

# **THE COMING FINANCIAL COLLAPSE OF THE WORLD REVELATION 18**

There is a day on the horizon of the future. On that day a series of events will take place which will arrest every day life on planet earth. In a single moment on a single day all over the world:

- ✓ the food supply will end,
- ✓ the transportation system will grind to a halt,
- ✓ the banking system will freeze and default,
- ✓ the luxuries, precious metals, gems, art and all other hoarded wealth of our country and all others will become worthless,
- ✓ the communications industry will be cut off and there will be no radio, no TV, no telephone, no internet,
- ✓ the supply of power will fade and blink off, and darkness will rule in the homes and businesses of the world. In short there is a day when the lights are going off all over the world, and they won't be coming on anytime soon.

## **God Gives a Plan: Navigating the Global Financial Collapse**

The 18<sup>th</sup> chapter of Revelation gives us a road map for the coming economic collapse of the world. By learning the lessons God laid down in His Word we can see what response He desires from His servants not only in the ultimate collapse (the topic of Revelation 18) but also in any other reversals, downturns and recessions, depressions and panics that precede the big and final crash.

What does God want us to learn in Revelation 18? Many things.

- ✓ There is life beyond money.
- ✓ Life is more important than possessions.
- ✓ You can't take it with you.
- ✓ Life is not linear, there will always be unexpected and devastating changes and disasters.
- ✓ There are no disappointments for the Christian only the appointments of God.

# Satan's Twins: Religion & Materialism

First an over view. Revelation 18 is a twin to Revelation 17.

In Revelation 17 we find **the collapse of the apostate world church**. In the process we see Satan's harlot bride, the delusion of religion. Religion in all its many varieties is one branch.

Revelation 18 is the other member of Satan's family. The other of the twins is found in **materialism, worldliness or covetousness**. From the Garden of Eden onward Satan has been offering to humans the elusive greener grass. If only you eat this fruit you will have it all. If only you earn this income you will be happy. If only you reach this level of popularity, power or success you will have it all. Hand in hand with Satan's fall is the insatiable desire for more. Lucifer was discontented with the highest position in heaven, he wanted more. Humans are born with a thirst for more of whatever they desire. This is the idolatry of covetousness.

The most visible sign of covetousness is materialism. Materialism is the desire for things as opposed to spiritual worship which is the desire for God. Materialism is seen in money, possessions, endless pursuits of physical pleasures and recreations. All of that physical pursuit is going to end. In Revelation 18 God turns off the party. The music stops. The money fails. The party is over and in a moment the lights go out! As we stand for the reading of Revelation 18 listen to the description of the coming global financial collapse.

## READ REVELATION 18

Revelation 18:1-24 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. 2 And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! 3 For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury." 4 And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. 5 For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. 6 Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. 7 In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.' 8 Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her. 9 "The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, 10 standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.' 11 "And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: 12 merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble; 13 and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and

frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men. 14 The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all. 15 The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16 and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! 17 For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.' Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance 18 and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What is like this great city?' 19 "They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.' 20 "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!" 21 Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. 22 The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. 23 The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth."

The Outline of this chapter:

- ✓ JESUS CONDEMNING WORLDLINESS (18:1-3)
- ✓ JESUS CALLING FOR SAINTS TO COME OUT OF WORLDLINESS (18:4-8)
- ✓ JESUS DESCRIBING THE WORTHLESSNESS OF WORLDLINESS (18:9-19)
- ✓ JESUS CELEBRATING THE END OF WORLDLINESS (18:20-24)

## WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OF REVELATION 18?

When we come to Revelation 18 we are looking at the fully grown evils of this world. As we saw in our study of Revelation 17, Babylon is at the same time an ancient city, a kingdom of the past, as well as a system of religion and a present way of life. Babylonian<sup>1</sup> materialism in Revelation 18 may be distilled down to one word in the Bible covetousness. Covetousness is idolatry. It is the worship of Mammon (money, possession and so on) instead of God.

In John's day Rome had gone to the limits in extravagance. The caesars would spend fortunes on a single meal demanding the most exotic and rare dishes for their personal consumption. Nero decorated his banquets with roses from Egypt costing \$ 70,000 and wore and outfit (he only wore things once) costing \$40,000. Caligula demanded meals of hummingbird and flamingo tongues, pearls costing \$ 200,00 dissolved in wine and the livers of pike fish, the brains of peacocks and so on<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Look with me at Zechariah 5:9-11 Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there were two women, coming with the wind in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between earth and heaven.<sup>10</sup> So I said to the angel who talked with me, "Where are they carrying the basket?"<sup>11</sup> And he said to me, "To build a house for it in the land of Shinar; when it is ready, the basket will be set there on its base."

✓ The woman is used to give the idea of birth.  
 ✓ The weights and all to give the idea of commerce.  
 ✓ Two may be because of Revelation 17-18 twin evils of religious and material corruption.

<sup>2</sup> Barclay, Revelation, volume 2, p. 157.

The problem of Revelation 18 was noted by St. Augustine in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. *Idolatry is when we use what we are supposed to worship and worship what we are supposed to use.* Just put all the evils of our world into that grid: Idolatry is when we use God and worship Money, sex, pleasure, etc.

## **Idolatry vs. True Worship**

True Biblical Worship<sup>3</sup> is to:

- ✓ Bow down to the will of God
- ✓ Acknowledge that what He says is true
- ✓ Acknowledge that what He does is Right

Anything can be worshiped. Worship simply stated is anything which captivates and draws us toward something. A person may be so captivated by work that they are irresistably drawn to work all the time, thus the workaholic: Work worship.

- ✓ Another may worship alcohol or drugs, and thus the alcoholic and drug addict. escape worship
- ✓ Another may worship pleasure in the sensual realm, and thus the sex addict, pervert and whoremongering fornicator. Pleasure worship
- ✓ Another may be drawn by the allurements of wealth and possessions, thus the materialist, the greedy and selfish rich fool Jesus spoke of who only planned for prosperity, eating, drinking, and enjoying life. Wealth worship
- ✓ Another may be drawn to the praise of man, and thus the proud, inward seeking, calloused and unfeeling self centered person. Self worship

The test of whether or not you worship something is quite simple. Can you give it up? Try this on each of the areas we have covered.

- ✓ Can you give up your career and the accomplishments of your goals in your field, to the Lord today?
- ✓ Can you stop drinking alcohol, smoking whatever, taking whatever substances that help you escape reality – stop them completely – today and give your life to the Lord?
- ✓ Can you end all selfish sensual pleasure pursuits, pornography, fornication, sodomy, adultery today and give you pleasures to the Lord to fulfill in His perfect time and way?
- ✓ Can you give up your money, security, power, all of it, today, into the Lord's control?
- ✓ Can you give up your pride, self seeking, self absorbtion, self focus and so on, today and humble yourself, deny yourself and take up your crtoss following Jesus today?

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<sup>3</sup> Henry Morris, Revelation, p. 380.

## WHAT IS COVETOUSNESS?

Covetousness is "to long for, be preoccupied with having what God has not given us". Possessiveness is "to be selfish and unsharing with what God has given us".<sup>4</sup>

A sure sign of the materialism of covetousness is its **INSATIABILITY**. "The legitimacy of a desire lies in the ability to satisfy or fill it. All true needs -- such as food, drink, and companionship -- are satiable. Illegitimate wants -- pride, envy, greed -- are insatiable. By their very nature they can't be satisfied."<sup>5</sup>

The Bible has many grim markers that show where illegitimate desire has given birth to immense disaster:

- ✓ Achan's lust for more led to his death by stoning and a similar death for all his family. [Joshua 7]
- ✓ Balaam's greed made him fail to hear his own message. [Numbers 22:4-35]
- ✓ Delilah betrayed a man who trusted her, for a payoff. [Judges 16]
- ✓ Solomon's insatiable desire for more of everything led him away from God. [Deuteronomy 17:16-17]
- ✓ Gehazi was not content with serving God, he lied to get more and paid dearly for it. [II Kings 5:20-27]
- ✓ Judas measured the inestimable value of Jesus in pieces of silver. (Mt. 26:15)
- ✓ Ananias & Sapphira could not let go of the money they possessed nor the applause they coveted so God killed them! [Acts 5:1-11]

## JESUS WAS WARNING HIS DISCIPLES ABOUT COVETOUSNESS<sup>6</sup>

What can we conclude? Covetousness or greed is not just a harmless pastime but a serious offense against God. Just as the lustful man is an adulterer in Matthew 5:28; The hateful man a murderer in I John 3:15; so the greedy man is an idolater in Col. 3:5.<sup>7</sup>

## JESUS CONDEMNING SATAN'S SYSTEM OF WORLDLINESS (18:1-3)

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<sup>4</sup> Alcorn, p. 55.

<sup>5</sup> Barnett, Wealth p. 139.

<sup>6</sup> When Jesus was preparing His disciples for life after His departure, a major part of their training had to do with living daily life in contentment. Our Lord said we can't serve God and Money. Luke 16:13 "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money." (NIV)

<sup>7</sup> Randy Alcorn, *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*, p. 55.

Revelation 18:1-3 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory.<sup>2</sup> And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!<sup>3</sup> "For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury."

**WORLDLY POSSESSIONS CAN'T BUY SPIRITUAL LIFE.** The rich and powerful families of the world from Rockefeller to Rothschild, from Getty to Gates will stand and watch their billions go up in the smoke of the wrath of God. This scene depicts graphically what Jesus said in Matthew 16:26 "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

✓ James 5:1-6 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you!<sup>2</sup> Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.<sup>3</sup> Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days.<sup>4</sup> Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.<sup>5</sup> You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter.<sup>6</sup> You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you.

## **JESUS<sup>8</sup> CALLING FOR SAINTS TO COME OUT OF SATAN'S SYSTEM OF WORLDLINESS (18:4-8)**

Revelation 18:4-8 And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.<sup>5</sup> "For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.<sup>6</sup> "Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her.<sup>7</sup> "In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.'<sup>8</sup> "Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.

This is a repetition of the continually repeated call of God. He wants us His saints to live out our high calling. We are called to be holy in all parts of our lives! Separate

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<sup>8</sup> THIS IS A SOBERING CALL TO PATIENCE IN ALL CHRISTIANS as Revelation 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. So we do not chase those things which will only be left behind to burn!

Word Count = 8119

MACINTOSH US USERS JOURNAL LETTER BOARD 1008 SEPTEMBER 2008 16 AM EST # 22 THIRD 100 DOC NUMBER 25 2010 P 11 24

from and get out of Babylon is called for 7 times in the Word of God<sup>9</sup>. Some of the key calls of God were for to get out of worldliness.

- ✓ **GOD CALLED ABRAHAM OUT OF HIS WORLD TO FOLLOW GOD'S WAY.**  
Genesis 12:1 Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you.
- ✓ **GOD CALLED LOT TO TOTALLY ABANDON THE SINFULNESS OF SODOM.**  
Genesis 19:12 Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city—take them out of this place!
- ✓ **GOD CALLED MOSES TO STAY OUT OF THE VERY PRESENCE OF THOSE REBELLING AGAINST THE LORD.** Numbers 16:23-24 So the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,<sup>24</sup> "Speak to the congregation, saying, 'Get away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.' "
- ✓ **GOD PROMISES GREAT BLESSING FOR LIVING A LIFE OF AVOIDING THE UNGODLINESS AROUND US.** Psalm 1:1-3 Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.
- ✓ **JESUS PRAYED FOR OUR REALIZATION OF THIS WORLD AS NOT OUR HOME.** John 17:14-16 "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.<sup>15</sup> "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.<sup>16</sup> "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.
- ✓ **GOD EXPECTS HIS CHILDREN TO COME OUT AND STAY OUT OF WORLDLINESS.** 2 Corinthians 6:14-17 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?<sup>15</sup> And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?<sup>16</sup> And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." <sup>17</sup> Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."
- ✓ **GOD CALLS US TO BE CAREFUL IN NOT ASSOCIATING WITH SIN.** 1 Timothy 5:22 Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.

## **JESUS DESCRIBING THE WORTHLESSNESS OF SATAN'S SYSTEM OF WORLDLINESS (18:9-19)**

<sup>9</sup> Isaiah 48:20; 52:11; Jer. 50:8-9; 51:6,8; Zech. 2:6-7 and Revelation 18:4.

**WORLDLY POSSESSIONS CAN'T LAST FOREVER.** Revelation 18:9 "The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning,

- ✓ The words "bemoan and lament" speak of an uncontrollable sobbing and beating of the breast in anguish! They are insecure and not enduring in the end.

**WORLDLY POSSESSIONS CAN'T MEET OUR DEEPEST NEEDS.** Revelation 18:10-12 "standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.'<sup>11</sup> "And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore:<sup>12</sup> "merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble <sup>13</sup> "and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men.

There are 28 types of possessions named in 8 categories:

1. **POSSESSIONS OF SECURITY.** In all of history gold, silver and precious stones have been a vehicle to hold the wealth of the rich against inflation, warfare and decline.
2. **POSSESSIONS OF EXTERNAL BEAUTY.** These are the fine materials of clothing, decorating and fashion.
3. **POSSESSIONS OF EXQUISITE FURNISHINGS.** The woods (thyanine a fragrant, rare coniferous wood of Northern Africa makes table tops worth \$10,000 each), ivory, marble (the most expensive building material) and so on.
4. **POSSESSIONS OF PERSONAL LUXURY.** These are the fragrances of perfumes and incenses, the oils of ointments and beautifiers, the spices of exotic cuisine.
5. **POSSESSIONS OF PERSONAL INDULGENCE.** The inclusion of wine would cover all the personal intoxicants including distilled spirits (not known in the ancient world), and drugs (known and used back then). The oil named may be olive oil of the ancient world or a prophetic look ahead to the vast petroleum industry.
6. **POSSESSIONS OF LIFE.** The list also has food stuffs for daily life. This would be all agricultural products. Then also are the fine meats named.
7. **POSSESSIONS OF TRANSPORTATION.** The word for chariot is not the normal 2 wheeler from the movies like Ben Hur, it is the four wheeled wagon (Greek: rheda) of travel. This may be a prophetic look at the vast automotive industry.
8. **POSSESSIONS OF SLAVERY.** The including of slaves "souls of men" may indicate a resurgence of slavery which was outlawed by Christian nations in the



19<sup>th</sup> century (although in Asia and Africa it continues), or this may be a spiritual reference to the sale of indulgences

### **WORLDLY POSSESSIONS CAN BLIND THE SOUL TO ETERNAL CONCERNS.**

Revelation 18:15-19 "The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear<sup>10</sup> of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16 "and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! 17 'For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.' Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance<sup>18</sup> "and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What is like this great city?'<sup>19</sup> "They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.'

- ✓ In four verses the earthdwellers lament their loss of luxuries, money and things (v. 9, 11, 15, 19) and the lightning like speed of their loss (v. 10, 17, 19).
- ✓ But in all the weeping and wailing **THEY FAIL TO EVEN NOTICE** the greatest loss is of their own souls! What a tragic scene!

### **JESUS CELEBRATING THE END OF SATAN'S SYSTEM OF WORLDLINESS (18:20-24)**

**WORLDLINESS USES THE DEAFENING SPELL OF ENTERTAINMENT** Revelation 18:20 "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!" (**they refused to listen to God's servants**) 21 Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. (**they lost their opportunity to live forever, instead they will die forever**) 22 "The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. (**no more music and tunes to drown out God**) No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. 23 "The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. 24 "And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth."

- ✓ Gone will be the diversions. Music and entertainment are shut down. The work that captivates so many keeping them from spiritual things ceases. The regular

<sup>10</sup> Remember what the prophet Zephaniah said (1:18) Neither their silver nor their gold Shall be able to deliver them In the day of the Lord's wrath; But the whole land shall be devoured By the fire of His jealousy, For He will make speedy riddance Of all those who dwell in the land.

grind (millstone) of life stops. There is nothing left to hide the thoughts of God. No diversions, no distractions! This is just another of the endings of this chapter.

- ✓ The profits of commerce ended in v. 11.
- ✓ The enjoyment of exotic commodities ended in v. 14.
- ✓ The whole system of materialism burned in v. 21
- ✓ The very sounds of life: music, industry, and home cease in v. 22.
- ✓ Finally even light and social life v. 23 stop.

Why? Because of the sorceries (Grk. Pharmakeia) the drug induced stupors of addiction, the demonic induced bondage of the astrology industry, the godless and mindless following of the evolutionary, dehumanization of mankind by philosophy and secular education. All the evils are facing judgment day.

In Revelation 18 there are seven elements of the worldly system Jesus ends. These are a cause for rejoicing as they will no longer cause earthdwellers to ignore him. What specifically does the Lord end? Here are the elements worldliness is built upon:

1. **A WORLDLY PERSON FINDS THEIR IDENTITY IN THIS WORLD NOT IN HEAVEN.** (v. 21b) They dress like the world, they act like the world and they are drawn toward the world. And God is erasing their identity.
2. **A WORLDLY PERSON FINDS THEIR ESCAPE THROUGH AMUSEMENTS, ENTERTAINMENTS AND PLEASURE SEEKING.** (v. 22a) This is the distraction factor. They are so captivated by movies, music and all they never engage with the Living and abiding Word of God. And God is turning off the music.
3. **A WORLDLY PERSON USES WORK, CAREER ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AND EVEN DAILY LIFE AS A WAY OUT OF SPIRITUAL RESPONSIBILITIES** (v. 22b) You have met them, they are so wound up in their work they are inconsistent in worship, they miss a lot of fellowship, they do not get to stay around enough to exercise their spiritual gifts in the body of Christ. Even the needs of daily life such as food and housing can keep them away from heavenly living. And God is stopping the cycle of life.
4. **A WORLDLY PERSON IS TIED TO THE TECHNOLOGY, SCIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE OF THIS WORLD NOT THE NEXT** (v. 23a) It is amazing how captivating the blur of technology has become. In the industrialized world there has been a blind acceptance and intoxication of humanity by convenience. And God is cutting short the technology.
5. **A WORLDLY PERSON IS TIED TO SOCIAL LIFE, PARTY LIFE, THE CALENDAR AND HOLIDAYS** (v. 23b) This is the person that lives for the weekend. This is the person who goes from one social event to another. Life is just an endless party, and God is stopping the party.
6. **A WORLDLY PERSON IS TIED TO THEIR FINANCES, TO THEIR WEALTH AND TO THEIR POSSESSIONS** (v. 23b) These worldlings find their greatness in money and stuff. They live to acquire and hold and enjoy things. And God is going to erase their assets.

7. **A WORLDLY PERSON IS INTOXICATED BY THE WORLD.** (v. 23c) This last section speaks of drugs and sorcery. This can include alcohol as well as drug induced witchcraft. And God is going to end it all.

## **WHAT IDOLS DO WE NEED TO WATCH OUT FOR TODAY?**

What are some of these deadly modern idols? We can take a look at some of the old ones the Lord condemns, and then looking around we can see their modern counterparts. For instance, the oldest book in the world is probably the Old Testament account of Job. So the oldest record of man's struggle with idols. And what was a very tempting idol back four thousand or more years ago? The same as today, **THE IDOL OF MONEY.**

Job 31:24-28 "If I have put my trust in gold or said to pure gold, 'You are my security,' if I have rejoiced over my great wealth, the fortune my hands had gained, if I have regarded the sun in its radiance or the moon moving in splendor, so that my heart was secretly enticed and my hand offered them a kiss of homage, then these also would be sins to be judged, for I would have been unfaithful to God on high. (NIV)

The Old Testament prophets **WARNED THAT THE ISRAELITES COULD BEGIN TO WORSHIP THEIR CAREER, JOB, OCCUPATION OR TECHNOLOGY.** And then his work would become an idol. Note the little minor prophet Habakkuk.

Habakkuk 1:15-16 The wicked foe pulls all of them up with hooks, he catches them in his net, he gathers them up in his dragnet; and so he rejoices and is glad. Therefore he sacrifices to his net and burns incense to his dragnet, for by his net he lives in luxury and enjoys the choicest food. (NIV)

In the New Testament church, the apostle Paul warned the saints at Philippi to **BEWARE OF THE POTENTIAL IDOL OF APPETITE, AND PHYSICAL DESIRES.**

Philippians 3:19 Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. (NIV)

## **WHAT DOES GOD TRULY WANT FROM US?**

Since no one has ever seen the Father, we need to listen to Jesus:

Matthew 22:37-38 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. (NIV)

How can we do that? David framed his love in a Psalm, the 63rd:

O God, You are my God;  
Early will I seek You;  
My soul thirsts for You;  
My flesh longs for You  
In a dry and thirsty land  
Where there is no water.

2 So I have looked for You in the sanctuary,  
To see Your power and Your glory.

3 Because Your lovingkindness is better than life,  
My lips shall praise You.

4 Thus I will bless You while I live;  
I will lift up my hands in Your name.

All of this we saw is only a foretaste of whats to come. But God has not left us without instructions. In Revelation we see truth to live by for a safe future.

## **HOW DO WE SURVIVE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY?**

- 1. BUILD WITH FIREPROOF MATERIALS** : Remember Jesus compares our earthly life to a BUILDING, so we must watch what we build with and where.  
**[Quakes, fires, hurricanes, floods]**

I Corinthians 3:10-17 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

- 2. BUY BLUE CHIPS:** REMEMBER JESUS SAYS OUR LIFE IS A STEWARDSHIP, SO WATCH WHERE YOU INVEST IT. [Scams, bilked out of millions, folded companies, Depco, stock market crashes]

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Exodus 24:9-11 Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they saw the God of Israel. And

there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity.<sup>11</sup> But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw God, and they ate and drank.

3. **RUN THE RACE FOR JESUS:** Remember Jesus says our life is like a RACE, so watch out for the rules, know the boundaries and keep the baggage at a minimum. [Must keep in lines, follow rules, not trip]

Hebrews 12:1-2 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (KJV)

## REMEMBER THE Y2K WARNINGS?

What will this be like on earth. Have you ever thought about it? In Revelation 18: 23 we find some amazing words: "The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore . . . In 20<sup>th</sup> century terms, this verse says the power grid is shut down. It says no power, no electricity, no technology that uses electricity will be running. Revelation 18 marks the end of the world as we know it. That will not happen before at least the year 2005 according to the Word of God. But, it calls for us to ask ourselves a few questions based on this Scripture.

This evening we are faced with the very intriguing possibility that the comfort and conveniences of our civilization may become briefly impaired in the not too distant future. Think back to 75 short years ago. Most people had no electricity, saw no television, heard very little radio, didn't use banks very much, worked all day, and prepared or even raised, their own food. These same people lived in small houses, heated the houses by fire, carried much of their water from a well to use in their homes, stayed very close to home because travel was difficult, and so on.

Then came the explosion of technology which gave greater comforts but charged higher and higher fees for maintenance. The electricity which feeds technology became vital. The speed of technology became critical and so on. What has happened to us is we are technologically dependent! Think of what many of us have lived through. The pace of change has been astounding. We now travel at the speed of sound, we communicate at the speed of light and we clothe our selves and live with materials made at the molecular level. Western society has grown into an inescapable interdependence with machines which can be greatly disrupted by any non-linearities.

In 1999 there were seven events ahead on the calendar for this earth. They all happened, and life went on. What will be the result of these seven the next time they come around even stronger, only God in His plan can tell. Let me list them:

1. **A SOLAR HURRICANE** affected the earth all of late 1999 and 2000.
2. **THE GROWING GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS.** There is an avalanche of debt in Japan, Russia and Asia that is bearing down the global hillside toward our tidy chalet in America.
3. **MOSLEMS HAVE THE BOMB AND PLAGUES.**
4. **PROPHECY MATERIALIZING:**
  - ✓ **EU 1/1/99**
  - ✓ **QUAKES CLIMBING<sup>11</sup>**
5. **THE GREAT DECEIVER WORKING OVERTIME.** From apparitions of Mary to alien encounters and UFOs Satan is out to make the most of these end days. Expect some incredible alien sightings and peace overtures.
6. **CASHLESS SOCIETY**

There is a day in the very near future when we may all get to see just how much we have come to depend upon computers, electricity, technology and conveniences. The question is, are you ready for the lights to go out? When the power goes off, how well will you survive? From the newspapers and news magazines of America (like the NY Times, LA Times, Chicago Tribune, Wall Street Journal, Newsweek, Time, and so on) let me read you these lines. You can quietly answer them in your mind.

- ✓ How will any upsetting of the GPS affect your life (all airlines use the GPS, all merchant and warships use GPS, even your pizza man and evening news camera crew use GPS).
- ✓ How will the director of the Federal Reserve Bank (which controls all money in America and thus 60% of the wealth of the world) Allen Greenspan's comments on 3/2/98 affect you? He said "60% chance of global recession. Damage ahead."
- ✓ Did you know that our sun operates on a Solar cycle of 11 years. The peak outflow of solar flares (plasma, electromagnetic explosions and power surges from the surface of the sun) comes on every 11<sup>th</sup> year. The last solar cycle peaked in 1989. What did it do? Check the encyclopedia. It knocked out the power grid of Canada and destroyed a 300 million dollar ATT satellite. That was 1989. It hits every 11 years. When is the next one? It is due in 2011.
- ✓ Do you know the supermarkets and gas stations around you have only a 72 hour supply of food and gasoline?

What might happen eventually to us as Christians? Probably what has happened all along the way to servants of the Lord since the beginning. You and I may be called

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<sup>11</sup> There were 28 quakes over 6.0 magnitude in the 100 years from 1400-1500; there were 60 in the 1500's; 172 in the 1600's; 136 in the 1700's; 72 quakes from 1800 to 1850; 172 from 1850 to 1900; 506 from 1900 to 1950 and already an astounding 670 from 1950 to 1997!

on by God to actually suffer! Listen to a modern day saint who is suffering. This is a Vietnamese Pastor's wife story.<sup>12</sup>

## **THE LAST SHALL BE FIRST**

I believe Mrs. Nguyen Thi An (a fictitious name) can claim a rightful companionship with Paul. Though she has lost everything, she has all things in One. They have taken her husband, her home, and her belongings, yet her contentment they cannot take.

Mrs. An's husband was a pastor in Vietnam. When their church was closed by police, he was thrown into prison. Without official papers, she and her children were forced to live on a balcony outside an apartment. Yet her faith has forged a sanctuary out of her surroundings, from which she greets us:

My Dear Friends,

... You know around here we are experiencing hardships, but we thank the Lord He is comforting us and caring for us in every way. When we experience misfortune, adversity, distress and hardship, only then do we see the real blessing of the Lord poured down on us in such a way that we cannot contain it.

We have been obliged recently to leave our modest apartment and for over two months have been living on a balcony. The rain has been beating down and soaking us. Sometimes in the middle of the night we are forced to gather our blankets and run to seek refuge in a stairwell.

Do you know what I do then? I laugh and I praise the Lord, because we can still take shelter in the stairwell. I think of how many people are experiencing much worse hardships than I am. Then I remember the words of the Lord, "To the poor, O Lord, You are a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat" (cp. Isaiah 25:4), and I am greatly comforted....

Our Father ... is the One who according to the Scriptures does not break the bruised reed nor put out the flickering lamp. He is the One who looks after the orphan and the widow. He is the One who brings blessings and peace to numberless people.

I do not know what words to use in order to describe the love that the Lord has shown our family. I only can bow my knee and my heart and offer to the Lord words of deepest thanks and praise. Although we have lost our house and our possessions, we have not lost the Lord, and He is enough. With the Lord I have everything. The only thing I would fear losing is His blessing!

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<sup>12</sup> Swenson, *Margin*, pp.189-90.

Could I ask you and our friends in the churches abroad to continue to pray for me that I will faithfully follow the Lord and serve Him regardless of what the circumstances may be? As far as my husband is concerned, I was able to visit him this past summer. We had a 20-minute conversation that brought us great joy....

I greet you with my love.  
Mrs. Nguyen Thi An

## **WHAT CAN WE DO TO GET READY FOR THE END OF THE WORLD?**

There is a plague sweeping America. It's not AIDS nor TB, it's a dark cloud that overshadows all of life. It's called DISCONTENT. What is the plague we face here in America? It's the plague of discontentment. Discontentment is like an infection. You can catch it by contact unless you are resistant.

## **STUDY THE SEVEN KEYS TO LEARN AND MAINTAIN BIBLICAL CONTENTMENT FROM I TIMOTHY 6:**

1. Remember things are only temporary v.7.
2. Only seek necessities, wait for the rest v.8.
3. Avoid a consuming desire for prosperity v.9-10.
4. Flee materialism v.11.
5. Cling to eternal life v.12-16.
6. Fix your hope on God v.17.
7. Give until it hurts v.18.

*Contentment is the byproduct of following the Shepherd. It is experiencing the inner-peace that only He can provide. It is knowing He will promote you at the right time. Contentment is the sense of satisfaction that comes to a husband and wife as they emulate the provision and care of the Shepherd to their own children. Contentment comes from serving Christ instead of money and from providing not only financially for your family, but emotionally, morally and spiritually.* <sup>13</sup>

Finally, What can be the result of living by the Bible's definition of contentment? Let's look at just three:

1. If you are content, you can enjoy the present rather than being anxious about the future. Mt 6:25

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<sup>13</sup> Farrar, *Better Homes and Jungles*, p.189-90.



2. If you are content, you can be liberated to truly enjoy the successes of others around you without envy. Ps 37:7
3. If you are content, you will be able to let the Lord build a true sense of thankfulness about everything. I TH5:18

## **BEWARE OF DISCONTENTMENT.**

Listen to Packer's insightful analysis.<sup>14</sup>

*"Discontent will destroy your peace, rob you of joy, make you miserable, spoil your witness," warns Packer. "We dishonor God if we proclaim a Savior who satisfies and then go around discontent."*

The advantages of contentment, on the other hand, are many: freedom, gratitude, rest, peace -- all components of health. They who are content do not have to worry about the latest styles or what to wear tomorrow. They can rejoice in their neighbor's good fortune without having to feel inferior. They do not fret with wrinkles or graying because they accept what comes. They do not have to worry how they might buy this or that because they have no desire for this or that. They are not consumed with how to get out of debt because they have no debt. They have time for gratitude even in small things. They have time for relationships because possessions and the bank do not own them.

*Contentment*, explains J.I. Packer, "is essentially a matter of accepting from God's hand what He sends because we know that He is good and therefore it is good."

## **BEWARE OF THE PROSPERITY LADDER<sup>15</sup>**

Another erroneous measure of contentment is the prosperity ladder. Most of us look "up the ladder" and notice that the wealthy have more than we do. This, of course, strikes a near fatal blow at one's contentment. If, instead, we reversed our gaze and looked down the ladder, our gratitude would thrive and opportunities for sharing would abound.

The pettiness of my own sources of discontent would be amusing were I not so repentant about them. I have been known to grumble when our house temperature drops to sixty degrees, yet there are untold millions in the world who do not have shelter. I have been known to complain if the day is rainy, yet a large segment of the world's land is shriveling up in drought. I have been known to groan if I miss my dinner, yet thousands who go to sleep tonight without food will not awaken in the

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<sup>14</sup> Packer as quoted by Swenson, p.194-5.

<sup>15</sup> Swenson, p.188.

Word Count = 8119

morning. Christ came to save me from sin -- not from sixty-degree homes, rainy weather, and delayed dinners.

This relativism, where the grass is greener on your neighbor's lawn, can be remedied, but first it must be confessed. We need to quit staring at those who have more than we do. We need to override the set-point by spiritual maturity, to look down rather than up the ladder, and to fix our contentment on godliness rather than relativism. It helps immeasurably if we are surrounded by a community of like-minded friends rather than a society where envy has been normalized.

What should we do?

1. **DON'T PANIC.** Listen to Only operate in the realm of the Word of God. Note what Isaiah 30:15 For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: "In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." But you would not, and Isaiah 32:17 The work of righteousness will be peace, And the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.
2. **THINK ETERNALLY.** Do you need this or that in light of eternity. Where would time and talent best be invested?
3. **GIVE STRATEGICALLY.**
4. **PREPARE EVANGELISTICALLY.** How can you be ready with your quake pack as if California (enough to help fellow motorists or neighbors).
5. **TALK PROPHETICALLY.** You can speak with confidence about the future. The world will not end, the planet will not be plunged into nuclear winter, etc.

## APPENDICES

### THE IMAGE OF DANIEL'S PROPHECY IN 2:31-45:

- Head of gold Babylon
- chest of silver Greece [8:20]
- lower body bronze Persia [8:21]
- feet and toes iron and clay Rome

Thus we have God describing the rise and fall of the kingdoms of the earth.

### WILL BABYLON THE CITY OF DANIEL'S DAY BE REBUILT?

Many Bible Scholars believe it will be. The main reasons are:

- ✓ When it is destroyed the sun and stars are darkened as in Isaiah 13:1,9,10.
- ✓ Desolation will follow like that of Sodom and Gomorrah as in Isaiah 13:19; Jer.50:40.
- ✓ Isaiah 13:20 It will never be inhabited, Nor will it be settled from generation to generation; Nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, Nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there. (NKJV)
- ✓ Jeremiah 50:40 As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah along with their neighboring towns," declares the LORD, "so no one will live there; no man will dwell in it. (NIV)
- ✓ Babylon will be desolate forever as in Isaiah 13:20; Jer 51:62 Then say, `O LORD, you have said you will destroy this place, so that neither man nor animal will live in it; it will be desolate forever.' (NIV)
- ✓ All nations of the world be involved in this judgment as in Jeremiah. 51:49. "Babylon must fall because of Israel's slain, just as the slain in all the earth have fallen because of Babylon. (NIV); Isaiah 13:11-13 I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless. I will make man scarcer than pure gold, more rare than the gold of Ophir. Therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the LORD Almighty, in the day of his burning anger. (NIV)
- ✓ Global peace and rest from God come after this destruction in Isaiah 14:7-8. All the lands are at rest and at peace; they break into singing. Even the pine trees and the cedars of Lebanon exult over you and say, "Now that you have been laid low, no woodsman comes to cut us down." (NIV)
- ✓ The destruction of Babylon is seemingly tied to the fall of Satan in Isaiah 14:12-15 How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit. (NIV)
- ✓ Babylon's stones will never be used to build anything again as in Jeremiah. 51:26 No rock will be taken from you for a cornerstone, nor any stone for a foundation, for you will be desolate forever," declares the LORD. (NIV)