaking of, the proliferation of man thinking he is god! And if man thinks he is god, then he can do what he thinks is right, he can determine what sin is!

And this lie of Satan was started in the Garden of Eden with Eve as he got Eve to doubt the Word of God, to deny the judgment for sin, and in the end, to believe that she will be as God!

What a lesson to learn and for us, to warn people of what is coming, this One World Religion, and to show people how the Pope is gathering the religions of the world together in this ecumenical movement.

Also, we see wars all over the place today, terrorism that is only going to increase. Interestingly enough the word “**will**” in the Greek is MELLO, (mel’-lo) and that carries the idea of continual hearing. There will be constant talk of actual wars and of rumors of wars, to a degree the world has never known before. As I have said, that is the thrust of what we hear on the news today and this is not even the start of the labor yet, it will only get more intense!

As we move on in verse 7 of Matthew chapter 24, we see “**famines**” spoken of, “**pestilences**” spoken of, “**earthquakes in various places**” spoken of. Let’s look at these three and see how they too are spoken of in Revelation.

First of all, with famines. Do you realize that the total number of children who die each year from starvation is 1.5 million! Not only that but every 3.6 seconds someone in the world dies from hunger! Every day 20,864 people will die of hunger or 7,615,360 people per year!

Think about this, because I don’t believe in our society, we tend to think a lot about this. We are only one crop failure away from global famine! And understand this; the deserts are increasing at a rate of 14.8 million square miles per year! (Forty square miles per day!)

Next is “**pestilences**” and I think that many times we feel this is speaking of deadly diseases like AIDS and Ebola and others from which there is no known cure.

I think that is part of it and it will only get worse. But what about plagues and biological warfare, do they fit into this?

I think they do. I will give you this example and that is with Syria, they have so much sarin gas that just for the United States or any country to secure it we would need 75,000 troops on the ground!

And look at how the world came to a standstill with the COVID-19 virus or the Coronavirus. People were quarantined in their homes, stock markets around the world crashed, people panicked, and that was just with this one virus, that was deadly, don't get me wrong, but what I want you to see is how the government can get you to do what they want very quickly!

Now, besides deadly diseases, this can also be speaking of natural disasters like a flood, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and-so-on.

And it may even speak of biological and chemical weapons that are unleashed, like I have said. And if there is a lack of food, then wild animals will do whatever they can to survive, even attacking humans! In any case, it is not good, it is devastating!

Look at the number of earthquakes and volcanoes that are erupting all over the world, especially around the Ring of Fire! We see the increase, but this is just the beginning, the Tribulation Period has not started yet, these are false labor pains or Braxton Hicks contractions!

And we can spend so much more time looking at all that is going on in the world, and it is just as the Lord has warned us. Read your Bible, pay attention to the news and see Bible prophecy come to life before your eyes!

Now, because of all of this, because of the bondage that man is in because of sin, like this prophet, we are to warn people of what is coming! We are not to be fearful, but to be strong in the Lord and the power of His might and share our faith.

Remember what we are told in Isaiah 44:6-8, **“Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: ‘I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God. And who can proclaim as I do? Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me, Since I appointed the ancient people. And the things that are coming and shall come, Let them show these to them. Do not fear, nor be afraid; Have I not told you from that time, and declared it? You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one.’”**

As I have said, God is God and He knows all things. Thus, because He knows all things, He is able to tell us what is going to happen long before it does and with 100% accuracy.

No one else can do that and thus, all these things will come to pass, whether we agree with them or not, and because we are aware of what is coming, the Lord says, **“Do not fear, nor be afraid; Have I not told you from that time, and declared it?”** And of course, He has declared it to us!

And that leads us to our responsibility, what we are to do as the Lord tells us, **“You are My witnesses.”**

Please don't lose sight of that fact. We are witnesses of the living God who has told us these things that are now coming to pass before our eyes.

And how we live out our faith truly shows what we believe. Are we fearful of things? Are we rebellious towards the government? That is a tough one for many, especially when the government said that we can't gather together in groups during this Coronavirus outbreak. Churches could not hold services so we could try to stop the spread of this virus.

But some churches refused to listen, and they had church service. In fact, they were very angry at churches that had obeyed the government. And yet, when you look at what the Scriptures tell us, like in Romans chapter 13, we are to obey the government.

Now their response may be, ***“But the government said that we can’t worship God anymore!”***

No, they did not! All they said is we can’t gather in a building with ten or more people to help stop the spread of this virus. And the building is not the church, the people are the church and we are blessed that we can still have church service and Live Stream it and have it on the radio station as well.

And if we did disobey the government, what kind of witness are we? A very bad witness because we are not only going against the law of the land, but also, we are going against what God has said, and that is far worse!

Now, if the government said that we can’t teach from the Bible, we can’t talk about Jesus, then we are to follow God and not man, but that is not what they said!

We need to shine brightly for the Lord because the days are coming to an end and the Lord is coming back soon, are we listening? Are people listening?

Let me share this with you and then I will close. We are told,

On September 21, 1938, a hurricane of monstrous proportions struck the East Coast of the United States.

William Manchester, writing about it [in] his book *The Glory and the Dream*, says that “the great wall of brine struck the beach between Babylon and Patchogue (Long Island, New York) at 2:30 p.m. So mighty was the power of that first storm wave that its impact registered on a seismograph in Sitka, Alaska, while the spray, carried northward at well over a hundred miles an hour, whitened windows in Montpelier, Vermont. As the torrential 40-foot wave approached, some Long Islanders jumped into cars and raced inland. No one knows precisely how many lost that race for their lives, but the survivors later estimated that they had to keep the speedometer over 50 mph all the way.”

For some reason the meteorologists - who should have known what was coming and should have warned the public - seemed strangely blind to the impending disaster. Either they ignored their instruments or simply couldn't believe them.

And, of course, if the forecasters were blind, the public was too.

“Among the striking stories which later came to light,” says Manchester, “was the experience of a Long Islander who had bought a barometer a few days earlier in a New York store. It arrived in the morning post September 21, and to his annoyance the needle pointed below 29, where the dial read, ‘Hurricanes and Tornadoes.’ He shook it and banged it against the wall; the needle wouldn't budge. Indignant, he repacked it, drove to the post office, and mailed it back. While he was gone, his house blew away.”

That's the way we are. If we can't cope with the forecast, we blame the barometer. Or ignore it. Or throw it away!

- Source Unknown

Our study was called – ***THE WARNING OF GOD!***

May we not be like the meteorologists who ignored the coming monstrous hurricane. And the people listened to what they said, or really what they didn't say. They did not give a warning maybe because they did not believe the warning!

We, like the meteorologists, are to warn people of the coming danger, whether they want to hear it or not. The warning is sure, it will come to pass, that is not the issue. The issue is, are we ready to share what is coming with people or ignore the warning.

Make no mistake about it, the storm clouds are upon us, what are we doing about it?