

COMING TIME OF TRIAL AND TESTING

Our Father in heaven, after the feast of Sukkot and the beginning of a new year of Bible study, we thank you for the opportunity to continue freely reading the Bible through and study deeply of your wisdom. We pray that you will continue to bless our understanding of the Old and New Testaments, Psalms and Proverbs. By the gift of the presence of your Holy Spirit in our heart and mind, guide your servants to walk in a way that is pleasing to you that will glorify your name. Help us to grow together in single-minded unity, always giving you the thanks, praise and honor. We bless your name and ask your will to be done in the name of your son, Yeshua ha Meshiach, Jesus Christ our Lord forever. Amen.

Shabbat Shalom! It is time for Bible study. We all have our trials and tests in this life. We all have Christ to call upon for his mercy, inspiration, and daily guidance in our life. A favorite scripture of mine which I committed to memory years ago is **Proverbs 3:5-6 (NKJV)**—“Trust in the LORD with all your heart; and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” I have found this instruction the first key to living a godly life. Key #1 put your faith and trust in God first! Key #2 is keep your eyes on Christ and his word. If we read the word of God we will be able to recall it to mind when trials and tough times arise. God has control of this earth and the Universe. Both belong to him. He sends punishment for disobedience as a wake-up call in people’s life. Likewise, he allows trials and tests in the lives of men.

Very seldom do people understand why these things happen when they happen. It is a human tendency to think “it all seems so unfair”. **2 Corinthians 10:12** —Paul says, “In measuring themselves with themselves and comparing themselves with one another, they are not wise” (without understanding and behave unwisely). There are the wealthy people of this world who have great palatial estates, airplanes, yachts and billions of dollars. Others have very little “by comparison” plus trials, tests, sickness or a handicap, or perhaps getting fired from a job which they didn’t like anyway. All kinds of things happen which cause people to get very disgruntled, sad and upset and they may think “Why does this have to happen to me?” “Why me Lord?” Some people do not believe in God and others don’t know if there even is a God. In the book of Revelation it talks about the Day of the Lord when he strikes men with plagues around the world and a lot of people are going to shake their fists at heaven, curse God and die.

Moses wrote the five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. They cover the story of Genesis—creation, the world before the flood, Noah and his time, the world of Nimrod and the tower of Babel, the lives and times of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), Joseph and their families and that is ancient history. This is the word of God telling us what happened in those ancient times and Moses wrote it all down. Exodus is about Israel coming out of Egypt and the book of the law is revealed in Exodus and Leviticus. Numbers is about the wanderings of Israel in the desert. Deuteronomy is repetition of the law. These are all ancient history.

Probably the earliest book written in the Bible was the book of Job, about a single man, his wife and family, his trials, tests and horrendous things he had to go through.

Job was a righteous man. A man who was perfect and upright, one that feared God, and shunned (eschewed) evil. Chapter 31 of Job is a pivotal chapter in the book of Job, because it is like a summary of his life experiences up to the point where God allowed him to be stricken. God had blessed him with ruler-ship as king, seven sons and three daughters, a very large household, 20 thousand varied kinds of livestock, so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east. Then a day came and major disasters occurred, one right after another. Fire from heaven burned up his sheep, all the rest of the livestock were stolen by bands of Sabeans and Chaldeans who killed all his servants by sword, then yet another messenger arrived telling him that all his sons and daughters were killed while eating at their eldest brother's house when the four corners of the house was collapsed by a great wind out of the wilderness. Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped. Job said "the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." In all this, Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly after all his riches, power and children were taken away.

Remember in chapter one, God himself said to Satan the devil when he presented himself, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, and one that fears God, and shuns evil?" God was using Job as a great example of righteousness. The devil replied, "Have you not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But take away all that he has, and he will curse you to thy face. Of course he loves you, because you have blessed him." So God said alright "you can touch all that he has, but not himself." God was allowing this most righteous man of that generation to be tested. So the devil began to smash Job and took away all that Job had.

Again Satan presented himself and God asked, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that fears God, and avoids evil? And still he holds fast his integrity, although you moved me against him, to destroy him without cause." Satan replied, "Put forth your hand now and touch his bone and flesh and he will curse you to your face." God said, alright "he is in your hand, but do not take his life. Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown." At that point, Job wound up afflicted with inflammation and painful boils which he scraped with a potsherd and sat down among the ashes and bemoaned the day he was born. But the worst part was that he knew he was a righteous man, yet all these calamities had come upon him and he was miserable. The one thing that he still had was his life and bemoaned his fate. In **Job 30:29**, he said: "When I looked for good, evil came on me. When I waited for light, then came the darkness. My heart can't rest (in turmoil), days of confliction confront me. I go about mourning but not in the sun. I cry out for help," but no one helped him. Even his three friends who came wound up condemning him. "You brought it on yourself buddy. Repent. God doesn't punish the righteous." Trouble was, they were wrong.

Job 13:15—"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him." Job accepted his test and trial as something that God allowed and that God must have had a reason for allowing them. He had faith and trust in God. Brethren, we need to have

that attitude of faith ourselves. **Revelation 3:7** speaks of the time of tribulation that is coming in the end of the age. “To the angel of the *church in Philadelphia* write; These things says he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that opens, and no man shuts; and shuts, and no man opens; ⁸I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” We are entering that very time of trial and tribulation prophesied.

Revelation 3:11-12 —“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take your crown (of life).” If we endure to the end, we will receive a crown or life that Christ brings with him at his return. He that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.¹³ He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches.” We need to endure just like Job did in his personal time of trial and testing. It was not easy, the suffering was hard to take. In fact, he had to examine himself to see what went wrong and what he could do to endure. He cried out for help.

People today are going to be crying out and seeking for answers. Is God going to send disaster upon the wicked workers of iniquity of this world. It is becoming like the days of Noah when the thoughts of men were evil continually (Genesis 6). The iniquity of the Amorites is just about reaching the brim. This world is storing up punishment. It is a Shemitah (year of release), a lunar blood moon tetrad during the spring and fall holy days of 2014 and 2015 is significant.

Isaiah 7:6-9 is a prophecy about Ephraim in the end time. The United States of America today is descended from Ephraim. Ephraim is involved with Syria and they are both creating an alliance against Judah (Israel). “Let us go up against Judah and trouble it.” Since Barack Obama has become president of America, America has become very anti-Semitic and anti-Israel. The head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin (firm). President Assad of Damascus is very firm with Russian support.

What else does this prophecy say? “In 65 years Ephraim will be *broken*; it shall not be a people.” The Hebrew word *broken* here means shattered. It is talking about America being shattered in 65 years. What does that mean? The nation of Israel was established in 1948-49 and a blood moon tetrad occurred in 1949 and 1950 during the Jewish holy days of Passover and Tabernacles. Add 65 years to 1950 when Israel became a nation in this generation and it will be 2014-2015. The blood moon tetrad occurs again 2014-1015 at Passover and Tabernacles. The world is in crisis with ISIS in Iraq, Turkey refuses to fight ISIS, there is threat of war along the Pakistan-Indian border because of dispute over the water of the Indus River and both nations are nuclear armed. We are entering a time of great trial and tests.

Job 31: 29 -30—“If I rejoice at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him: Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul.” Job prayed for his enemies and those who hated him. “The stranger did not lodge in the street: but I opened my doors to the traveller.³³ If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom:³⁴ Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, and went not out of the door?³⁵ Oh that one would hear me! behold, my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book.³⁶ Surely I

would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me.³⁷ I would declare unto him the number of my steps; as a prince would I go near unto him.³⁸ If my land cries against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain;³⁹ If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life:⁴⁰ Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended.” Job spoke the truth, but he still had to go through this hard time of testing to improve his heart and perfect his character.

A potter shapes the clay into a vessel just the way he desires. Then is it finished? No. It may be beautiful, but it has to be fired in the kiln (oven) at the proper temperature to retain the beauty and shape, or it would crumble and no longer be a fitting, strong and useful vessel that will endure. God wants to know that we are going to be faithful to him no matter what happens. **Isaiah 64:8** —“But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and you our potter; and we all are the work of your hand.”

Revelation 2:8 —“And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; ‘These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;⁹ I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.¹⁰ Fear none of those things which you shall suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.’” **Galatians 6:16** —“as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the **Israel of God**.” Those in God’s church are the Israel of God.

Romans 2:26-29 —True circumcision is of the heart, not the flesh. “But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” **Revelation 2:10** —“Fear none of those things which thou shall suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee (at Christ’s coming) a crown of life.” Job went through tests. We are all going to go through tests in this life to prove our character to see if we are faithful and will endure to the end.

Once you get to know the word of God and continue to study and review it, these numbers come to make sense. Daniel was praying, meditating, fasting and seeking God. He was thinking about the punishment that had come upon ancient Judea that caused him to be a captive in Babylon. As he thought about Jeremiah’s prophecies, it turned out that 70 was the exact number of Sabbatical years that Israel had failed to observe while living in the Holy Land. So God punished them 70 years—from 604 BC to 534 BC.

This letter is from a man who was in the Worldwide Church of God for many years who has been through his trials and tests. He asks, “If Herbert Armstrong was so right on his teachings, then why did the WWC^G completely fall apart like it did after he died?” My answer to this is, Herbert Armstrong was not right on a lot of his teachings. He was wrong, and I am here to witness to that fact and have written many articles showing where he was wrong. He then says, “When it comes to Abraham and his faith and his work of obedience to God, Abraham could not have done what he did without his faith in God. It takes faith to serve God and do what he commands us to do. Without faith we have nothing, and without it we will surely lose in the end.” Right! Our salvation depends on two things: 1) the sacrifice of Christ who paid the penalty

for us, 2) the life Christ is living today as our high priest at the right hand of God, and he sends the Holy Spirit to strengthen us so we can build righteous character today. We are saved by his life. We are pardoned and redeemed by his death, and we are actively being saved by his life and his dwelling in us through the Holy Spirit. **Galatians 2:20**—Paul says, “And I live, yet not I; but Christ lives in me. And the life that I live now in the flesh: I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered himself for me.” He adds, “Abraham had a deep trusting faith in God. Without that faith he could not have pleased God. You cannot keep the commands of God without faith. When you have complete faith in Jesus Christ, you have the desire to live by the commandments and help other who need help along the way.” (That is true.)

This time that is coming is a time of trial and testing of our faith and therefore, also of our obedience. Will we remain faithful to God and trusting in him no matter what happens? Will we faithfully endure like Job did? Job came out with double blessings in the end, but he had to go through the trials and tests first. This world is going to go through a time of testing.

Ecclesiastes 7:17-18—“Do not be overly wicked, or be foolish: Why should you die before your time? It is good that thou should take hold of this; and also not remove your hand from the other; For he who fears God will escape them all.” If we fear God and obey him, he will be with us through the tests that are coming. **Ecclesiastes 9:10 -12** —“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.¹¹ I returned and saw under the sun that—

The race is not to the swift,
Nor the battle to the strong,
Nor bread to the wise,
Nor riches to men of understanding,
Nor favor to men of skill;
But time and chance happen to them all.
For man also does not know his time:
Like fish taken in a cruel net,
Like birds caught in a snare,
So the sons of men are snared in an evil time,
When it falls suddenly upon them.”

We are dependent on faith with obedience.

Letter (continues)—“I lost faith in the WWCG years ago and I have no faith in the offshoots. I can remember back when that church was tearing families apart. I remember how the minister of the Spokane church would not pray for my wife on Saturday or any other time, because she was not a member of the church. Would Jesus have done that? My wife was a Lutheran, but she didn’t go to church. She was just 40 years old when she died of cancer, and we had four young children. Our youngest was only four years old when her mother died. I rented a hospital bed and took care of my wife in our living room plus caring for our four children by myself. The Spokane minister came to our house after he had read her obituary in the newspaper. After talking to me for a while, I asked him to leave my house and he stomped his feet as he walked out the door—shaking the dust off his feet (Matt. 10:14) considering him an unbeliever. He thought he was following Christ’s example. “I never went back to the WWCG again. My wife spent her last 30 days in the Holy Family Hospital in Spokane. After she had to go to the hospital, a Seventh-Day

Adventist book salesman came to our door. I told him what was going on, and the next day the SDA pastor came knocking on my door and that church helped us out a lot!

“Also a woman from Reardon visited us and afterward went to the Lutheran minister. People from that church took care of the children daily while I was at the hospital until at least 5 pm. They would bring the kids home at 5 pm and serve up a hot meal. I would come home and find bags of food on my back porch. Every day the SDA minister would visit my wife in the hospital and was standing at her bedside with me the day she died. The SDA and Lutheran ministers both officiated at the funeral. There were six members in our family and we were given 6 plots in the Reardon Cemetery. I don’t know who paid for the plots. I never received a bill from the funeral home, I received a notice from them saying I owed them nothing.

“I am 81 years old now. When it comes to physical things the WWCG would help no one where other churches will. Herbert Armstrong died a millionaire –rich and lived with opulence and luxury. I will not go into WWCG prophetic teachings except to say Daniel was told to shut up the book until the time of the end. So much of prophecy that is being preached yet to take place has already to come to pass. Yes, I have faith in Jesus Christ, and by that faith I am able to keep the commandment to love my fellow man, but it is not on my own strength. It is the strength of Jesus Christ that gives me that kind of faith.”

I will say Amen to that. He is not alone. Many others have had similar experiences. I am not Herbert Armstrong’s judge, or jury but I am not his advocate and defense attorney. However, I will state the fact that he made a lot of factual mistakes, a lot of errors in prophecies and errors in living — documented in my articles, *How Are the Mighty Fallen*, *The Prophetic Errors of H.W. Armstrong* and *Where the Church Went Wrong*.

“A lawyer tested Christ, saying, ‘Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ Christ said to him, ‘What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?’ So he answered, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.’ Christ said, ‘You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.’ But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’

Then Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan. “A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.³¹ Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.³² Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side.³³ But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion.³⁴ So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.³⁵ On the next day, when he departed he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.’ Which one of these men do you think was a neighbor who fell among thieves?” Everyone got the point—the Samaritan showed mercy on him. Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.” God will judge each one of us in how much love we show other people—in and out of the church—especially out of the church. These are our neighbors.

Revelation 3:14—“These things say the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.¹⁶ So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot I will vomit you out of my mouth.¹⁷ Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire (character refined in tribulation), that you may be rich; and white garments, (righteousness) that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see (spiritual things).¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with me.²¹ To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with me on my throne, as I also overcame and sat down with my Father on His throne.”

Be eager to repent. Don’t be lifted up with pride and deny your sins. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God and he will life you up in due time. **1 Peter 4:7-12**—“The end of all things is at hand. Therefore, be serious and watchful in your prayers.” Guard your prayer life—morning, noon and night. Seek God throughout the day as you go about your day’s activities—reading, work, shopping, or visiting. “And above all things have fervent love for one another, for ‘love will cover a multitude of sins.’ Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.¹⁰ As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.¹¹ If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

Verse 12-19—“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;¹³ but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?¹⁸ Now, if the righteous one is scarcely saved. Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.”

God is our Creator and he is faithful. He sees every step we take. He sees everything the children of men go through. **2 Chronicles 16:9**—“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.” Think of Job’s life; remember Lot was a righteous man whose soul was vexed by the wickedness around him. He scarcely was pulled out of Sodom before fire and brimstone incinerated the city. The world is on the cusp of oblivion and coming to a critical closing with great suffering and disasters.

Cast all your cares on him and draw close to God for He cares for you. May the Lord bless you, and keep you as you walk humbly with Him.