

Beginning of Tragedies

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehrung 9/16/2017

As we come up to the Feast of Trumpets, Thursday of this week and the **Day of the Lord** – I wanted to look at how the Bible tells us that much trouble will actually **precede** the Day of the Lord – and we should not be surprised by it. This sermon is meat in due season. Hurricanes and floods have been **in the news** – what are we to make of it?

The **Title** of today's sermon is from here:

Matthew 24:8 All these are the **beginning of sorrows**. [pains, travails]

Jesus could have just as easily said, "All these are the **beginning of tragedies**." We will see today how it **is God** who is "turning up the heat" little by little as a warning to man to repent. That is why there are so many catastrophes today. What is going on with all these hurricanes, floods and disasters that are so prominent in the news?

We are not very far off from the beginning of the Tribulation and that is the reason we are seeing so many **tragedies**. What is the state of the Church of God? What should we be doing as Christians? Let's read from verse one:

Matthew 24:1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple.

The Temple and its surrounding edifices were among the finest buildings on earth.

Matthew 24:2 Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Truly I say unto you, there shall not be **one stone left upon another** here, that shall not be thrown down.

That was an incredulous statement for the disciples to understand.

That would have been like standing in Manhattan, NY on September 10, 2001, and saying, "See those 110 story tall **World Trade Towers** – – they won't be there at this time tomorrow.

Truly I say unto you, there shall not **one stone left upon another** that shall not be thrown down.

Jesus was telling them the "Signs of the End of the Age." Which, brethren, **is now!**

Matthew 24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

Matthew 24:4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

Matthew 24:5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, I am the **Messiah**; and shall deceive many.

Matthew 24:6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

Matthew 24:7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:

Just in my time, and that of my dad's – we've seen WWI, WWII, the Korean War, and the Viet Nam war... the Sinking of the Lusitania, the Great Depression, Pearl Harbor... Each of those was a **tragedy** – – but the end is not yet.

The Korean war is still on-going with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un firing another ballistic missile over northern Japan this past week – – a direct challenge to the United States and China – – just days after **a new** sanctions resolution adopted by the United Nations Security Council – – that was intended to force the country **to halt** its accelerating **nuclear** and missile tests.

It is thought that North Korea detonated a hydrogen bomb two weeks ago. That is a **tragedy** in the making.

And we are still bogged down in war in Iraq and **Afghanistan** – the longest war in U.S. history.

That is a **tragedy**.

Matthew 24:7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, and

natural disasters in divers places.

Recently an earthquake and a tsunami hit Japan causing a nuclear melt-down.

That's a **tragedy**.

Matthew 24:8 All these are the **beginning of sorrows**.

Jesus could have just as easily said, "All these are the **beginning of tragedies**."

This is **exactly** where we are today – in the midst of tragedies. These are not the days for God's people to sit back and relax. There are some very rough days ahead, especially for the people of the Church of God.

The tribulation that is coming on the entire world is a God-send for the Church of God in that it is the final **wake-up** call to those whose zeal is cooling off. The Church of God has gone into a lull – the lull before the storm. The Church is not as dynamic as it was in the last century – but we should not be in a cooling off period.

Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and **repent**.

Many thought that Jesus Christ would have returned to this earth by now. Many people are thinking, Why hasn't Jesus returned – "Our Lord delays His coming." Jesus tells us not to think that way. Jesus said that as we near the very end-time, religious persecution – – family betrayal – – spiritual deception – – tribulation – – and falling away from the love of God – – would be the norm, rather than the exception.

Matthew 24:33 When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

Jesus is not delaying His return. We, the people of God, **need** this time to develop spiritually. God is showing us how to have Godly relationships with each other in His Church – the called out family of God.

Of course we realize that this calling from God is a tremendous blessing that we are privileged to be a part of – but sometimes **we do not act** like we know it. We are witnessing **the last days** of the Israelitish nations. USA, England, Canada, Australia, Scotland, France, Ireland, New Zealand... The hand writing is on the wall for all these nations.

If these remarkable nations do not return to the Creator God soon, every good standard defining our greatness and exceptionalism will collapse.

Without God, no nation can stand.

All who believe in good morals will agree that the United States and Great Britain are in a horrendous moral degeneration. As a result of this disintegration of Godly values, we will face incredible challenges in the immediate future undreamt of.

Will the complete breakdown come in a sudden immense crash or an excruciatingly slow but sure demise?

1Thesalonians 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that the **Day of the Lord** so cometh as a thief in the night.

That **Day of the Lord** is portrayed by the **Feast of Trumpets**. Then Paul compares the time **before** the Day of the Lord with the labor pains a mother experiences before the birth of her child.

1Thesalonians 5:3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, **as travail upon a woman with child**; and they shall not escape.

That word **travail** is the exact same word in the Greek that we saw in sorrows – beginning of **sorrows**. All these miseries are but like the early pains of childbirth.

All these **tragedies** are the beginning of birth pains before the **Day of the Lord**. What will be the impact on the members of the Church of God as society around them crumbles? Within God's Church we should be different from the world – but we are too much like the world. The brethren in God's Church are similar to the cultures we find ourselves embedded in.

As a result, **as the world** slides into oblivion, we find ourselves in a parallel decline. Too often we seek to be accepted by the world, but we will not receive the approval of the world which only loves its own. Jesus said:

John 15:19 If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

Are we ashamed for people to find out how different we are?

Are we ashamed to take a stand for God's way? Or, do we correctly understand what our duty and responsibility is? All of us have often experienced how difficult it is to properly take a stand for Godly principles.

Do we boldly proclaim and stand for the truth? Jesus said:

Mark 8:38 Whosoever therefore shall be **ashamed of me** and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.

The correct thing for us to do now is to live by the principles Jesus Christ taught. Godly Character comes only with standing-up for the truth of God.

We have an obligation to live our Faith as an example to a world desperately in need of what we have been given. We are supposed to exhibit the attributes of true Christianity all the more as that day of **Christ's return** draws near.

As we approach the tribulation, we are being given more and more opportunities to live our Christianity. Yes, it is difficult to do so because the temptation to be like the world is becoming greater and greater. Let's never forget that God blesses those who practice and follow His way of life.

Deuteronomy 28:2 All these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, **if you shall hearken** unto the voice of the Lord thy God.

On the other hand, tragedy, catastrophe, natural disaster and destruction follow those who break God's rules. We have all seen lives ruined by any number of causes. When people end up with broken lives – – every time, the reasons can be traced back to violations of Godly principles.

God's perfect set of spiritual rules brings about all things good. Defiance of God's spiritual law brings a breakdown of moral order.

The Bible refers to these results as, "blessings and cursings." (Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28)

After His promise to Abraham – – and 2520 years – – God led America and Great Britain into becoming the greatest and most powerful nations that have ever existed.

Fulfilled prophecy is a proof of God. But now, America and Great Britain are experiencing the **beginning curses** and **tragedies** that follow the rejection of God and His law. God tells us that these tragedies will become progressively worse as time goes on.

We've just seen 4'-4" of rain from Hurricane Harvey near Corpus Christi, Texas – which does not represent the 'Body of Christ.'

We've seen devastating winds run the length of Florida – but the end is not yet as we saw in:

Matthew 24:6... all these things must come to pass, but the end is **not yet**.

If you watch the weather channel you would think Irma was the worst hurricane ever – they even said so. They like to **hype** their news.

But Irma and Harvey didn't make the **top 100** storms.

In 1900 the great Galveston, TX Hurricane – – 8,000-15,000 people died in the storm. (according to those who lived there.) In hurricane Irma, 27 people died in Florida – by comparison. The great Galveston hurricane was the deadliest hurricane in US history and it happened at the turn of the 20th century. That hurricane wiped Galveston, Texas completely off the map, then headed north through the Great Plains.

Deuteronomy 28:45 All these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, until thou be destroyed; because thou hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which he commanded thee.

Please, not even for a moment – think that we are **prepared** for emergencies. Federal Government agencies like FEMA Disaster Assistance can only help **afterwards** in your **recovery** from a major disaster.

For Hurricane **Irma**, in one of the biggest evacuations ever ordered in the U.S., about 5.6 million people in Florida - more than one-quarter of the state's population - were **told to leave**.

In what was described as "the biggest evacuation in history," Miami-Dade County in Florida expanded its mandatory evacuations orders, forcing over 650,000 to leave southern Florida in a "traffic nightmare" as Cat-5 Hurricane Irma bore down.

"There was no gas and it was gridlock. People were stranded on the sides of the highway." "It was 92 degrees out and little kids were out on the grass on the side of the road... No one to help them."

The storm plans were a total failure – you don't see them talking much about it on TV. It is about logistics and being prepared.

Analogy of a million gallon elevated water tank with 8 support columns.

Most people do not keep their vehicle's fuel tank full. Most people only have a half tank or less. When there is a panic and millions people increase their fuel levels from 1/4 of a tank to 3/4 of a tank, just that single act alone is a demand that far exceeds the ability of the normal distribution system to keep up with. There are roughly 9,000 gallons of fuel in a tanker truck load. It takes 112 tanker loads to haul one million gallons of fuel.

When just three million people must purchase 10 gallons of gas suddenly to fill up their tanks to evacuate, that's 3,000 tanker truck loads of fuel. Parts of Florida's Interstates 75 and 95 north were bumper-to-bumper.

We are going to see disease epidemics and flu pandemics of biblical proportions.

The Spanish flu epidemic of 1918 killed 21 million people in the developed nations and as many as 40 – 50 million world-wide.

That was a **tragedy**.

Some years ago, a **one-hundred year old lady** in God's Church told me how she – as a little girl – watched the wagons come down her street each day to pick up the bodies of those who had **succumbed to the flu** – to take them to a mass grave.

Now that we, as nations, have chosen to set aside the perfect spiritual law of God, which is the foundation of society itself, we can absolutely expect to encounter increasing **tragedies**.

Too many of our leaders and teachers have rejected God's way and truth that provide good things. What can we, as a people and a nation, expect as a result of our rejection of God and His Ten Commandments?

We can anticipate God beginning to remove the national blessings and the protection He has, thus far, afforded us because we, as a nation, have rejected His perfect way.

As society deteriorates, the people of God will be facing the greatest challenge of our lives. Make no mistake about it – – these are the last days.

We will be called on, more than ever, to come to the aid of our brethren - not only physical aid, but also spiritual support. It will take our utmost in spiritual discernment because so many will be going along with the world.

And yet, we of God's Church have a responsibility to set the highest example in our behavior and conduct. Over and over, God has given His people a reprieve to have the time to:

Hebrews 6:1 ..."go on to perfection."

But we cannot take this extra time for granted. This is not only about America and Great Britain... Unless we, the brethren, learn to lay our lives down for our fellowman, we will not have a part in the **Kingdom of God**.

In the past, too many in God's Church have believed that our faith consists mostly of the ceremonial observance of rituals, rather than being the living sacrifices that we must be.

Let's not get caught up in the Godless social and moral disorder that is coming upon the descendants of Joseph. The citizens of this once moral land must come to understand what happens when God is rejected and abandoned.

Our people will learn what happens when God's spiritual rules, which are for our good, are not followed. Unless the people of our country return to God in business, in education, and in government, our social order will deteriorate to the point of total breakdown and complete collapse. National defense will become insignificant, resulting finally in defeat.

On the sixteenth anniversary of 9/11, Sharon and I watched a documentary on the destruction of the twin World Trade Towers in New York.

It vividly portrayed what happens when there are thousands dead, and there's no water, electricity, support personnel – – and you are knee deep in ash and rubble – – unable to talk or breath – – and no one to come to your rescue.

That was a **tragedy**. But that **tragedy** happened to **the tip** of Manhattan Island. What if it happened to the **entire** state of New York? Multiple millions would perish.

God says that our enemies will walk in and pluck-up our land and the surviving one-third of the population like a ripe peach.

Let's understand that the time of Jacob's trouble is near.

Jeremiah 30:7 Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.

Blessings and cursings:

Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28

Too many people do not realize what dire straits we are in – thinking NOW is the best time ever. They cannot see that each of our blessings from God are being removed – one by one.

Leviticus 26:3 If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them;

Leviticus 26:4 Then I will give you **rain in due season**, and the land shall **yield her increase**, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.

Leviticus 26:5 And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land **safely**.

Leviticus 26:6 And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land.

Forty years later, God reiterated these same promises to our forefathers as they entered the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 28:1 And it shall come to pass, **if** thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will **set thee on high** above all nations of the earth:

That's where we are now, **on high**.

Airlines around the world must use **English** when communication with air traffic control – it's a rule. In **Arab** countries – you want to land – you must speak in **English**.

The **International Monetary Fund** does business in **Dollars** all around the world – it's a rule.

Deuteronomy 28:2 And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.

Deuteronomy 28:3 Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.

Deuteronomy 28:4 Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

Deuteronomy 28:5 Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.

Deuteronomy 28:6 Blessed shalt thou be when thou come in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou go out.

Deuteronomy 28:7 The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways.

Deuteronomy 28:8 The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and He shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God gives thee.

Deuteronomy 28:9 The LORD shall establish thee an holy people **unto Himself**, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways.

Deuteronomy 28:10 And all people of **the earth shall see** that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee.

It is never too late to **repent and turn** around. But who is listening – news and entertainment today bear no resemblance to reality. God is calling the **precious last few** people at this time.

2Chronicles 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Leviticus 26:14 But **if ye will not** hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments;

Leviticus 26:15 And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will **not** do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant:

Leviticus 26:16 I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you **terror** – – [even on our land], consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.

No rain in due season.

Leviticus 26:19 And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass:

Leviticus 26:32 And I will bring the **land into desolation** [think 9/11 for starters]: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it.

Enemies which dwell therein – look at how our demographics are changing with immigrants from the East. Both USA and England.

The God speaks of another **captivity** – as happened to our forefathers in Israel and Judah.

Deuteronomy 28:37 And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations **whither the LORD shall lead** thee.

Deuteronomy 28:64 And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the **one end of the earth** even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone.

Leviticus 26:33 And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.

Deuteronomy 28:15 But it shall come to pass, **if thou wilt not** hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:

Let's look at the list of **tragedies**.

Deuteronomy 28:16 Cursed shalt thou be in the **city**, and cursed shalt thou be in the **field**.

Deuteronomy 28:17 Cursed shall be thy **basket** and thy store.

We are now barely a viable race of people.

Deuteronomy 28:18 Cursed shall be the **fruit of thy body**, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

Deuteronomy 28:19 Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

Deuteronomy 28:20 The LORD shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou **perish quickly**; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast **forsaken me**.

Deuteronomy 28:21 The LORD shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it.

Deuteronomy 28:22 The LORD shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish.

Deuteronomy 28:23 And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron.

Deuteronomy 28:24 The LORD shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

Deuteronomy 28:44 He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.

We have become a **debtor** nation – 20 trillion in debt – impossible to repay.

America does not know the Sabbath or the Feasts of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 28:47 Because thou served not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things;

Deuteronomy 28:48 Therefore shalt thou **serve thine enemies** which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee.

Will foreign powers foreclose on America?

About a year ago The International Monetary Fund announced that it would add the Chinese renminbi—or **yuan**—to its **selective basket** of reserve currencies.

The English Pound once reigned... For a good while, the international currency has been the Dollar – uniquely up to now.

The decision to add the Chinese yuan to the reserve currencies promises to be a boon to China's efforts to play a larger role in the global economy. Should China move a good fraction of world wealth from dollars and Euros to Yuan, it would be a massive benefit for China and an existential threat to the power of the West.

Deuteronomy 28:49 The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand;

Deuteronomy 28:50 A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young:

Read **all of** Deuteronomy 28 – and believe it. It is too horrible to fathom. We will face incredible challenges in the immediate future undreamt of.

As we approach the tribulation and the **Day of the Lord**, we are being given more and more opportunities to live our Christianity. As society deteriorates, we people of God, will be facing the greatest challenge of our lives.

Matthew 24:37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Matthew 24:38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

Matthew 24:39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Look at the **Tragedies**:

Mark 13:7 And when ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet.

Just as we saw in Matthew 24:

Mark 13:8 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these **are the beginnings** of tragedies. [pain, travail]

Mark 13:9 But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.

Mark 13:10 And the gospel must first be published among all nations.

Mark 13:11 But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit.

Mark 13:12 Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.

Mark 13:13 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

God will fight for us and protect us if we are faithful.

Exodus 14:13 And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever.

Exodus 14:14 The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

Matthew 5:45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends **rain on the just and on the unjust.**

Luke 13:1 There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

Luke 13:2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?

Luke 13:3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Luke 13:4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in **Siloam** fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

Luke 13:5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Hezekiah's Tunnel, is a 1749 foot long water tunnel that was carved through solid rock underneath the City of David in Jerusalem during the reign of Hezekiah of Judah about 700 BC.

The aqueduct was dug at a time when Jerusalem was preparing for an impending siege by the Assyrians, led by Sennacherib.

Sharon and I walked through the entirety of the tunnel at the Feast of 1983 before we went to Ambassador College.

The tunnel begins on the Gihon Spring and then emerges on the lower end at the pool of Siloam.

Actually, Hezekiah's Tunnel was an engineering marvel of its day because the tunnel was excavated by two teams, one starting at each end of the tunnel and then meeting in the middle without any of today's surveying instruments.

When I was a young boy of 15-17 years old, I used to like to go exploring on long hikes – up to 20 miles long with my high school buddies. I'll just bet you that Jesus as a young man along with some of his buddies went through Hezekiah's Tunnel down into the pool of Siloam one year when He went up to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles.

2Kings 20:20 The rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool [the pool of Siloam], and a conduit [tunnel], and brought water into the city [of Jerusalem], are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

God saved these stories in the Bible for our edification – and they mean a lot at a time when God is denied even in our schools.

Proverbs 22:1 A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

Proverbs 22:2 The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all.

Proverbs 22:3 A prudent man foresees the evil, and hides himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.

Proverbs 22:4 By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honor, and life.

1Thessalonians 5:21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

1Thessalonians 5:22 Abstain from all appearance of evil. [Reject every kind of evil - especially when it has become acceptable to society]

1Peter 3:10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

1Peter 3:11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

1Peter 3:12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

1Peter 3:13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

1Pe 3:14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

1Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

These are the last days. Brethren, we can expect things to become really rough for the people of God. We will be called on, more than ever, to come to the aid of our brethren - not only physical aid, but also spiritual support. It will take our utmost in spiritual discernment because so many will be going along with the world. And yet, we of God's Church have a responsibility to set the highest example in our behavior and conduct.

God has given His people a reprieve to have the time to:

Hebrews 6:1 ..."go on to perfection."

We must be a fellowship of believers who are earnestly endeavoring to hold fast to God's truth, -- that is an important requirement. We are to be a church made of brethren who undertake to live lives of caring concern for one another - with God's Spirit guiding us in our undertakings. We are to be begotten Children of God, who are looking forward to being born spiritually into the Family of God. We must be exercising God's Holy Spirit, so that with the help of God we are overcoming the world. Battles over diminishing natural resources will lead many nations into war. There will be increasing tsunamis, volcanoes, blizzards and wildfires. We will face incredible challenges in the immediate future.

Let's put God first in our lives. Let's hearken to the word of God.

End: Beginning of Tragedies