

# *Sudden Destruction*

(Sermon Notes)

By Warren Zehrung – 10/27/2012

Let's begin in **1 Thessalonians 4**

Sin brings destruction, and Massive sin brings massive destruction.

It is only by living according to Godliness that mankind enjoys the bountiful blessings of life and happiness.

SPS: In today's sermon we will look at the question, "Will **sudden destruction** come upon us?"

God warns us.

Have we recognized that **Vast Changes** are rapidly coming upon our nation?

The order of things we have enjoyed all of our lives are about to change dramatically!

Brethren, it is decision time.

Let's take a look at the Scripture where Jesus Christ inspires this phrase.

The subject here is the **resurrection of the saints**:

**1 Thessalonians 4:16** *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:*

**1 Thessalonians 4:17** *Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

That is really good and encouraging to know.

**1 Thessalonians 4:18** *Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

*No Chapter Break in the original thought*

**1 Thessalonians 5:1** *But of the **times and the seasons**, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.*

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

*Title*

**1 Thessalonians 5:3** *For when **they** [those in the world] shall say, Peace and safety; then **sudden destruction** cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*

“Peace and safety,” will be a catch phrase of men in the world – this will not be being said by God’s true people.

**sudden destruction cometh upon them – Who?**

**1 Thessalonians 5:4** *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.*

God’s true Church will **not** be caught off guard – if we are living Christian lives.

**1 Thessalonians 5:5** *Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.*

Brethren, the problem is that way too much of the Church of God is asleep - that is why Paul says:

**1 Thessalonians 5:6** *Therefore **let us not sleep**, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.*

**Revelations 6**

It is not the saints, but the unbelievers of false religion who will believe that “*Peace and Safety*” are the order of the day.

Only the saints will be wise enough not to buy into the false propaganda.

The beloved apostle John records in Revelation.

**Revelations 6:1** *And I saw when the Lamb [Jesus Christ] opened one of the seals [First Seal], and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.*

This is the first seal.

**Revelations 6:2** *"I saw, and behold a white horse [representative of false religion]: and he that sat on him had a bow [that is the False Prophet and his religious system]; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth **conquering, and to conquer.**"*

The Beast Power will seek to wreak havoc on God’s true people.

There will be no place to hide outside the safe-house of God.

The governmental religious system of the False Prophet will have the power of bringing **great destruction** [*conquering, and to conquer*] on any and all who do not march in locked step with the Beast Power.

Christians will not be able to openly keep the Sabbath or the Feast Days.

They will not be able to openly profess their faith in safety.

The rider of the white horse will impose **his version** of peace and safety on the world. That leaves out those who practice true Christianity.

We will see that it is a forced and short lived peace initiative.

It is **only** the true practicing converted brethren will not be fooled and taken in by this imposter.

Everyone in the world will believe that they are lining in a wonderful time.

It will be a short-lived peace and safety – with terrible repercussions.

God will allow strong delusion to come on all the others **to believe the lie**

**(2 Thessalonians 2:11).**

## **John 16**

There will be no freedom of true religion practiced at that time.

We can hardly imagine the horror of fear, torture and persecution that will be utilized by those false zealots.

Jesus said,

**John 16:1** *These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.*

**John 16:2** *They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever kills you will think that he doeth God service. [do God a favor]*

**John 16:3** *And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.*

There will be on Sabbath observance allowed.

## **2 Peter 2**

Members of our families will turn us over to the new secret police.

God's law will be completely abhorred and trampled underfoot.

We are in the last days when Jesus foretold that there would be many religious deceivers teaching many false gospels and doctrines.

Things have changed so much in the last 50 years. Religious freedom is being severely eroded.

**2 Peter 2:1** But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them [Jesus is the Redeemer], and bring upon themselves **swift destruction**. [there's the title again there]

“Denying the Lord,” means not living a life of service and sacrifice as Jesus instructed His followers to do.

*“Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.”*  
**(Matthew 24:4-5)**

Many **Church Brethren** [not the world] are going to be deceived – that is terrible – that is why we are looking at this subject today.

Sure, many men preach “Jesus” but they do not believe in the “Christianity” that Jesus taught.

True faith is rare on the earth!

### **Genesis 3**

In the Bible we find many instances of good things suddenly coming to an end.

The Garden of Eden was good – in fact God said it was **very good**.

Why then did God put Adam and Eve out of it?

The answer is because it is God alone who has the prerogative to define what is GOOD – and what is BAD.

**Genesis 3:22** *“And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.”*

Adam and Eve chose situation ethics – deciding for themselves – rather than believing God.

What a mess that would be – can you imagine living forever with sin and its consequences. What a hopeless situation that would be.

*And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:*

**Genesis 3:23** *Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.*

**Genesis 3:24** *So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the **tree of life**.*

Well, we know the story – they sinned –

They did not qualify...

They did not take of the Tree of Life – which would have ushered in the millennium – God had designed man to live for a thousand years.

Put yourself in Adam and Eve's place as they were cast out of the Garden of Eden...

Can you imagine how they longed to go back to the good old days? Sin has irreversible consequences!

\*\*Brethren, therefore draw near to God while we have opportunity...while we can...while we are able.

We too, had it good in America – but now our constitution is being trampled under foot --- our leaders lie to us – there are none that we can trust...

America was our blessing and we are being cast out like Adam and Eve were. We are losing our blessings.

Evil spirit is descending on our nation – just as it did to Adam and Eve.

There is nowhere to hide – is there?

Are we prepared so that **sudden destruction** does not come upon us?

## **Mathew 25**

God says that many will not heed this biblical warning.

Suddenly the final test is upon us.

God says that there will be one final surprise “Pop Quiz.”

Like when we were in school – Oh No! Are we ready?

**Mathew 25:1** Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. [Jesus Christ]

Everyone – including the Protestants and Catholics want to be God’s chosen people.

In the Church of God we think that we have the “lock on” - the “shoo in” position of being the bride of Christ...

Let’s read on (review for many) to see if **everyone’s** wish is going to materialize.

**Mathew 25:2** And five of them were **wise**, and five were **foolish**.

Well, everyone assumes – “We’re the wise!” Be careful.

**Mathew 25:3** They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

A lamp without oil is useless. They did not utilize God’s Holy Spirit.

Oh, they went to church services every week...

They were in good with the pastor...

But their **spiritual life** was void...

They talked religion – but they did not practice the true tenants of justice, forgiveness, mercy, caring, love, consideration, the giving of themselves – laying their lives down for others...

Their spiritual lives were devoid of true spirituality.

But they did all the other religious stuff – like belonging to the right organization.

**Mathew 25:4** But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

The most important thing to learn, Brethren, is what does it mean to have oil in our vessels???

\*\*This is a salvational question.

**Mathew 25:5** While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

Again, this is exactly where we are right now!!!

There’s sure not much going on in God’s Church today – is there?

Jesus has not come back yet. They all slumbered and slept.

**Mathew 25:6** And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

How close are we to this time?

**Mathew 25:7** Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

The foolish will have no flame.

The time is about to arrive when everyone will realize that Christ's return is imminent.

But it will be TOO LATE to prepare for those who have not been zealously living their Christianity – to learn how to do so. It cannot be done.

**Mathew 25:8** And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

End-time events will reveal those who were not serious enough about their faith.

**Mathew 25:9** But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough oil for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

No one can share their Godly character with someone who does not have it.

Hopefully, we are doing our utmost to share God's Holy Spirit with others – we are teaching, preaching and living it.

But the only way others can partake of God's Holy Spirit is to drink in the living waters of Jesus Christ for themselves.

We all have to live Christianity ourselves.

We all have to be living sacrifices – as Jesus gave us example.

When is the last time we sacrificed for others??? That's Godly love.

There are no substitutes for sacrificing ourselves so that other may profit spiritually. Jesus did it – and He said that his followers would do likewise.

**Mathew 25:10** And while the foolish virgins went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

Only the wise go in with Jesus – those who were living their Christianity daily – only those with God's Holy Spirit will go in with Jesus Christ.

**Mathew 25:11** Afterward came also the other [foolish] virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

“We want – we desire to be a part of your Kingdom.”

This is terrible... it is too late.

**Mathew 25:12** But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

They never drank of those Living Waters of Jesus Christ. They did not practice the attributes of true Christianity – they only did the **substitutes** for true religion.

The conclusion of the matter:

Do we recognize what is going on in the churches?

**Mathew 25:13** Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

But we know that time is growing short – don't we?

**Isaiah 1:28** And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the LORD **shall be consumed**.

**Isaiah 13:6** Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; **it shall come as a destruction** from the Almighty.

That is what happens to those who never quite get around to living their Christianity.

## **Isaiah 59**

The Church of God is on a parallel course with this nation.

Is the Church of God following in the immorality of our nation?

Ministers are not above the law – any more than politicians are above the law.

Justice is available for a price to the powerful.

**Isaiah 59:4** None calls for justice, nor any pleads for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.

This describes our nation – does it also describe our Church of God community?

**Isaiah 59:5** They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eats of their eggs dies, and that which is crushed breaks out into a viper.

**Isaiah 59:6** Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands.

**Isaiah 59:7** Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; **wasting and destruction** are in their paths.

**Isaiah 59:8** The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goes therein **shall not know peace**.

“crooked paths,” – are there crooked men among God’s people?

**Isaiah 59:9** Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; we wait for brightness, but we walk in darkness.

When Jesus returns it will be to destroy all the evil power of men.

**Daniel 2:45** Forasmuch as thou saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands [that is Jesus Christ], and that it **brake in pieces** the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

Jesus is going to bring **swift destruction** on all who reject God. Jesus will come against all evil men.

## **Ezekiel 6**

Do we see the big picture?

Do we see where we are now?

Draw near to God while we are able.

**\*\*God is not so interested in who you once were – as He is interested in what you are becoming.**

We were all sinners!

It is only when we draw near to God that we can become who and what God intends for us to be.

**Ezekiel 6:3** And say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys; Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places.

High places = places of false and pagan worship.

We have idolatry in the Church of God.

Anything that is sought and done instead of what God desires is idolatry.

**Ezekiel 6:4** And your altars shall be desolate, and your images shall be broken: and I will cast down your slain men before your idols.

**Ezekiel 6:5** And I will lay the dead carcasses of the children of Israel before their idols; and I will scatter your bones round about your altars.

**Ezekiel 6:6** In all your dwelling places the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate; that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, and your idols may be broken and cease, and your images may be cut down, and your works may be abolished.

God will bring **swift destruction**.

**Ezekiel 6:7** And the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

God is serious!

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isaiah 5:20)

Brethren, time is growing very short.

## **John 9**

How much **longer** do we have before the Word of God and the Gospel message are no longer available to us?

God’s Word is widely available today – but for how long?

Do you trust men who say, “We would never touch your freedom to worship as you wish?”

Men are being locked up for having Bible Studies in their homes.

Ministers are being jailed for preaching that God abhors homosexuality.

How much longer do you think we will have open access to the world by way of the **internet**?

God has warned us repeatedly to prepare **now** – while there is access to His Truth.

Make hard copies of good sermons. Share them with others.

Know the meaning of God’s Word – write it on your heart!!!

**John 9:4** 'The night comes when no man can work.'

Turn a few pages toward the front of your bibles to John 6:

We are told to take hold of Spiritual food – let it become a part of us.

**\*\*John 6:27** Labor not for the meat which perishes [physical food], but for that [spiritual] meat which endures unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

**John 6:28** Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

**John 6:29** Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that **ye believe** on Him [Jesus Christ] whom He [God the Father] hath sent.

**“Work of God =** this is what God the Father is actually bringing about – what God is doing.

Many believe on the historical “Jesus” who lived in Palestine. That is not what is being spoken of here.

They say that they believe on the “name of Jesus,” but they do not believe the morality, the law, the Holy Days, the Kingdom that Jesus announced.

**Believe** on Jesus Christ = believe **and do** what Jesus did and taught. That is to be a living sacrifice AS Jesus gave us the example.

Jesus gave His life for others. Do we follow THAT example?

Do we even know what it means to lay our lives down for others? To put our reputation on the line... to put our very life on the line... so that others may prosper spiritually and live?

Brethren, spend your life daily – so that others can know and grow.

## **Romans 9**

My wife and I went to Wal-Mart to get a product we’ve always used --- they were out --- we were told, “They don’t make it anymore.” “It has been discontinued.”

You know that feeling that you get when something you might cherish -- becomes **forever** unavailable to you???

Do we think that because the Gospel has gone to the world that we will **always** have open access to all forms of media to continue to teach?

**Romans 9:28** 'He [Jesus] **will finish the work**, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.'

How close are we to the day when the Gospel Truth will no longer be available?

**Amos 8:11** Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a **famine** in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of **hearing the words** of the Lord."

**John 16:2** They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever kills you will think that he doeth God service.

### **Isaiah 55**

Brethren, let's not take for granted that the truth that we seek will always be available.

Let's not take for granted that the biblical answers truth that we need will always be there for the asking.

Religious freedom is going to be interrupted and **cut-off** in an instant!

We do not have much time left.

Let's not assume that there is endless time to grow in Godly character.

Here is the most important Scripture in today's sermon.

**\*\*Isaiah 55:6** Seek ye the Lord **while He may be found**, call ye upon Him while **He is near**.

In the same way that **destruction** followed the angelic rebellion, destruction also followed the sin of Adam and Eve. They were thrust from the Garden of Eden... it will come again on all the sinful world.

The time of horrendous trouble looming on the horizon – it is the Great Tribulation.

It is prophesied that at the close of his 6000-year rule, Satan's great wrath will bring destruction on all the unprotected inhabitants of the earth.

Jesus Christ tells us to be watching and praying always. In that way we may be accounted worthy to escape the near annihilation of mankind.

The devastation will be so great that there would not be a single survivor – except for Christ's intervention to save an elect few.

In God's great providence, He will protect a small part of His Church from the horrors of the Great Tribulation.

Most people will not make it to the Place of Safety.

It is because of Satan's deception that the human race will be brought to the very brink of destruction.

A great deal is revealed in the Bible about what will occur during that time.

We can learn how to escape the horrors of the Tribulation, and be nourished in the Place of Safety.

Those Christians who go into the **Tribulation** will see and know that they had not followed Christ's example of laying down their lives for the brethren. (1 John 3:16)

**1 John 3:16** Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down his life for us: and **we ought to lay down our lives** for the brethren.

Most are slated to go into the Tribulation, but it is **not too late** to avoid it.

**Revelations 12:6** And the woman [Church] fled into the wilderness, where she has a place [of Safety] prepared by God.

## Genesis 6

Let's look briefly at the Great Flood of Noah's day – where God protected some from **sudden destruction**.

God told Noah, "I'll put up with mankind for 120 more years – then **I'm pulling the plug**."

**Genesis 6:3** And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also *is* flesh: **yet** his days shall be a hundred and twenty years.

Noah had 120 years to preach righteousness and build the huge ship – the ark.

He had one advantage – he could build where timber was abundant and not necessarily near a seaport.

In the same way, Today, God is giving us a TIME reference – Before He intervenes!

God tells us "This generation will not pass away – I believe that is speaking of our generation – to us today.

**Mark 13:30** Verily I say unto you, that **this generation shall not pass**, till all these things be done. ....:36 we better not be sleeping.

Why did God send the Flood to wipe everything out?

The answer is because things were not going according to God's plan.

**Genesis 6:5** And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and *that* every imagination [ purpose and desire of man ] of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. {Compare Genesis 13:13 + 18:20}

God would not be able to accomplish in those people what He intended to get done – a sinful nation is an uncooperative nation.

**Genesis 6:6** And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at His heart.

God was not scrapping His whole plan – it just got so bad that He could not work with those pre-flood peoples.

They had become so deranged, so degraded, so ruined that God could not produce a nation of Israelites out of those people.

Like Jesus Christ said: It is getting that way today.

And right before the flood the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every desire of man's heart *was* only evil continually.

We do not like to think of ourselves in these terms – but Jesus said that it would be just like this in the end-time – now!

What does all this have to do with us – God tells us.

Let's look at another example of **sudden destruction** – because God is serious.

## 2 Peter

God recorded this **just for us**. God is going to do it again.

The flood was **an example** for us.

**2 Peter 2:6** And turning the cities of **Sodom** and Gomorrah into ashes condemned *them* with an overthrow, **making them an example** unto those that after should live ungodly;

Turn over to Jude:7 We are close...

**Jude:7** Even as **Sodom** and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are **set forth for an example**, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

## Luke 17

Would God **really** destroy our modern civilization with all of its conveniences, progress, science, airlines, trains, shipping, automobiles, cities with sky-scrapers and modern communications?

**Luke 17:26** And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

**Luke 17:27** They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

**Luke 17:28** Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they buildt;

**Luke 17:29** But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and **destroyed them all**.

**Luke 17:30** Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

Maybe we think we are too special for God to wipe us out???

**Isaiah 66:**

**Who will be saved from the wrath to come?**

Will it be the Powerful?

Will it be those who have joined the right fraternity?

Will it be the wise of this world?

Will it be those who memorize the most doctrine?

Will it be the wealthy and secure?

Here is the answer:

God who made heaven and earth is looking for the **humble and obedient**.

**Isaiah 66:2** For all those things [ heaven and earth ] hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that **is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my word**.

**Brethren, does that describe you?** ...knowing that **swift destruction** is coming on those who do not live the word of God.

**Ezekiel 18**

Let's close with:

**Ezekiel 18:21** But if the wicked will turn [repent] from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, **he shall surely live**, he shall not die.

**Ezekiel 18:22** All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.

**Ezekiel 18:23** Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

**Ezekiel 18:24** But when the righteous turns away from his righteousness, and commits iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

**Ezekiel 18:25** Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal [not fair and equitable]. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? Are not your ways unequal?

**Ezekiel 18:26** When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, and commits iniquity, and dies in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.

**Ezekiel 18:27** Again, when the wicked man turns away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.

**Ezekiel 18:28** Because he considers, and turns away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

**Ezekiel 18:29** Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?

**Ezekiel 18:30** Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

**Ezekiel 18:31** Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and **make you a new heart and a new spirit**: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

**Ezekiel 18:32** For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn [repent] yourselves, and live ye.

\*\*Brethren, let's make sure that we are actually living – in our mind, heart and actions – the kind of life that God would have us live. Jesus' life is our example. Set the highest standard of perfection and sacrifice in ours.

In that way, we will never have to fear **sudden destruction**.