

THE CORNERSTONE

January 2021

Happy New Year!

Mom Encouragement!

By: Fabi Morris

A great reminder as we look ahead to a fresh, new year is that we serve a mighty God who stands outside of time. Future, past and everything in between. He sees it all, and is sovereignly working all things out for our good. Uncertainty can quickly elicit one of the emotions God despises.

Worrying.

The parable of the Sower, which appears in three of the gospels, mentions three types of seeds. The third one described is the one that fell among thorns. This seed gets choked and becomes unfruitful. #1 on the list of reasons for the debilitating asphyxiation that leads to unfruitfulness?

Worrying!

A better word for us to contemplate this year is Ebenezer. It's Hebrew for "stone of help." Hasn't the Lord helped us thus far? Do we believe He will continue to help us? When we look back and count all the times He has already helped us, we gird ourselves with hope and expectation that whether we walk through a valley or exult on a mountaintop, the Lord will be our constant "stone of help."

"Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and named it Ebenezer, saying, 'Thus far the Lord has helped us.'" 1 Samuel 7:12





Missions for the Month

Winter greetings!



* Our Prayer Requests for These Puzzling Times:

- * Ask the Lord with us for grace toward Debbie as she remains under the monthly care of the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance. Recently, they have told us that they feel her situation is under control.
- * Pray with Patrick that he — like many missionaries around the globe — manages wisely his ongoing global ministry interaction. As with many missionaries, trips have been cancelled and many are temporarily home-bound. As part of this, e3 Partners [with whom we serve] has 'virtual training trips' (India / Greece / Lebanon / Honduras / Africa) which prove fascinating. ACTION International, too, has persons around the globe pleading for training via modern digital media.
- * Thank the Lord with us for very good medical insurance through e3 Partners. Medical costs and premiums are high, but Debbie's level of care is very good.
- * Thank the Lord with us that Sarah and Kathryn reside seven miles from us. It is a real delight that we are all close relationally, and we thank the Lord for this.
- * Thank the Lord with us as we both feel that the Lord is teaching us a lot during this never-to-be-forgotten 2020. He prepares all of us for His purposes.
- * Thank the Lord with us as we all give thought in **FAITH** for our soon-to-be-upon-us **2021**. What shall it hold for all of us?
- * Thank the Lord with us for: _____!
(So many blessings and provision and grace and care and forgiveness to ALL OF US.) His grace abounds and that is our Christmas praise of thanksgiving!

—> Please call us, text us, e-mail us or "message" us through Facebook messenger.

Praying with you! Bless you!
Patrick & Debbie OConnor

Almost Christmas! December, 2020

A P.S. —> Debbie and I pray daily. How can we pray for you? Let us know?

P.P.S —> Can we 'zoom' with you? Let us know?

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Normally in God's grace I travel internationally roughly four or more times per year, but this year - as we all know - has been very different. I was fortunate to be in Honduras in February, as the last trip before Covid-19. Sad Sad —> I WAS TO HAVE a short circuit trip within HONDURAS over Thanksgiving, but it was cancelled due to recent WASHINGTON STATE Covid-19 mandates and also for Debbie's very real cancer journey.

Behold, the Lamb of God*, who takes away the sin of the world!" –

John 1:29



"Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him." – Psalm 34:8

Serving with e3 Partners,

2001 W. Plano Parkway # 2600,

Plano, Texas 75075 (Phone: 214-440-1101)



Andy Woods—Pastor

Signs of the Times for 2020

(Part 11)

In our first installment, we observed that the Bible places much emphasis on the signs related to Christ's return (Matt. 24:33; Luke 21:28; Heb. 10:25, etc.). Observing these signs helps us ascertain that general time of human history in which we find ourselves. We noted that if the signs of the Tribulation period are rapidly approaching, and the rapture of the Church precedes the Tribulation period, then the rapture must be coming even faster. Thus, we began to ask ourselves, what are some of these signs that are now setting the stage for the coming Tribulation period? We selected the following *seven* signs as deserving of analysis to be covered in this series:

1. Signs related to Israel
2. signs related to international politics
3. Signs related to economics
4. Signs related to technology
5. Signs related to spirituality
6. Signs related to society
7. Signs related to understanding Bible prophecy

Therefore, this series is dedicated to exploring the *seven* signs related to the soon return of Jesus Christ. As a result of this teaching, may we all grow in our understanding of the unique time in which we now live. As dealt with in the prior installments in this series, there are several signs meriting discussion concerning the modern state of *Israel* and *international politics*. Moving away from these categories, we began to discuss signs related to *economics*.

3. Signs Related to Economics

According to prophetic Scripture, the last days economic scenario will involve a trend toward both a *global* and *cashless* economy as well as an economy teetering on economic *collapse*. Having already discussed, in our last installment, the trend in our world toward both a global and cashless economy, we will now highlight how our entire present economic system is now teetering on sudden economic *destruction*.

Economic Collapse

Another economic trend of the last days is that the economies of the world will be teetering on the verge of *collapse*. There is a debt clock in Times Square in New York City indicating that our national debt is rapidly approaching the thirty trillion-dollar point (<http://www.usdebtclock.org/>). The national debt has become a key issue of our time. Let us first define a couple of key terms. A *deficit* is the amount of debt that we incur in a regular budgetary cycle—typically a year. The national *debt* is the total of all the deficits that have been accumulated.

Conceptualizing the Problem

How much is thirty trillion dollars? This number is so astronomically large that it is difficult to conceptualize. As former Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill once quipped, "A million here and a million there... pretty soon you are talking about real money!"

A helpful conceptual tool involves thinking about just one-hundred-dollar bill. Stacking up hundred-dollar bills so that they reach a hundred million dollars looks like a stack of bills about the size and width of an average size human being. Ten such stacks of one-hundred-dollar bills would be the rough equivalent of one hundred billion dollars. After doubling the height of these stacks and then having so many stacks of

one-hundred-dollar bills so that they consume the volume of an entire football field would constitute one-trillion dollars. When this stack then reaches about half the size of the Statue of Liberty, we then have the conceptual equivalent of fifteen trillion dollars. According to some economists, if you look at everything that America owes, which are called unfunded liabilities that are typically shifted off budget, America's national debt is about 115 trillion dollars. When the previously described stack of one-hundred-dollar bills reaches a height of more than double that of the Empire State Building and two times the height of the former Twin Towers, you would then have a conceptual equivalent of 115 trillion dollars.

Keep in mind that this number only conceptualizes debt at a one-dimensional level. In other words, it only conceptualizes our national debt. Yet, there are other forms of debt that are also simultaneously accumulating. Economists are fond of talking about the debt pyramid, which helps conceptualize these other levels of debt. These also include the accumulated debts of the individual state and international governments as well as private business and individual consumer debt.

When you want out of a hole that you have dug for yourself, the first step is to stop digging. This has not happened. The prevailing economic philosophy today, known as Keynesian Economics, is that the government must spend more money to prosper. Any businesses or household would, of course, financially sink by employing this philosophy. Yet, the Federal government continues to subscribe to it and to spend accordingly. Sadly, this is what passes as normal today in the government of the United States of America. We are acting as if somehow the law of gravity does not apply to us! We act as if we can just spend and spend, like there is no tomorrow, and the day of reckoning will never come. As philosopher William Earle wisely stated, "If your outgo exceeds your income, then your upkeep will be your downfall."

The Nature of Debt

Debt, whether Federal or personal, is a spiritual issue. This explains why the Bible refers to our sinful condition in financial terms when Jesus instructed us to pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matt. 6:12). Speaking about the nature of financial debt, Proverbs 22:7b states, "The borrower *becomes* the lender's slave." Scripture clearly tells us that debt puts a person in a position or place of bondage and servitude. While debt may be necessary at times, due to its enslaving nature, it should be incurred sparingly, cautiously, with great discernment and prayer, and as a last resort.

Our national debt is tantamount to generational theft. We are spending the next generation's money. This is akin to ordering the most expensive meal on the menu at a fancy restaurant and instructing the server to bill your children, your grandchildren, or your great-grandchildren.

Our current national debt violates two of the Ten Commandments: "You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" (Exod. 20:15-16). As indicated previously, debt involves generational theft. It allows us to spend the next generation's money before they are even born. Thus, debt, with no ability to repay, is stealing (Ps. 37:21).

How is debt a lie? Debt itself fosters the illusion of prosperity. It allows one to gain possessions one does not necessarily have the means to acquire. Consequently, we deceive ourselves and others into believing that we are prosperous when we really are not. Those who consider the United States the richest country in the world fail to analyze the ledger. We are deceiving ourselves and others. Thus, debt is a biblical and moral issue as well as a political issue.

I wish people would stop calling America the richest country in the world. We psychologically want to believe that we are the richest country in the world, but if I gave you the ability to bounce trillions of dollars in hot checks, I could also give you the illusion of prosperity. We are living in an illusion with all this rampant debt. We are not enjoying true prosperity. The fact of the matter is the economic problems of our nation are so severe that we are beyond the point of no return.

The Dollar's Deliberate Devaluation

When other nations see that we either have no intention or no ability to pay back what we have borrowed, this perception has the propensity to weaken the value of our currency on the world market. Such a devaluation of the dollar leads to inflation. In other words, it takes more dollars to purchase less and less. The purchasing power of the dollar shrinks, in other words. Ask your parents or grandparents how much they paid

for their first home in comparison to the current asking price of your house just to see firsthand how the dollar has been devalued over time, thanks largely to our runaway national debt.

The husband-and-wife political science team, Andrew Cloward and Francis Piven, wrote about a strategy in what is now known as their *Cloward-Piven Strategy*. This strategy can be defined as a political strategy to intentionally overload the American public welfare system to the point that it creates a financial crisis and bankrupts the American economy, thereby leaving the United States with no choice but to adopt a Socialist–Marxist economic and political structure (Francis Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, “The Weight of the Poor: A Strategy to End Poverty: the theory here, to force change through chaos, was among the most provocative of the 1960s,” online: <https://www.commondreams.org/news/2010/03/24/weight-poor-strategy-end-poverty>, From the Monday, May 2, 1966 issue of *The Nation*, accessed June 13, 2020). Our runaway national debt appears to be a deliberate attempt to create a crisis to drive the country into a globalist, one-world model of government.

The Prophetic Significance of Our Runaway Debt

Revelation 6:5-6 says, “When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, Come.’ I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard *something* like a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not damage the oil and the wine.”

Dr. Constable, in his online notes of this passage, says this:

A "black horse" followed, symbolizing the ravage of war, namely, famine. Antichrist, the cause of this famine, again seems to be the rider (cf. Matt. 24:7b). He carries "a pair of [balance] scales," which are a symbol of commerce, indicating his control of commodity prices... The prices of both "wheat" (good food) and "barley" (cheap cattle food) will be very high. A quart of wheat will provide one day's ration for a person, but it will cost a whole day's wages. In John's day, a denarius would purchase eight to 16 times as much food as what he said it will purchase in the future. The poor would have little money left over for oil, for fuel and health needs, and for wine to drink (cf. Ezek. 4:16-17). (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Revelation,” online: www.soniclight.com, accessed 17 December 2020, 125).

What is happening here, as depicted in the Book of Revelation, is a global economic collapse. I would contend that our insane escalation of debt is preparing the way for this prophesied global economic collapse. The spending habits of our nation and other nations are setting the stage for this third seal judgment. It is all stage setting for this coming economic collapse.

In sum, according to prophetic Scripture, the last days economic scenario will involve a trend toward both a *global* and *cashless* economy as well as an economy teetering on economic *collapse*. In our next installment, we will begin to discuss the *technological* signs of the last days.

(To Be Continued...)

Dear SLBC Church Family,

If you or a family member desire to be baptized, please let us know by responding to this email

with THE FULL NAME OF THE CANDIDATE FOR BAPTISM as it should appear on their Baptismal Certificate.

As soon as we have an idea of how many candidates we have, we will send out another informational email with the Baptism Class dates. ***Please note that all candidates for baptism are required to attend “one” scheduled baptism class prior to being baptized.*** Thank you! **281-491-7773 SLBC–Office**

SLBC Office
281-491-7773



Scripture for the Month



Psalm 103 *A Psalm of David.*

Bless the Lord, O my soul;

And all that is within me, *bless* His holy name!

Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits:
Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases,

Who redeems your life from destruction,

Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,

Who satisfies your mouth with good *things*,

So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

The Lord executes righteousness

And justice for all who are oppressed.

He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel.

The Lord *is* merciful and gracious,

Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.

He will not always strive *with us*,

Nor will He keep *His anger* forever.

He has not dealt with us according to our sins,

Nor punished us according to our iniquities.

For as the heavens are high above the earth,

So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;

As far as the east is from the west,

So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

As a father pities *his* children, *So* the Lord pities those who fear Him.

For He knows our frame; He remembers that *we are* dust.

As for man, his days *are* like grass;

As a flower of the field, so he flourishes.

For the wind passes over it, and it is gone,

And its place remembers it no more.

But the mercy of the Lord *is* from everlasting to everlasting

On those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children,

To such as keep His covenant, And to those who remember

His commandments to do them.

The Lord has established His throne in heaven,

And His kingdom rules over all.

Bless the Lord, you His angels, Who excel in strength, who do His word,

Heeding the voice of His word.

Bless the Lord, all *you* His hosts, *You* ministers of His, who do His pleasure.

Bless the Lord, all His works, In all places of His dominion.

Bless the Lord, O my soul!