

After Peace and Safety, Then What?

Since the last Presidential election we've been hearing a lot about the desire for peace and safety, haven't we? Make America great again and safe again and peaceful again and healthy again and strong again and rich again and on and on, and there's nothing wrong with that, it's something we should all want for our country. However, prophecy tells us that there's something that comes after peace and safety has seemingly been achieved in these last days.

In **1 Thessalonians 5:3** the apostle Paul gave us a heads up when he said, "For when they **(the leaders of the various nations)** shall say, peace and safety; then **(what happens)** sudden destruction cometh upon them." **Chapter 5** follows **chapter 4** where the apostle Paul talks about the coming of the Lord, and since chapters and verses are man-made divisions to help us find things in the Bible more easily, when Paul speaks of people saying "peace and safety" it's in reference to the last days just before Jesus comes. And so, there's no mistaking that this warning is for our day and not something that applies to the past. The apostle Paul is very specific here.

Also **Isaiah 60:2** tells us that in the last days, "darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people," and we are just about there, aren't we? There are things going on today that are absolutely insane when it comes to what people in this country, and even worldwide, would have rejected as little as 20 years ago, but now insanity is becoming normalized. Over time, societal attitudes have changed, haven't they? Which has led to a more lenient view of behaviors once considered unacceptable, and as a result immorality and crime has become commonplace in society, and the more often this happens the worse it gets. It's like a snowball rolling downhill that gets bigger and bigger as it rolls; it's like opening the mythical Pandora's box and not being able to put the evil back inside after it's been released.

What we need to understand is that as long as there are people with fallen sinful human natures here on this planet, there's never going to be lasting peace and safety, because there will always be some leader somewhere that will have a desire to conquer. Whether it's for a nation to expand its borders like Russia is trying to do with Ukraine, or for a smaller nation that has ambitions to become a world super power, there will always be conflict of some kind; there will always be those who are never satisfied to be content with such things as they have as **Hebrews 13:5** admonishes us, but they will continue to want more and more. That's just the nature of things on this sinful planet we live on, and unfortunately it will continue to be that way until the Lord comes, because there's no such thing as a coming utopia here in this world. That's what many people think communism is like, but it has failed every place it's been tried, and will continue to do so.

In the past there have been times when world peace seemed within reach, only to be dashed to pieces by another conflict. In more recent times there was world war one, which was supposed to be the war to end all wars, but then there was world war two, and Korea, and Vietnam, and the gulf war, and the war on terror, and on and on, and that's just concerning the United States. But of course we know there are ongoing wars elsewhere nearly all the time.

The majority of people have been yearning for a world at peace for thousands of years, yet even as treaties are signed and truces made, peace talks always seem to fail given enough time, and the misplaced hope of lasting peace becomes painfully clear as the world moves from one crisis to another as if propelled by forces beyond human control; and it is beyond human control, isn't it? because the devil is behind it all, and human beings are no match for him. But I know someone who is, don't you? In fact, in a spiritual sense, Jesus has already defeated the devil, but I have to tell you that lasting physical peace is not coming to this world until it's totally destroyed at the coming of the Lord and replaced by a new heaven and a new earth, wherein righteousness dwells, as it says in **2 Peter 3:13**. And I'm looking forward to that day, how about you? But in the meantime we are all stuck right here in a place where lasting peace will never be realized.

And so, amid promises of lasting stability, skepticism lingers, doesn't it? People celebrate the end of one war while anxiously watching the horizon for signs of the next and the next and the next. Government leaders tout their victories, but the shadow of unrest rarely lifts for long, and the cycles of peace and turmoil remind us that, in this world, security will never be lasting.

It's a sober reality that peace, however passionately sought after and celebrated, proves to be little more than a pause before the next storm hits. And this cycle that continues on is not just political or social, but again, it's rooted in the human condition because of a fallen sinful nature.

If we're paying attention to what the Scriptures teach, when a calm comes, it doesn't signal an end to war at all, but the beginning of an even greater upheaval. I don't say these things to bring discouragement to anyone, but we have to face the fact that becoming new creatures in Christ Jesus is our only hope; the problem is, only a few people will accept the gracious invitation to become partakers of the divine nature and be made new and experience the kind of peace that Jesus talked about when He was here.

Just before He was getting ready to go back to heaven, in **John 14:27** Jesus said to His disciples, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Certainly the kind of peace Jesus was talking about here isn't the kind the world is looking for, because He was crucified. No, the kind of peace Jesus referred to was peace of mind, even when physical peace is nowhere to be seen. So no matter what's going on around

us or in the world in general, we can have that inner peace if we have faith to believe what Jesus said, it's as simple as that. And how does that kind of faith come? **Romans 10:17** says, "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Or we could say, faith comes by listening and acting upon what God tells us in His word. And remember, faith is not a feeling or an emotion, but faith comes and grows as we spend time with God in the study of His word "and keep those things which are written therein." (**Revelation 1:3**)

President Trump has a goal to stop the killing that's ongoing between Russia and Ukraine, and more recently between Israel and Iran and all there proxies, and I don't fault him for that. He has been successful in stopping other wars already since he started his second term, by imposing tariffs. But when one war is stopped, guess what? There will always be another one that will crop up as long as this world continues to spin on its axis. Even if President Trump were awarded the Noble Peace Prize for his achievements, it wouldn't be long before he'd have to tackle another war, and it may very well be with the very same people he thought he had already settled.

By the way, what has recently happened with the war in Iran is proof that the Muslim world does not figure prominently in Bible prophecy in these last days. I know there are many Adventists, and Christians in general, who believe that it does, but it's simply not so. Several years ago I had conversations with someone that was creating quite a stir by teaching that Islam was going to wipe Israel off the map and that was somehow going to be the catalyst for bringing in a Sunday law. Uriah Smith was teaching a version of that by bringing Turkey and Islam into the picture over 100 years ago, because at that time it looked like the papacy couldn't possibly recover after the pope was taken captive by France in 1798, and there are some who still cling to that idea, which takes the heat off who? The papacy as the real king of the north in **Daniel 11**.

In 1798 it looked as though the deadly wound the papacy received back then would never be healed, and had we lived back then we would have probably agreed with Uriah Smith, but we know now that the healing process began in 1929 when Benito Mussolini signed the Lateran treaty which reestablished Vatican City as an independent state and restored power back to the pope. You see, there is danger in trying to interpret Bible prophecy by looking at current events like Uriah was doing, and I'm sure had he lived to see the papacy restored, he would have gone back to the original pioneer position that the papacy is indeed the king of the north and the one that figures prominently in these last days, as apostate Protestantism forms an image to the papal beast.

You see, there was a huge debate back then between James White and Uriah Smith over this, and unfortunately the majority of church leaders sided with Uriah Smith.

But James, who stuck with the Bible and the Bible only, was the one who turned out to be right. So we should let this be a lesson to us today to keep our eyes off what we see happening in the Middle East as a fulfillment of prophecy and look instead at what the papacy is doing behind the scenes. The last mention of Islam figuring prominently in the Bible is in the time prophecy mentioned in **Revelation 9:11-15** when on August 11, 1840 the Islamic Ottoman Empire in Constantinople was overthrown and never again to hold a significant place in prophecy, regardless of what we see happening in the Muslim countries today. You can read about that in ***The Great Controversy, page 334.***

And so again, we need to keep our eyes off of Islam and the Middle East and focus on what the papacy is doing as her deadly wound continues to heal. That doesn't mean Islam won't continue to be a problem in the world, because it's nearly impossible to cure religious fanaticism when it controls a nation, but that's not where our focus should be as the great controversy comes to a climax. While it's true that there is nothing more potentially dangerous than a fanatical religious regime like we've seen in Iran, we should understand that something similar to that is going to soon manifest itself within apostate Protestantism here in America first and then around the world as the image of the papal beast forces its will upon the unsuspecting world.

And so again, we need to understand that the way the world is looking at religious fanaticism and celebrating the assassination of the former Iranian leaders, so the world will soon be looking at seventh-day Sabbath keepers the same way, and even worse.

We're told in ***The Great Controversy, pages 615, 635*** that government authorities will try to "root out the hated sect" of Sabbath keepers and our "persistent refusal" to honor Sunday will make us "objects of universal execration." Do you understand what that means? It means we will be looked upon by the whole world as cursed of God, we will be hated, we will be detested, we will be loathed, we will be thought to be unpatriotic and whatever other adjectives you can think of. And the question is, will we be able to stand up under that kind of pressure? It's going to be hard friends, and we're going to have to have a very close connection with Jesus Christ, and even then it's not going to be easy. If we are one of the 144,000, we are going to go through a time of trouble that will be like nothing this world has ever seen.

In ***The Great Controversy, pages 622, 623*** we're told that there's a time of trouble coming that is going to be worse than anything this world has ever experienced, and during this time human probation will have closed, but we won't know it. This is a little lengthy, but notice what it says, "The 'time of trouble, such as never was,' is soon to open upon us; and we shall need an experience which we do not now possess **(and that goes for all of us)** and which many are too indolent to obtain. **(And hopefully that does not apply to all of us)** It is often the case that trouble is greater in anticipation than in reality; but

this is not true of the crisis before us. The most vivid presentation cannot reach the magnitude of the ordeal. In that time of trial, every soul must stand for himself before God. . . . **(Then it tells us what we must do now, before probation closes, so we will be able to stand through the last great conflict)**

“Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, **(this means the atonement was not finished at the cross, which is the popular teaching within Adventism these days)** while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foothold; some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power. But Christ declared of Himself: ‘The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.’ John 14:30. Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father’s commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. **(Now listen carefully)** This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.

“It is in this life that we are to separate sin from us, through faith in the atoning blood of Christ. Our precious Saviour invites us to join ourselves to Him, to unite our weakness to His strength, our ignorance to His wisdom, our unworthiness to His merits. . . . None can neglect or defer this work but at the most fearful peril to their souls.

“The apostle John in vision heard a loud voice in heaven exclaiming: ‘Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.’ Revelation 12:12. Fearful are the scenes which call forth this exclamation from the heavenly voice. The wrath of Satan increases as his time grows short, and his work of deceit and destruction will reach its culmination in the time of trouble.”

Now, you may be thinking after reading this that you will never be able to attain to the spiritual condition in which there will be nothing in you that the devil can use to his advantage. But friends, there’s absolutely no reason we should think this way, because it’s the indwelling Spirit of God that will accomplish this work in us if we will do our part. What is our part? We just read it. It is “to join ourselves to Him, to unite our weakness to His strength, our ignorance to His wisdom, our unworthiness to His merits.” This is a conscious choice; this is what righteousness by faith is all about.

In **1 Thessalonians 5:22-24** the Holy Spirit inspired the apostle Paul to write the following, “Abstain from all appearance of evil. **(Do we have the ability to shun evil? Of course we do)** And **(if we do)** the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.” Do what? Make you holy! That’s something only God can do, and He has promised to do it if we will

but refuse to engage in that which we know to be evil. We are not to look to self for strength or wisdom or worthiness, but look to Jesus who alone possesses these things, because we don't have any, and if we don't have any, God knows that we can't manufacture it apart from Him. We are to give God our sins and in exchange He will give us His righteousness. Now that's a pretty good exchange, isn't it? It's called justification by faith, and it's a beautiful thing. And if we will do this, sanctification, which is a process, will take place in our lives. This is working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, realizing that it is God that will work in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

In *The Desire of Ages, page 556* it says, "No repentance is genuine that does not work reformation. The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin; it is a principle of life that transforms the character and controls the conduct. **(What is it that "transforms the character and controls the conduct?" The righteousness of Christ)** Holiness is wholeness for God; it is the entire surrender of heart and life to the indwelling of the principles of heaven." Now isn't that beautiful? And it's beautiful because it's true, and by faith it's ours.

Now back to peace and safety. Cindy and I have been reading a chapter in the Bible every morning and when we were in Numbers and Deuteronomy especially, over and over again God told the Israelites they were to go in and take the promised land from the heathen nations that surrounded them, and when they went in, in many cases, they were to completely destroy all the inhabitants of the land and not leave one left alive, why? Because some people cannot be reformed, and those are the kind of people that would mislead others in religious matters and rise up and fight against them in the future, because there would always be some that would not want to assimilate into the nation of Israel and would want to avenge themselves for killing their family members.

Kind of sounds like what's been going on here in America in some respects since our borders were wide open for anybody and everybody to come in for four years and not wanting to assimilate to our culture, but bring in their own culture along with every kind of crime imaginable. You see, God knew these same kind of things would be a problem for Israel if the heathen were allowed to join them, and also, depending on the circumstances, those that did want to join Israel and assimilate into their nation, had to wait three, and even 10 generations in some cases, before they were allowed to become legal citizens and join in religious services, and I know this all sounds hard, and I'm not advocating that a nation or a church should do that today, because we are not under a theocracy like Israel was, but the principle is still true.

If Israel didn't follow God's instructions and root out everyone that may have had an ax to grind and allow enough time to go by before certain people could be considered part of the nation and the congregation, there would surely be dissidents that would rise up and take revenge as soon as there

was opportunity to do so, and this I believe is why the United States military took out the Aia tola's son and everyone else that was close to all the top leaders in Iran. Because if those with fanatical beliefs were left to take over leadership of the country without finishing the job, we'd be fighting the same war again just a few years down the road. And yes, it's all very sad when you think about it, and many innocent lives were sacrificed in this war, as there always is, but unfortunately that's the way it is.

And I think there's a spiritual lesson regarding this as well, and that is that if we don't watch unto prayer and overcome every sinful character defect, sin will rise up within us like an illegal alien and we will be in danger of being deported back into our old sinful habits, and the fallen nature would once again gain a foothold and win the battle with self.

Remember what it says in ***Steps to Christ, page 43?*** "The warfare against self is **(what?)** the greatest battle that was ever fought." And we know by experience that's true, don't we? There's nothing more difficult than to deny our sinful flesh of the pleasure it seeks. It wants to be satisfied, and if we give it what it wants, it only wants more and more of the same, doesn't it? It's like an itch that only gets worse when you scratch it, because it's like a narcotic, it always takes more and more to bring it to the same level of satisfaction. But God wants to break that cycle in us, and there's only one way He can do it, and **Jeremiah 29:13** gives us the simple answer. God's promise is, "Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart." And as we search and find Him, we will also find the strength needed to gain that battle with self, and nothing short of yielding the whole heart will suffice.

Because friends, if the whole heart is not yielded to God, unreservedly, the change we need to be victorious will never be accomplished in us, which means we can never be restored to the likeness of Christ. That's how important it is. Because of our fallen nature we are alienated from God. **Ephesians 2:1** describes this condition perfectly when it says we are, "Dead in trespasses and sins;" and **Isaiah 1:5, 6** says, "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint;" **(with)** "no soundness in it." And **2 Timothy 2:26** says we are, "taken captive by him **(Satan)** at his will." In other words, if we are not abiding in Christ 24/7, the devil can trip us up any time he wants to. This is the terrible condition we find ourselves in without Christ. And because of this, God wants to heal us and to set us free. But since this requires an entire transformation and a renewing of our whole nature, our part is to yield ourselves wholly to Him or it will never happen. There's no such thing as a half-hearted Christian! We are all of His, or we are not His at all.

In **Luke 14:26** Jesus said, "If any come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Now, this is not a very good translation of this verse, because Jesus is not here teaching us that we are to hate

anyone. The word “hate” means “to love less.” In other words, if we love another person more than we love Christ, we don’t belong to Him, no matter what our profession. As Christians we are to please God above that of pleasing our parents, our spouse, ourselves, or anyone else, and this is why it’s so important to make sure the one you marry has this same understanding, otherwise you’ll be heading for divorce court, or at the least, an unhappy marriage, and that’s the end of my marriage counselling session for the day.

So, when history and prophecy both warn us that when the world at large dares to believe that war and darkness has finally passed and peace and safety is coming, it’s often the precursor to sudden upheaval. That’s just the way it is in this old world, and if we are not one with Christ, we will be fearful and worried just like the rest of the unbelieving world when we see the things that are coming upon this world.

Let’s read a few verses of Scripture that tell us plainly what comes after the world believes that peace has finally been achieved. **1 Thessalonians chapter 5**. We already read some of this, but let’s finish it. In **verses 1-6** the apostle Paul says, “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. **(So I want you to notice that the context here is talking about “the day of the Lord,” or the time when Jesus is about to return)** For when they shall say, **(or when you hear world leaders and the world in general say)** Peace and safety; **(has finally arrived)** then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they **(those who don’t know Jesus)** shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober.”

So, what are we watching for? We’re watching for the time when the world believes that peace and safety are finally here, and then is when the destructive events foretold in the Bible will come as the Lord is preparing to descend the skies. And according to what Paul just told us, we should not be surprised when peace does not remain peaceful! If we are children of the light, we can expect things to go haywire when the whole world believes otherwise. In other words, when the whole world is thinking things are finally going to get better, it’s like they are asleep to the real condition of things, and we should know better and be on guard and remain vigilant, because all hell is about to break loose.

These verses of Scripture serve as a warning, echoing down through the ages that times of apparent peace and safety can swiftly transform into chaos and destruction. And it’s not just a matter of what’s

going on with politics or the strategies of world leaders, but the heart of the issue is the unpredictability woven into the very fabric of our sinful human nature.

As believers in Jesus, we are urged to remain wide awake and alert. The metaphor of darkness and light in Paul's letter reminds us that discernment and spiritual vigilance are essential, especially in times when complacency threatens to dull our senses. History has shown that those who watch with sober minds are much better prepared to face upheaval, while those lulled by comfort and daily routine are caught off guard by the sudden change.

Those who believe that world peace has finally been achieved, and when America and the surrounding nations are thought to be "safe again," it's then that destruction comes, and there will be no escaping the consequences for those who are walking in darkness.

So what is this "sudden destruction" that's coming? Is it the annihilation of civilization by nuclear war? Is it when America and Russia and China and North Korea and France and Britain and India and Pakistan and Israel start lobbing those 12,187 nuclear warheads at each other? No friends. World leaders know that should that happen there would be no winners, and besides, God is in control of this world and He's not going to allow that to happen, because that's not how the story ends. Is it global warming with icecaps melting and drowning everyone? No, God has promised that that will never happen again, that's what the rainbow is all about, and besides, **Genesis 8:22** says, "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." Is it aliens from outer space who will come and destroy our planet, or make us all slaves? No. Is it AI? Is it artificial super intelligence that will take control and terminate human life? No, it is none of these things.

But there is a clear answer as to how it all ends if we have faith enough to believe what God says. It's found in **Revelation chapters 15 and 16** where the wrath of God is poured out in the seven last plagues just before Jesus returns. But through it all God's people will be protected, that's what it says in **Psalms 91:10**. And **verse 8** of the same chapter says the coming plagues are "the reward of the wicked." Read **Psalms 91** if you're worried about the types of things I mentioned a moment ago, because it's a wonderful promise to those who "dwell in the secret place of the most high (**and**) abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

And by the way, what is that "secret place?" Have you found it? It's constant trust and unbroken communion with God; it's total dependence upon Him and Him alone that will get us through the time

ahead that will try men's souls; it's complete surrender to the will of God; it's seeking God and finding Him, because we have searched for Him with all our heart.

Notice what it says in *Selected Messages, book 3, page 387*, because it tells us plainly what the coming "sudden destruction" is all about. "A spurious sabbath is presented to be legislated into power, compelling the observance of a sabbath which God has not enjoined upon man. The persecutions of Protestants by Romanism, by which the religion of Jesus Christ was almost annihilated, will be more than rivaled, when Protestantism and popery are combined. . . .

"Our own land is to become a battlefield on which is to be carried on the struggle for religious liberty—to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience. Then can we not discern the work of the enemy in keeping men asleep who ought to be awake, whose influence shall not be neutral, but wholly and entirely on the Lord's side? **(Now listen)** Shall men cry, Peace and safety, now, when sudden destruction is coming upon the world, when God's wrath shall be poured out?"

So there we have it friends, the "sudden destruction" the apostle Paul warned about is the wrath of God poured out in the seven last plagues. Just before the Lord comes, the belief will be that unity has finally been achieved so that peace and safety can at long last be ushered in as soon as they can get rid of that little company who refuse to worship the beast and his image, and they will have a plan already to be implemented as outlined in **Revelation 13:15** for any dissenters, it's called a death decree. It's when "the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." Notice the word "Worship." The world is not going to end by any of the things I mentioned a few moments ago, because It's about worship! Are we going to worship the beast and his image and a false day of worship, or are we going to worship the God of heaven who said, "Here is the patience of the saints, here are they that keep the commandments of God **(including number four)** and the faith of Jesus."

We can take comfort today in the fact that the diabolical plan of the enemy will be cut short when those who receive of the plagues notice "a noisome and grievous sore" breaking out on their skin, and when the waters become, "as the blood of a dead man," and when global warming becomes a reality when the sun is given power, "to scorch men with fire" and so on with the rest of the plagues.

And let's not forget that Satan is going to personate Christ before the real Christ comes, and what do you suppose his message will be? He will probably say, my dear people, if you want real and lasting peace, you have to get rid of those who are at fault, those who are creating problems, those who are out of step with the rest of Christendom, i.e., seventh-day Sabbath keepers.

In ***The Great Controversy*** it says the personation of Christ is Satan's crowning act. On **page 624** it says, "The church has long professed to look to the Saviour's advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will make it appear that Christ has come. In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. Revelation 1:13-15. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: 'Christ has come! Christ has come!' The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands and pronounces a blessing upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths which the Saviour uttered; **(and no doubt some of those "same gracious, heavenly truths" will have to do with how to have real peace, don't you think?)** he heals the diseases of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. **(And friends, Seventh-day Adventist ministers will be among those who "will urge upon the people the necessity of keeping the first day of the week" as it says in Review and Herold, March 18, 1884, par. 8. Read it for yourself)** He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth. This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion."

Will you fall for this delusion? Will I? It's easy to say right now that we won't, but when the prophet says that this will be an almost overmastering delusion, that's exactly what she means. Yes we know that Jesus isn't going to change the fourth commandment, and yes we know that His feet will not touch the ground when He comes, but it's still a delusion that the majority will fall for nonetheless, and we don't want to be a part of that majority.

My dear friends, I'm not sharing these things to try to scare you, but that you might think seriously about how to make the connection with God you're going to need in order to make it through the time of trouble that's just ahead while we still have the opportunity to do so. Let's not be one of those indolent ones we read about earlier, but seek for that experience which we do not now possess, because that's what we're going to need.

If we are alive and go through the coming time of trouble, we're going to go through a similar experience that Jesus went through, and if we have not taken the time we need with Jesus to form a character like His, we're not going to make it, and no doubt some of us will be laid to rest beforehand, because only God knows those of us who may not be prepared to handle what's coming.

In ***Counsels on Health, page 375*** it says God knows whether or not certain ones “would be able to endure the trial and test that would come upon them if they lived. He knows the end from the beginning. Many will be laid away to sleep before the fiery ordeal of the time of trouble shall come upon our world.”

In God’s mercy, this may be our experience, and if so, let’s be faithful to our last breath, what do you say? And if we are chosen to see the Lord come without seeing death, then we’ll praise the Lord for that experience once it’s over. So may God help us to be faithful no matter which group we find ourselves in on that great day.

Titus 2:11 says, “the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.”