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We continue our newsletter series with our Scripture focus text: *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour...” (1 Peter 5:8).*

When you receive this newsletter, the 47<sup>th</sup> president of the United States, Donald J. Trump, should have been inaugurated. The world in which we live continues to deteriorate. Our present world isn’t growing better but, rather, worse.

It is reported nearly 13,000 homes and buildings have been destroyed by the apocalyptic incineration in Los Angeles, California.

Recently, I witnessed a Jewish Rabbi voice his opinion about the incompetent leadership in California, again in Los Angeles, regarding the wildfires. The Rabbi said he was going to quit voting for the “D”, meaning Democrat, and start voting for the “B”, meaning businessman. I was quickly reminded of the words of the apostle Paul, *“... that blindness (hardness) in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (Romans 11:25).* I am amazed at the accuracy of Paul’s prophecy bearing witness to the blindness of the Rabbi’s heart.

The person who believes the world is going to morph into some euphoric Golden Age Utopia is grossly mistaken. The world will continue its deterioration until the Second Advent of Christ. Satan is monstrously manipulating the world through his vile, unholy plots.

This world, as we know it, will become so treacherous it will allow the revelation of the Antichrist. I know there are some who do not

**THE NEED TO BE SOBER AND VIGILANT! – PART 5**

believe in a literal Antichrist, but the Scriptures make it vividly clear there is one coming known as the *Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition.*

Those who diligently study **2 Thessalonians 2:1-12** find ample proof there is one coming who will seemingly have the answers for all of mankind. In those 12 verses, Paul uses 11 pronouns and 2 nouns to humanize this man of lawlessness.

Denial of biblical truth will only lead to more deception in these end times. As a matter of fact, I encourage you to study this prophecy given by the apostle Paul: *“And with all deceivableness (to delude or cheat) of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure (willingly partook) in unrighteousness” (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).*

Consider: *Do you truly embrace and receive the love of truth, or do you spurn and reject it?*

All who reject the love of the truth will become delusional by the power of God, and will be made to believe a lie to their own damnation. As I grow older in His grace, love, and mercy, I observe how easily people turn away from God and reject the truth. I am witnessing church carnality like never before.

Many use this verse to justify their sins: *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after*

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*the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:1).* There is no guilt or condemnation to those who walk after the Spirit, but to walk after the flesh is damnable. Many today no longer deny themselves of any worldly pleasures. However, even some who claim to be seasoned saints of God are wholly embracing the works of the flesh.

I challenge you, and everyone reading this newsletter, to discern the intent of this passage, *“For by thy words thou shalt be justified (regarded as free, innocent), and by thy words thou shalt be condemned (judged guilty)” (Matthew 12:37).*

Our lives and lifestyle will either justify or condemn us. This is the very reason we must strive to be *sober and vigilant* in this illusory era, which is growing more perilous by the day. The distressful and perplexing days Christ spoke of are here now. However, all the distress and perplexing circumstances will come to an end not long after the revelation of the Antichrist!

The Son of the living God, the Redeemer of all mankind, Jesus the Lamb is coming back to Earth a second time and He shall rule and reign forever and ever.

It is imperative to our well-being that we remain steadfast in prayer and in the Holy Writ. I cannot overemphasize the need to press inwardly in Christ for the coming days will be very tempestuous.

I had to chuckle the other day as I witnessed over 30 prophecies about the year 2025. I did not bother to listen to them because I understood, for the most part, these purported prophets have an agenda,

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which is not God's but theirs. May I remind you of the words of the apostle Paul: *"There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification* (meaning). *Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me"* (1 Corinthians 14:10-11).

When I was a boy growing up, prophets were as rare as a hen's teeth, but today they are like grapes and bananas, they come in bunches. Notwithstanding, Christ warned us concerning these last days and what we could anticipate: *"And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many"* (Matthew 24:11).

We also read from the apostle John: *"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try (test) the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world"* (1 John 4:1).

One purported prophet decreed recently that we are now entering the Golden Age. If that's true, then I believe we have been misled. Today, the earth is convulsing, groaning, and travailing for deliverance, which we see as an ongoing fulfillment of Scripture: *"For we know that the whole creation (every creature) groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now"* (Romans 8:22).

In my 70 years, I have never witnessed the pain, toil, and distress I'm witnessing now. Sadly, this toil and pain has also gripped and fractured many families. Sin is the damnable culprit that is wreaking havoc throughout the world, and, yet, few dare address sin any longer.

I foresee civil unrest and U.S. troops on America's soil in the coming days because some will attempt to thwart our newly elected President. Civil unrest is not spontaneous, but, rather, it is preplanned and predetermined. Some are even predicting food shortages if the Trump administration deports illegal

immigrants. They say deportation will create a lack of laborers for the farms. With the events transpiring throughout the world, it should be evident to discerning Christians, we are not entering some Golden Age, but, rather, a time of great distress.

You may question: *Why does the Lord allow such peril to come upon the world?* The apostle Paul gave us the answer, *"Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways"* (Acts 14:16). If a nation wills to walk in unrighteousness, God will allow it. All nations will either prosper or diminish as they respond to the call to righteousness: *"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn"* (Proverbs 29:2).

We must pray and demand righteousness from our leadership: *"When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth: and when the wicked perish, there is shouting"* (Proverbs 11:10).

Blessed be the Lamb of the Most High, for there will be a day of rejoicing and shouting at Christ's Second Advent! Solomon decreed, *"When righteous men do rejoice, there is great glory: but when the wicked rise, a man is hidden (concealed)"* (Proverbs 28:12).

During this time of the end, the church must prepare spiritually more than ever before. Jesus voiced His concern as He looked toward His return: *"Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"* (Luke 18:8). Christ warned us that faithfulness will wane terribly in the time of the end.

The apostle Peter admonished us concerning the need for prayer in the end times: *"But the end of all things is at hand (near): be ye therefore sober (of sound mind), and watch unto prayer"* (1 Peter 4:7). The true unction for Spirit-filled prayer only comes from deep within. In spite of our frailty, we all should yearn for fellowship with Jehovah.

For the last several months, I have repeatedly called for prayer concerning our cities. I cannot get beyond this Scripture God laid on my heart: *"... seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it (the city): for in the peace thereof (the peace of the city) shall ye have peace"* (Jeremiah 29:7).

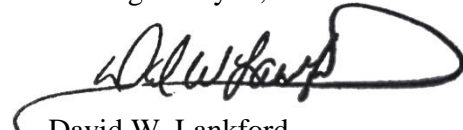
Peace will be one of our greatest comforts in the coming days, and it is found only in our Lord: *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind (thought) is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee"* (Isaiah 26:3).

When Jesus departed this physical plane, He did not leave us without peace: *"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 (agitated), neither let it be afraid (timid)"* (John 14:27).

Let me close with Paul's encouragement to the Philippians: *"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4:7).

We are always mindful and thankful for all your prayers and support for this ministry. You are of great value and a great blessing to the kingdom of God. Never allow the enemy to diminish your value in our Lord. The Lord God of Abraham is faithful and just and he has a record of every sacrifice you have ever made. We have no idea of the enormity of blessings we will receive when He returns. Thus we remain strong and enduring, in spite of the opposition.

Serving with you,



David W. Lankford  
Pastor / Evangelist