

ARE WE NOW LIVING THE LAST DAYS ON EARTH?

Written by admin

Wednesday, 18 April 2012 11:09 - Last Updated Wednesday, 18 April 2012 11:22



by Dr. Henderson Ward

Some very important questions need to be asked as regards this important topic for today's reflection. Can we know if these are the last days? How late is it on the eschatological time clock? Are we near the end of time or are we like some early Christians waiting with baited breath for something to happen which are thousands of years in the future? Questions, questions and more questions but where are the definitive answers and can we rely on these answers.

If you follow the news closely or surf the internet it seems every nutcase, palm reader, dreamer, false prophet, devil worshipper, cultist, God-told-me-so-last-night-joke preacher, tea leaves reader, Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all know exactly when the world comes to an end. History is littered with false prognostications and every day more of the same is being proffered. A serious and eschatological inevitability is being obfuscated by self-seeking charlatans who have neither a desire for the truth nor an interest in the spiritual welfare of mankind.

So what can we know, what do we know about the last days. God gave Nebuchadnezzar (who reigned for approximately 43 years, 605-562 BC) a dream which Daniel by special revelation of God interpreted, in Daniel Chapter 2, to represent man's time on earth ending with the establishment of God's everlasting kingdom. We know from history that following Daniel's interpretation everything prophesied took place exactly as Daniel stated. Remember that the book of Daniel was written about 536 BC, about 60 years after his prophesy, and following that

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prophecy the Babylonian Empire fell as predicted (in 539 BC) the Medio-Persian Empire took over and fell as predicted (in 333BC) the Greek Empire took over and fell as predicted (in 133BC) and the Roman Empire took over and disintegrated as predicted (in AD 476) although a piece of it continued in the East until AD1453. So based on the human-like beast that Daniel saw the Head is gone (Babylon) the Arms and Chest are gone (Medio-Persia) the Belly and Thighs are gone (Greece) and the legs are gone (Rome) and the feet have disintegrated into a number of disparate kingdoms which is where the world is at this moment.

So chronologically and eschatological we are in the final days and we would be negligent if we did not pay full attention to the situation. Our reflection here is based on a well known and often quoted scripture, "And as it was in the Days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." (Luke 17:6)

It can be said that God does not act invisibly but invisibly to the spiritually blind. The Bible says, "Having eyes, see ye not? And having ears, hear ye not? And do ye not remember?" (Mark 8:18) All the signs were there prior to God sweeping away the Old World, just as the signs are here today but we need to open our eyes and ears and recognize them.

First we need to recognize accelerating sinfulness

We should note an absence of spiritual normality

It is said that when abnormal weather is approaching, like the Asian tsunami that struck in December 2004, some animals change their behavior drastically to the extent that such behavior can be described as bizarre. This behavior is in response to what animals perceive as coming their way. In the case of humans the exact opposite is true for it is our bizarre behavior that causes things to happen and at the same time stands bold as a predictor of approaching events.

In Noah's day the absence of spiritual normality was manifest when bizarre things were happening between people that were expressly forbidden, "when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them" (Genesis 6:4). Whatever your interpretation, angels cohabiting with humans or the children of godly Seth cohabiting with the children of ungodly Cain, the bottom line remains the same; an escalation of doing something God found offensive. In nations all across the world we are witnessing the most bizarre and perverse happenings; same-sex marriages, sodomy practiced as just another lifestyle, incestuous relationships, bestiality, ritual human killings and more.

Alas the church is not exempt from this immoral carnage sweeping the land for some of it is taking place in the heart of the Christian church; practicing homosexual priests (SIC!) being ordained bishop, the blessing (SIC!) of homosexual unions, non-Christians ordained to the priesthood, priests routinely sexually abusing young children, and the list goes on. We now have many so called Christian church leaders who have no interest in the spiritual and moral development of their congregation only in their mushrooming bank balance and their ego-centric, worldly lifestyle. All of this is clear indication of an absence of spiritual normality.

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We should observe an absence of moral standards

One of the most frightening afflictions of our modern era is the fast disappearance of moral and ethical standards. The corporate world holds the population to ransom and is rewarded handsomely for it. The elite in society, the superstar sportsmen and sportswomen, the itinerant celebrities, the big-up politicians and corporate moguls that cheat, steal, lie and perpetuate shenanigans are adored, elevated and feted. The world is obsessed with doing its own thing, removing all the sacred landmarks; if it feels good do it and be damned, who cares this is my life and I can do as I please. All following a similar pattern as before, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Genesis 6:5).

Believers should not be taken by surprise by this trend for the Apostle Paul warned us about this so that we can recognize the perilous times in which we are living. Paul according to 2 Tim 3:1-9 listed a number of the maladies that we are currently witnessing including these, "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, Without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (V. 2 - 4).

God's standards for morality and holiness have not changed but people have digressed from the true paths. Many are engaging in the most perverse wickedness and they are encouraging their children to do the same meaning that they are not just destroying their lives but are rupturing the prospects of the next generation.

God expects believers to set an example and live soberly, godly and righteously in this present world in spite of the moral decay, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:11-13).

We should notice an absence of spiritual discernment

In a world where there is easy access to all things spiritual there is no good reason why anyone should be without spiritual understanding. The cry is often heard and the complaint made of the abundance of religious information by which we are bombarded and yet they are so many who are spiritually blind. Spiritual blindness is more often than not a self inflicted disorder because people willfully refuse to believe and Paul states it thus, "because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they believe a lie." (2 Thessalonians 2:10b-11). When people keep practicing rejection of the truth it becomes normal for them to accept and become comfortable with lies. People are blind to the truth of God's word and are not recognizing the warning signs even though they are prevalent and pronounced because Satan has blinded the eyes of the unbelieving world. We have now reached the stage where spiritually the horns are sounding and we do not hear, the red lights are flashing and we do not see and our sense of danger has been curtailed. What follows next is all but inevitable.

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Next we need to recognize the approaching storm

Be alarmed by the unpreparedness for the storm

One of the things responsible governments do is to prepare its people for approaching natural disasters. Tsunamis, approaching hurricanes, snowstorms, tornadoes, mudslides and all such threats are made known so that people will not be caught unprepared. People seem to have a propensity for living dangerously and often ignore judicious warnings until the last minute and then often it is hopelessly too late. History has shown us that in Noah's day the flood was approaching with all its deadly ferocity, soon to be killing all before it and yet in spite of warnings the people were caught unprepared. For one hundred and twenty years Noah trumpeted his warning only to be met with scorn and derision. The Bible puts the warning thus, "And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them." (Genesis 6:7).

The present preaching fraternity has not been slack in bringing to the world the abundance of signs that something truly awesome is on the horizon and may even at this moment be approaching our neighbourhood. Many people today still think God is making mock sport for they have heard these warnings for generations. One man was heard to remark recently that from the time he was a little boy he was hearing about God coming soon and now he is an old man and nothing has happened. To him and his fellow travelers we say remember Sodom and Gomorrah!!

Be troubled by the unawareness of the Second Advent

The imminent return of Jesus Christ is the most looked for and highly anticipated event the world will ever know. It has been trumpeted for the past two thousand years and will find the world in a state of sophomoric unawareness. The events surrounding the second coming of Jesus Christ, the Rapture and The Tribulation, are on the horizon and can occur at any time and yet people continue in blissful ignorance. Were you to prophesy in 2004 and tell people who never witnessed a tsunami that one was about to lash their shore with thousands dead they would not have paid any attention.

The consequence of Noah's flood was extraordinary devastating drowning the entire known world amounting to something like 7 million people with just 8 people escaping. That the flood was this destructive is recorded thus, "And all flesh died that moved upon the face of the earth and every man." (Genesis 7:21). Maybe it is pure coincidence that the present population of this world is now approaching 7 billion, it presently stands at 6.5 billion. Just think about it.

Failure to be ready does not mean God will fail to act and the assurance and swiftness of the act is thus recorded, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (1 Corinthians 15:52) The unexpected is what God does best and the Bible tells us, "In an hour when ye think not the Son of man cometh." (Matthew 24:44)

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Be concerned at the unavoidable consequences

People may ignore the approaching storm, desensitize themselves to the imminent return of Jesus Christ and pretend that things will continue just as before but there is one thing they cannot do. They cannot control or prevent the consequences that follow. God hath spoken and so will it be, and this world will soon face the most horrendous events in its history followed by the inevitable judgment of the ungodly ending in their being cast into Hell. These are the unavoidable consequences and no amount of wishy-washy thinking or obfuscation or philosophical/theological denial will alter to the slightest degree God's planned interventions.

Whether we believe it or not make no difference for there will be no escape, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die but after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27). Unlike man's flawed judicial systems everyone without fail is accountable to God, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God" (Revelation 20:12a) If you are not saved, not covered by the blood of Jesus Christ then everything you have done will come up against you in the White Throne judgment, "and they were judged every man according to their works." (Revelation 20:13b).

These are the unavoidable consequences flowing from the arrival of the storm and the Second Advent of Jesus Christ and you are without excuse because now you know and your response is your own responsibility.

Finally we need to recognize an active saviour

God is closely observing man's activities

Many believe that God created this world and just left it to evolve and manage by itself as best it could (this is known as deism) but they are incorrect and God is a very active, though invisible, participant in our affairs. While mankind is doing what it likes, God is watching attentively everything that is going on for the Bible tells us, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." (Proverbs 15:3) Like traffic police looking at video screens observing the orderly flow of traffic, their eyes and attention taken up mostly with traffic problems, so too is Almighty God. For in the days of Noah God was noting carefully the departure from acceptable norms resulting in a vast amount of wickedness going on, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Genesis 6:5).

Even today, God is observing man's depravity and abominations, "For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither anything hid, that shall not be known and come abroad." (Luke 8:17)

God is hugely offended by man's activities

The purpose of Divine observation carries with it the implication that if things are not in order then corrective action must follow. To offend God moves him to act either through nature or directly in a manner and a time of his choosing. The ugliness of sin in all its wicked variations

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have always been and still are offensive to the Lord but when the volume and intensity is elevated to dangerous levels then mankind is treading on very dangerous grounds. We ought to tread very carefully when we push God to the point of grieving as the ante-diluvium world did, "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." (Genesis 6:6). God does not long tolerate heightened offensive activity.

God was highly offended and took swift and drastic action against Sodom and Gomorrah as recorded in Genesis 19. The offences of the ante-diluvium world were more than God could tolerate as shown in Genesis 7. The offences of Nadab and Abihu abusing the priestly office were so divinely insulting that the most severe sanction was immediately carried out as stated in Leviticus 10:1-3. God will surely not tarry long in dealing with this offensive world.

God is tirelessly working for man's salvation

There are some things you can rely on with absolute certainty and here is one of them. God is not willing according to 2 Peter 3:9 that any should perish but that all will come to repentance and in that vein he is not idle but working fervently for man's salvation. When Jesus came to earth he recognized his working ministry when he said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Luke 5:32). Jesus travelled all across Palestine doing just that and continued in like manner right up to his crucifixion. Even on the cross moments before he drew his last breath he was still working to save sinners and rescued the dying thief with these words, "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:42).

Jesus was not finished working for mankind when his earthly ministry was over for he returned to heaven and as mediator is instrumental in affording mankind opportunities for salvation and the Bible states it thus, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 2:5). Today God is everywhere motivating and inspiring his messengers to declare the message of salvation just like he did to Noah who preached for 120 years. And the message is essentially the same rooted in God's mercy and opened to everyone.

God is eternally gracious and whosoever wants salvation is invited to come says Isaiah 55:1. God ask only that you seek him in a timely manner before it is too late according to Isaiah 55:6. Isaiah discharges his duty once again and urges that you take action now to obtain your salvation and says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." (Isaiah 55:7)

No man knows the day or the hour when our Lord will come again, but all the indications are that these are the last days and you should take no chances with your destiny.

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Dr. Henderson Ward received his Doctor of Divinity in theology, with distinction, from Masters International School of Divinity, USA, where he is currently a post-doctoral fellow. Dr. Ward's career involved pastoring, evangelism, and teaching and can be contacted at hneward@hotmail.com

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