

THE BIBLE ONLINE STUDY COURSE - LESSON 2

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WORLD PEACE IS COMING

The search for world peace continues while arsenals of lethal weapons grow larger. Experts predict the earth will soon become a burnt up relic - UNLESS world conditions are dramatically REVERSED. Exactly what does the future hold for mankind? This lesson reveals the ANSWERS in the prophecies of your Bible!

World leaders and scientists are frankly frightened by the prospects of the future!

They warn that man now possesses the means of committing COSMOCIDE - suicide of the whole human race - and even talk in terms of "overkill." They realize something totally unforeseen must soon occur to stop the present trend of world events - or man will finally DESTROY himself!

What Statesmen Warn

In 1961 the late President John F. Kennedy warned a hushed United Nations Assembly: "Mankind must put an end to war - or war will put an end to mankind.

"Today," he said, "every inhabitant of this planet must contemplate the day when this planet may no longer be habitableThe mere existence of modern weapons - 10 MILLION TIMES more powerful than any that the world has ever seen, and only minutes away from any target on earth - is a source of horror"Together," said President Kennedy grimly, "we shall save our planet - or together we shall perish in its flames"

What President Kennedy told the United Nations in 1961 was not the ranting of a wild-eyed fanatic, but is the day-to-day reality of the world in which we live. Today, the estimated number of stockpiled nuclear bombs is already enough to wipe out the world's population many times over!

Former U.N. Secretary-General U Thant warned in 1969: "I do not wish to seem over dramatic, but I can only conclude from information that is available to me as Secretary-General that the members of the United Nations have perhaps 10 years left in which to subordinate their ancient quarrels and launch a global partnership to curb the arms race, to improve the human environment, to defuse the population explosion, and to supply the required momentum to world development efforts."

Many other world-renowned statesmen and scientists, too numerous to quote in this lesson, speak fearfully of the END OF THE WORLD - the END of human civilization!

But the Arms Race Continues

In spite of these terrifying, imagination-defying facts, the arms race continues to escalate toward nuclear insanity!

Take a look at "MIRV" which stands for "Multiple Independently Targeted Reentry Vehicle." Instead of one missile carrying one warhead, the Russians and Americans have developed and deployed missiles which carry many warheads. One such MIRV can do the same job as could 10-14 missiles previously. With MIRV alone, the U.S. is capable of destroying the Russia many times over! And, of course, Russian MIRVs could similarly "overkill" the United States of America!

Staggering, but a fact nevertheless! The arms race is also spreading to outer space. The Russians have developed a "killer satellite" capable of blowing up American early warning satellites. But what's to prevent the design of satellites capable of carrying hydrogen-bomb warheads and dropping them on preselected targets? Politicians and military experts generally agree that whoever gains military control of space will be able to rule the world!

What will come next?

Many other bizarre, frightening weapons are in various stages of development. These include the pure fusion weapon (a "clean" H-bomb), the neutron bomb, and the laser bomb. Scientists say any of these weapons theoretically has enough destructive potential to annihilate all life on the earth!

It sounds incredible, but it's true! And the record of history proves that every weapon man has ever developed was eventually used!

Chemical and Biological Warfare

Nuclear warfare is only one of many ways that could bring the total destruction of mankind in the very near future. Though the subject has been given little publicity, some nations are now producing new super-weapons which may be even deadlier than nuclear bombs! Fifteen nations, including the U. S. and Russia already have a chemical and biological warfare potential.

Tens of thousands of gallons of deadly nerve gas- odorless, tasteless and virtually invisible - have already been manufactured and stored. One drop, breathed or applied to the skin, can kill instantly!

Speaking about biological warfare, Dr. Barry Commoner, director of Washington University's Center for the Biology of Natural Systems, warned that chemical and biological agents make nuclear weapons "look like a child's toy."

Weapons of a chemical or biological nature are far less expensive to produce than complicated nuclear weapons. Any country with a good size brewery could manufacture germs about as easily as beer!

But a huge question mark hangs over the advisability of using biological weapons on an enemy nation. Even the best-informed scientists are afraid the after-effects of an all-out biological war might backfire! Epidemics could spread around the world.

Only one thing is certain. No one can predict what actually would happen, because such biological weapons have never been (nor can they ever be) adequately tested until they are actually used on the battlefield!

Can Man-made Plagues Be Controlled?

Scientists are faced with the grim question of whether or not a man-made plague could be controlled, once started, since full-scale testing is impossible. Dr. Commoner asserted that even natural epidemics are poorly understood, and that we can rarely predict how fast they will spread, or how many people will be affected.

Moreover, in biological warfare, he warned it is likely that the infectious agents will not be those which occur in natural epidemics, but special variants selected or modified in the biological warfare laboratory. In this case it would be nearly impossible to be confident about the actual course of an artificial epidemic, once it started. It might fizzle out, or it might spread so unexpectedly as to engulf friend and foe alike!

A biological warfare experiment which aptly illustrates Dr. Commoner's fears took place during World War II. Now Safrin Gases and Chemical viruses.

Britain tested biological weapons as early as 1941, when there was widespread fear that the Axis Powers might use germ warfare. In one test, Gruinard, a remote island off the northwest coast of Scotland, was sprayed with anthrax bacteria. The targets were sheep, which soon became infected and died. But the anthrax bacteria were so durable that the isle is still unsafe for people today! It is expected to remain that way for at least another 100 years!

Because of the grave doubts arising from such experiments, some observers ominously conclude that "to initiate the use of plague or anthrax diseases that can kill more than 90 percent of their victims, would be to set in motion a DOOMSDAY MACHINE on the planet..." (Seymore M. Hersh, New York Times Magazine, Aug. 25, 1968).

There are Other Ways to Annihilation!

There are yet several other global crisis which could lead to the utter destruction of mankind in the not-too-distant future.

Human life can only be sustained by air, water and food. But today man is polluting and poisoning all three of these necessities. Air pollution is now recognized as a growing international menace - one which not only threatens the health of man, but seriously affects the continued existence of all life.

Water pollution is another massive threat. Most of our rivers and lakes are so seriously polluted that supplies of drinkable water in many places have reached a CRISIS STAGE! Now, increasingly, it is being found that pollution is also seeping into our underground water supplies. A study by the U. S. Public Health Service indicates that millions of people in the United States are drinking water that is unfit for human consumption!

Man is infamous for having depleted and ruined the soil out of which his food must grow. More recently, he has vastly speeded up the process by using artificial fertilizers which actually defeat their very purpose by locking up other soil elements, thereby

robbing vegetables, grains and fruits grown in such soils of the life-sustaining minerals and vitamins necessary for good health. Modern man also uses poisonous insecticides which not only exterminate more helpful forms of life in the soil and air than harmful, but also enter the ecological web of life and threaten the extinction of higher species of life. Even man himself is potentially in danger!

Other potential dangers to life are the host of inadequately tested rodenticides, fumigicides, herbicides, flavor enhancers and artificial preservatives. Scientists fear that these and other products of our modern society could cause irrevocable damage to succeeding generations.

Add to these urgent problems the worldwide revolution in the weather- droughts, floods and earthquakes - and epidemics of disease. And if all these fast-accelerating evils do not destroy humanity soon, the experts say the effects of the POPULATION EXPLOSION will!

The Population Explosion

Many leading scientists have warned that the greatest single crisis facing the world is the population explosion.

Although this explosive growth of the world's population has slowed down some within the last decade, it is still an unsettling fact that the sheer numbers are still increasing at the same time that fewer and fewer nations are self-sufficient in food production. Just six countries are the major food exporters to the rest of the world community. If one or more of these exporter countries should experience serious shortfalls in food production due to bad weather or other unforeseen factors over several years, millions will go hungry and vast numbers will starve to death!

Population experts reveal that if present trends continue, the earth's population will number over six billion people by the year 2000! How will they be fed? Hungry people are restless people. And starving people seldom just sit down and quietly die. They riot, revolt, pillage and murder in order to get food! Massive food shortages could spark future FOOD WARS which could finally engulf the entire world in horrible struggles for survival!

What is Needed: "A Strong Hand From Someplace"

An accurate appraisal of MAN'S ONLY HOPE for survival appeared in a leading U.S. news magazine in 1965. This appraisal indicated that among government officials the prevailing view is gaining acceptance that tensions and world problems are fast becoming too deep-seated to be solved except "by a strong hand from someplace."

That strong hand is coming - but from a source most people least expect! The Prophet Isaiah reveals that source in your Bible: "Behold, the LORD GOD will come with STRONG HAND, and his arm shall rule for him..." (Isaiah 40:10).

Your Bible shows there IS HOPE for mankind! The great God of your Bible says He is going to send Jesus Christ again - this time to SAVE us from ourselves and to establish

the Government of God on earth! He will not allow the misguided scientific genius of man to destroy all life from this planet!

Think of it!

The glorified Christ - returning in all the splendor, supernatural POWER and GLORY of God Almighty - coming to save mankind alive - coming to STOP escalating wars, nuclear mass destruction, human pain and suffering - coming to usher in peace, abundant well-being, happiness and joy for all mankind!

This was Predicted Centuries Ago

The sad state of our world was predicted and written in advance. Over 1900 years ago, the greatest newscaster the world has ever known foretold today's chaotic world conditions! He foresaw today's scientific discoveries and technological advancements. And He foresaw the outcome of it all.

He knew that men would produce the destructive forces that now threaten cosmocide! This famous newscaster warned: "And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved [alive - Moffatt Trans.]" (Mark 13:20).

This great news prophet was Jesus Christ of Nazareth - the same Jesus who is coming again to intervene at the last moment for this world. What He foretold has been written in your Bible all these centuries. No other book is as up-to-date as your Bible!

Jesus Christ foretold today's world conditions in vivid language. He prophesied in advance the wars, famines, disease epidemics and natural disasters that are now occurring increasingly before our very eyes! Jesus gave the exact sequence of events that would take place in our modern, pulsating space age. Scientists and world leaders - most of whom know little of Bible prophecy, and even reject the Bible - readily admit that events He prophesied are taking place right now - in our generation!

For some time influential people have been using biblical terminology to describe current world conditions. Notice just a few:

Dr. Binay Sen, former director of the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization said, "If the rate of food production cannot be significantly increased, we must be prepared for the four horsemen of the Apocalypse."

Robert S. McNamara, former president of the World Bank: "We have to see the population problem as part ... of a much wider social and political crisis that grows deeper with each decade and threatens to round off this century with years of unrest and turbulence, a 'time of troubles' [emphasis ours] during which the forces of historical change threaten our frail twentieth-century society with disintegration."

Barbara Ward and Rene Dubos, research writers: "When we consider the planet's still-increasing population, we may even wonder whether the traditional figure of the harvester may not be turning before our eyes into that other image of the man with the scythe - the archetypal image of Death itself."

Prophecy Is for us, TODAY!

But some will still object, "There have always been 'prophets of doom.' People thought the world was coming to an end in the Middle Ages when the black death struck Europe."

These skeptics simply do not understand God's timetable of prophecy. The end of man's rule must, and will, come as God has scheduled it. Though some had ignorantly thought otherwise, the end of man's rule was not due in the Middle Ages.

We need to understand that every prophecy has a definite time setting - usually not in the prophet's own day. Most prophecies of the Bible are yet to be fulfilled, and are for our time - TODAY!

Jesus taught that there is a timetable of prophecy - that certain specific events must occur in the months and years ahead before He returns to rescue humanity from annihilation. Let's begin to understand these prophecies. Let's learn exactly what the world's greatest newscaster foretold for our time.

But before we begin, be sure you have your Bible in front of you. You should turn to all the Scripture references given in answer to the questions we will ask - and carefully read them. **PROVE** what we say for yourself in your own Bible!

Thousands of our students have found that making notations in their lessons and Bibles as they study is especially helpful when they review their lessons later. Some also write or type out in full these scripture references.

Now let's begin.

LESSON2

There will be Scoffers in the Last Days

Our day is the day of so-called "Christian Atheism" when even theologians scoff at the idea of God's existence and the prophesied intervention of Jesus Christ.

"Christ is no longer expected to come back," says John Robinson, Bishop of Woolwich, England, in his book *The New Reformation*. "I believe," continues Bishop Robinson, "that we must designate ours a post-Christian era, in the sense that a Christ is no longer expected. The present generation is unable to recognize Jesus as the Christ. They ask why should we see in this historical character the focus of all our hopes or the answer to all our problems?"

Notice that your Bible predicted this time of scoffers!

1. What did the Apostle Peter say would signal the "last days"? 2 Peter 3:3-4.

COMMENT: "Scoffers" is rendered "mockers" in the Moffatt translation.

2. Does God address a rebuke against such skepticism, especially to Israel? Ezekiel 12:21-23.

COMMENT: Surprising as it may seem, this prophecy and the entire book of Ezekiel were written primarily for our day! When this book was written, the nation of Israel (not to be

confused with the modern nation of Israel) had already fallen and been taken into captivity - from which she never returned - a full 120 years before.

History reveals that the ten-tribed nation of Israel (the northern kingdom) was taken captive by the Assyrians in 721-718 B.C. However, by the time God spoke this prophecy to Ezekiel, about 600 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was attacking the Southern kingdom of Judah. Ezekiel was already in a Babylonian slave camp (Ezekiel 1:1), far from the regions where Israel had been carried by Assyria so long before. He was even farther from where some Israelites had subsequently migrated. (Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's book, *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*, explains where they went, and who ancient Israel's descendants really are today.)

God gave Ezekiel a message to be delivered to Israel - a message about a future captivity. Yet Israel had already gone into its first and only captivity 120 long years before! Ezekiel's captors would not allow him to go to Israel to deliver that message. God knew he would not be able to go, before He gave him the prophecy. So, plainly, God did not expect the message to be delivered then and there.

But Ezekiel wrote the message so it would be preserved. And it is today in the hands of the people to whom it was sent - at precisely the time when God intended that they receive it!

3. Does God say that the doubters' proverb would prove worthless, and that the time would come when every vision would be fulfilled? Ezekiel 12:23, 25. What is the prophecy the modern-day descendants of Israel do not want to believe? Ezekiel 12:20.

COMMENT: The people say time has already been so long that it is obvious the vision will never come to pass. God's answer is that everything prophesied will happen as predicted!

4. Even if people admit the fact that this calamity will come to pass, how do they try to rationalize it away? Verse 27. Does God answer there will be no reprieve from this sentence? Verse 28.

5. Before God sends major punishment upon a nation, does He always first reveal it to His servants? Amos 3:6-7.

6. Hosea 5:9 calls the end time the "day of rebuke." Do verses 8 and 9 indicate an end-time warning ministry to the nations of Israel? Compare these verses with Hosea 7:12.

7. For what age was Isaiah's prophecy primarily put in writing? Isaiah 30:8. (The better rendering of "time to come" is "the latter day," as given in the margin of many Bibles.) What does God say will be the character of people in "the latter day"? Verses 9-11. Then will their punishment come suddenly, though obvious signs had previously been visible? Verse 13.

8. Is one of the signs of the imminence of dire calamity the world's tendency to ignore and deny the peril? 1 Thessalonians 5:3.

9. What message does Isaiah give the mockers? Isaiah 28:22. Does God warn them of great destruction upon the whole earth? Same verse. Is it linked with the time of God's intervention in world affairs? Verse 21.

Prophecy Has NOT Failed!

Let's understand once and for all that prophecy has not failed. We need to realize that every prophecy has a definite time setting, a time usually not in the prophet's own day. One full third of the Bible is prophecy- and about 90% of all that prophecy still pertains to this prophesied "end time"!

With this in mind, let's notice certain KEY prophecies:

1. Was Joel's prophecy for his own day, or for the distant future? Joel 1:2-3, 15. What is the "day of the Lord"? Is it the time when God intervenes in world affairs? Joel 3:1-2, 11-14. When will this period of time occur - after great signs in the heavens? Verses 15-16. Is this plainly speaking of the time Christ will return? Matthew 24:29-31.

COMMENT: The "day of the Lord" is mentioned in many prophecies of the Bible. It always refers to the time when God will intervene in world affairs, culminating in the return of Jesus Christ to this earth.

2. Did the prophet Isaiah also prophesy of this time? Isaiah 24:17-21. What will happen "in that day"? Isaiah 2:11-12.

3. Will all of the prophecies regarding the day of the Lord be fulfilled? Revelation 10:5-7.

4. Will any of the God-given prophecies FAIL to come to pass? Isaiah 55:11. Will the warning message given to the people by God's servants be fulfilled? Ezekiel 33:30-33. Is it a pleasant message? Verses 25-29.

COMMENT: Most people today are tired of hearing "bad news." Nevertheless, God's prophecies include BAD NEWS for all those who rebel against Him and trample on His laws! But they also include much GOOD NEWS on beyond the prophesied time of world trouble and chaos (Isaiah 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-4). Many of the prophecies foretell a time of peace, of happiness, of restoration, of joy, of great prosperity and physical wealth for those who serve and OBEY God. We'll learn more about this GOOD NEWS in a soon-coming lesson.

The FIRST Thing Christ Foretold

1. What was the first warning sign Jesus Christ gave His disciples when they asked Him about the time of His second coming? Matthew 24:3-4. Did He foretell that MANY deceivers would arise to deceive MANY people? Verses 5, 11, 24. Are they the ministers of the archdeceiver himself? 2 Corinthians 11:13-15. Is the whole world deceived as a result of their activities? Revelation 12:9.

2. But would the TRUTH of God also be proclaimed with power around the world before the second coming of Christ? Matthew 24:14.

COMMENT: God will not leave the world without a warning witness. Today, His servants are powerfully proclaiming His truth worldwide via the media of radio, television and the printing press. You are studying His message right now, as you study your Bible with this Correspondence Course.

3. In the meantime, would the deceivers become extremely active? 2 Timothy 3:13. Would men have only a "form" - an outward show - of godliness? Verse 5. Wasn't Paul clearly speaking of these "last days" - our perilous age? Verse 1.

4. Did Jesus predict that some of the false teachers would even claim He has already returned? Matthew 24:23-26.

COMMENT: As we'll see in the next lesson, there will not be the slightest doubt that Christ has returned when His second coming really does occur!

When Will Christ Return?

Perhaps you have heard preachers declare: "The Lord may come tonight." But, is it true the second coming of Jesus Christ could occur at any minute? What did He Himself say - Jesus warned: "Take heed that ye be not deceived"!

1. What is one of the deceits the false ministers would preach? Luke 21:8. Notice the words "the time draweth near."

COMMENT: According to the original Greek in which the New Testament was written, the false message of those pretending to be the ministers of Christ is: "The time HAS COME near," or "The time is at hand" (RSV). In other words, "The Lord may come tonight."

What about it, then? Could Christ return at any moment?

Your Bible teaches that there is a definite sequence of events which must occur first! Study carefully ALL of Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. These chapters clearly reveal that there is a time-table of prophecy - that certain definite events must occur before Christ returns!

2. Did Christ explain clearly that certain events would have to take place before the "end"? Luke 21:9-11.

COMMENT: Notice that the King James English of 1611 is not at all clear in verse 9. Instead of "by and by," the original Greek phrase is better translated "immediately." Parallel accounts in Matthew 24:6 and Mark 13:7 correctly answer "the end is not yet."

3. But once the terrible events Jesus enumerated in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 finally begin to occur, will they all be completed in the lifetime of one generation? Matthew 24:34; Mark 13:30; Luke 21:32.

The "Signs of the Times"

There is a parallel to the widespread lack of understanding of God's prophetic timetable for the return of Jesus Christ. The Jews at the time of His first coming also lacked understanding and did not fully recognize or accept Christ as the prophesied Messiah.

Jesus told the religious leaders of His day that the "signs" accompanying His ministry should have been proof enough that He was the prophesied Christ. The Old Testament prophecies, with which they were thoroughly familiar, had predicted the exact time and manner of His appearance!

Yet they refused to believe Him!

1. What did these scoffing Pharisees and Sadducees ask Jesus to show them? Matthew 16:1. How did He answer them? Verses 2-3.

COMMENT: The religious leaders of Christ's day didn't understand the "signs of the times." Yet they had been taught the Messiah was to come, for that very message was repeated in nearly every book of the Old Testament. In verse 3, Jesus showed them they could understand - if they really wanted to!

2. What additional sign - besides the plain Old Testament prophecies they already knew - did Jesus give? Matthew 16:4. What was the "sign of the prophet Jonas"? Matthew 12:39-40.

COMMENT: Atheists and agnostics scoff at the Biblical record of "Jonah and the whale." Nevertheless, Jesus told the Pharisees that He would be in His grave for the same length of time Jonah was in the great fish. This was to be the special "sign" to His generation that He really was the prophesied Christ!

3. Did that sign come to pass? Read Matthew 27:57-66 and 28:1-6 and 28:1-66. Notice especially verse 6.

COMMENT: Two women came to see the tomb where Christ had been laid. When they arrived, they found it empty. They were told that Christ had risen - "as he said" - after three days and three nights.

The sign had come to pass!

Jesus proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that He was the prophesied Messiah and Savior of mankind!

Might it be "Signs" of OUR Times?

1. As Jesus explained to His disciples the exact SEQUENCE OF EVENTS that would precede His intervention (Matthew 24:3-41), what else did He say would occur in the end time besides the coming of many false prophets? Matthew 24:6-7.

COMMENT: World War I commenced in 1914. Ever since, nation has continued to rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. Just since World War II alone, there have been over 150 armed conflicts around the world! We are now merely in a lull between rounds two and three of World War!

2. Is famine one of the major signs indicating that Christ's intervention in world affairs is very near? Matthew 24:7.

COMMENT: The first decade or so after World War II, food production kept up with population in the underdeveloped countries. But the tables turned in 1958, a crucial year.

From that time till this, the stork outraced and passed the plow. More and more had less and less to eat.

Since 1958 the crisis has generally grown worse. The first shocking blow came in 1965-1966 with severe drought and threatening famine in India.

Disaster was barely staved off in 1966. What will happen the next year the world faces drought and famine? Remember: every year world population grows another 70 million. Every three years the equivalent of another United States is added to the world's population! Many areas of the world face a severe crisis as population passes food production.

In Central and South America, some of the most miserable and depressing poverty can be seen. Yet, in several of these nations the population is expected to double within 25 years! This was once thought to be impossible.

The facts of lagging world food production, combined with the reality of the population explosion, add up to one thing: a crisis of awesome proportions is exploding on the world's doorstep! The several million dying each year now from starvation could soon be multiplied a hundred times. Hundreds of millions of human beings now drawing breath could perish in world-girdling famines! It is not at all a pleasant thought to contemplate. As one writer put it, "We shall see them doing so on our television sets."

But worse, even our affluent nations are not immune to this dire threat!

Killer Diseases - Global Pandemics

1. What else was prophesied to occur after famine? Matthew 24:7. Isn't pestilence partly the natural result of food shortage?

COMMENT: The way is already prepared for a revival of pestilence. More and more crowding means more waste and refuse, more garbage, more pollution of the water, air and land. And more disease!

Huge concentrations of population are ready-made tinder boxes of potential disease epidemics. Under crowded conditions, an epidemic can spread from person to person like wildfire. All the great pestilences of the past were just such contagious diseases.

It is not inconceivable that a flu epidemic similar to the one in 1918 could strike. Despite medical science, disease germs, bacteria and viruses have built up an amazing resistance to the "wonder drugs" of a few years ago. Through mutation and adaptation, the resistance to man's drugs and vaccines is becoming even greater. It is very possible that a super-flu or other deadly pestilence could sweep the world, killing millions!

Remember also that modern man already lives in an environment of poisons. He inhales poisonous, polluted air, drinks contaminated water, and eats pesticide-laden foods. The inevitable result is that the heart, lungs and the entire body in general are weakened, thus lowering resistance to disease, which nearly always strikes the weakest first!

Jesus Christ told the truth bluntly, plainly, without equivocation. He said the world would experience vast disease epidemics in the end time!

Medical experts are growing increasingly alarmed when they study the world situation. They see growing signs of such epidemics. Plagues of cholera have already struck East Europe, Asia and Africa. Even bubonic plague - the "Black Death" of the Middle Ages - is making a comeback today!

Dr. Paul Ehrlich, studying the population explosion in the world today, drew a picture of what could very easily occur in the future. In one of his seemingly prophetic scenarios, he foretold the dire possibility of vast disease pandemics taking multiple millions of lives as a new, drug-resistant strain of some major disease broke out and quickly spread around the world!

Such a possibility frightens medical authorities because it is NOT mere "science-fiction" With the advent of huge jetliners and the tremendous intercontinental air and ship traffic of our age, such diseases could be spread around the world very quickly!

Jesus' words, spoken over 1900 years ago, were certainly prophetic. The next few years will reveal precisely how much so!

Earthquakes!

1. What else will happen with increasing severity? Matthew 24:7. When earthquake activity reaches a peak, will men at last begin to recognize that GOD is intervening? Isaiah 2:19-21.

2. Are the signs Jesus foretold only the beginning of sorrows? Matthew 24:8. If this prophesied time of world trouble were allowed to continue, would there be anyone left alive? Verses 21-22.

COMMENT: Famine, disease, pestilence, earthquakes and other disruptions of nature are taking an increasing toll of human life today. And as we have seen, world leaders everywhere are afraid that man's destructive capability will annihilate all life on earth!

The "Four Horsemen" in Revelation

1. Doesn't Revelation 6 picture the same conditions Jesus described in Matthew 24, but in symbolic terms? Revelation 6:2-8.

COMMENT: These four horses and horsemen represent the four major world conditions Jesus said would exist at the end of this age - all increasing in severity and overlapping in their effects on the entire world!

The white horse represents the increasing number of false ministers preaching a false Christ and false ways to "salvation." The red horse pictures the increasing tempo of the ravages of wars. The black horse - increasing famine. And the pale horse - rampaging diseases.

2. What tremendous toll of life will be taken by these "four horsemen of the Apocalypse"? Revelation 6:8.

COMMENT: Just imagine, if you can, ONE-FOURTH of mankind dying during a period described as only the BEGINNING of sorrows!!

But let's not forget that man is bringing this horrible suffering and death upon himself! Jesus knew that man, left to his own devices, would so afflict himself and would ultimately destroy all life - unless something totally unforeseen occurred to stop it. That is why He has promised to intervene in world affairs. Jesus Christ is coming soon to rescue us from ourselves because man has just about reached the end of his rope!

The "Abomination of Desolation"

- 1.** What was another sign Jesus gave to indicate when "the end" was near? Matthew 24:14-16.
- 2.** Did Jesus identify the "abomination of desolation" as that one which was spoken of by the Prophet Daniel? Verse 15.
- 3.** What was Daniel told about a desolating abomination? Daniel 12:11. Would it exist in the end time? Verses 4, 9.

COMMENT: Notice that this abomination is something which occurs in the vicinity where sacrifices are being made.

- 4.** Where else does Daniel mention an "abomination of desolation"? Daniel 11:31.

COMMENT: Verse 31 was once fulfilled in ancient history. Most Bible scholars concede that most of the eleventh chapter of Daniel was fulfilled in history by the struggles of the Seleucidae of Syria and the Ptolemies of Egypt - called the kings of the North and the South by Daniel.

Verse 31 was once fulfilled when Jerusalem was conquered and the Temple of God was desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria, in 168 B.C. (See Rawlinson's A Manual of Ancient History.)

- 5.** But Jesus said the "abomination" was still future, didn't He? Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20-24, especially verse 20.

COMMENT: Then at least a part of Daniel 11 must also be DUAL! And no wonder, for we find the chapter concludes with the "time of the end" (verse 40) - leading up to the resurrection of the saints (chapter 12:2). (In the original text, there is no chapter break between Daniel 11 and 12.)

But what is the "abomination of desolation" prophesied for the "time of the end"?

Putting Bible prophecy and historical fulfillment together, we can get an idea of what this abomination of desolation will be. Historically, the abomination of desolation occurred when Antiochus Epiphanes moved against Jerusalem with his armies. The latter-day fulfillment occurs when invading armies are again set up against Jerusalem (Luke 21:20). These armed forces will then crush and spoil the city (verse 24), stopping whatever daily sacrifice may be instituted by the Israelis. These actions by the brutal occupying armies will be a great abomination for the entire city and cause the desolation thereof.

The modern "abomination of desolation" (Matthew 24:15), or "that maketh desolate" (Daniel 12:11), therefore will be vicious and catastrophic troubles caused by invading armies in Jerusalem.

Will there be Sudden Destruction!

1. Will there be warfare at the same time in the Middle East? Luke 21:23-24. Will the city of Jerusalem be captured? Verse 24; Zechariah 14:1-2. By whom? Same verses.

COMMENT: Some have wondered if Jerusalem's destruction by the Gentile Roman armies in 70 A.D. was the fulfillment of this prophecy.

The presence of Roman armies in Jerusalem in 70 A.D. was only a type of what is to occur in the near future. The Roman legions which conquered Jerusalem then were only a type of MODERN legions which will soon again surge through the Middle East.

A.D. 70 was not "the END"! The "day of the Lord" did not arrive then!

2. Will half of Jerusalem's population eventually be carried away and the whole city looted? Zechariah 14:2. Will this time be especially hard on women? Same verse.

COMMENT: This is why Jesus warned "WOE" to pregnant and nursing women (Matthew 24:16-19). It will be very difficult for them to escape!

3. Will this future military action in the Middle East threaten to engulf the whole world? Matthew 24:21-22. Will this time of "great tribulation" that ensues - this time of unequalled strife and bloodshed involving weapons of modern warfare - threaten to utterly extinguish all life on earth? Verse 22.

COMMENT: This is the very time Jesus Christ must intervene. Never before in man's history has he been able to destroy all life on this planet. These prophecies can only refer to this latter day and the immediate future!

World's Population being reduced

1. Does the Bible prophesy a great future war? Revelation 9:14-18. How many will die in this terrible conflict? Verses 15, 18.

COMMENT: Horrible as it sounds, the millions who died in World War II will be as nothing compared to the enormous decimation of human life just ahead! Roughly one-third of the human race will die in this war. And remember, this death toll is in addition to the number of others who will die of famine and disease!

2. What will happen to the armies that attack Jerusalem? Zechariah 14:12; Revelation 19:19-21.

3. In summary, what does Isaiah prophesy concerning the earth's population when Christ returns? Isaiah 24:1, 3. Why? Verses 5-6. What is the number of the "few" people still alive compared to? Verse 13; Isaiah 17:4-6.

"Watch You Therefore ..."

1. Will Christ's coming catch most people unawares - their minds completely occupied with their own problems, hopes, fears and pleasures- even in the midst of the most terrible times the world has ever known? Matthew 24:37-39.

2. Does Christ therefore warn us to take heed and carefully watch for the signs of His imminent return? Luke 21:34-36.

COMMENT: Jesus plainly shows us that we must watch world events in order to ESCAPE the trouble mankind is bringing upon itself - lest we be snared by it and unprepared for His coming.

3. Will the events - the "signs" - preceding Christ's intervention be difficult to discern? Or will they be as obvious (to those who are watching) as the changing of the seasons? Compare Luke 21:29-31 with Matthew 24:32-33.

COMMENT: Are you watching carefully the step-by-step fulfillment of Biblical prophecies on the world scene? Are you taking diligent heed to Jesus' words of warning? May God help you to do so!

Is it true that God MUST Intervene?

When we take a hard, cold, realistic look at present world conditions and trends, they DO point to a fast-approaching WORLD CRISIS of war, starvation, uncontrollable disease epidemics, and the extinction of human life on this planet!

Man simply has no solutions to these terrifying problems! The further he goes, the more destructive become his efforts. His technology has gotten out of hand - beyond his capacity to control wisely.

World leaders, statesmen, and scientists look at this terrifying world picture and admit they are frightened! They warn us that man's only hope lies in the formation of a SUPER WORLD GOVERNMENT wielding all authority and power over the nations.

But the nations, hostile against one another, could never form such a government.

Let's face it! Either there does exist a living GOD of supreme mind and total POWER who very soon will step in and intervene in the affairs of this world to SAVE HUMANITY FROM ITSELF - or else the EXTINCTION of all life will inevitably occur, sooner or later, as man unleashes the awesome forces at his control upon his neighbor!

The next lesson shows exactly how God will intervene in this world's affairs to save mankind alive!

MINI QUIZ - TEST YOUR MEMORY

This quiz is designed to help you remember the important facts you learned in the lesson. You simply circle or underline each correct answer. After you've finished this test, check your choices with the correct answers listed at the end of the test, and then rate yourself.

1. World statesmen warn of: A. impending world catastrophe through warfare. B. world government. C. shortage of armaments. D. under-population.

2. Which of the following is not a threat to human survival? A. Nuclear annihilation. B. Over-population. C. Pestilence. D. Conventional weapons.
3. Biological weapons: A. have been proven safe to the user if handled with caution. B. are more expensive than nuclear weapons. C. could render an attacked nation uninhabitable for 100 years. D. are entirely predictable as to effects.
4. What is man's greatest need in this time of world trouble? A. More time to control pollution. B. More sophisticated weapons of warfare. C. Effective birth-control methods now. D. "A strong hand from someplace."
5. Jesus Christ: A. could return tonight. B. gave a sequence of events that must occur before He returns. C. predicted man will annihilate human life. D. predicted none of today's conditions.
6. God's general timetable of prophecy: A. is not clearly revealed in the Bible B. is either ignored or declared already fulfilled by most ministers. C. has apparently been revised. D. is something we were not meant to understand.
7. Awesome famines are certain to come: A. because food production is being outpaced by population growth. B. because too many nations possess deserts. C. only because weather is unpredictable. D. only in India and certain other "poor" countries.
8. Can pestilence - disease - again bring death to multiple millions in this modern world? A. Wonder drugs and better medical practices make that impossible. B. Not with vaccinations and serum immunization. C. Yes, because our polluted environment weakens man's natural resistance, while helping to create strains of super germs. D. Possibly, but the sick could be quickly isolated.
9. The "beginning of sorrows" will actually kill: A. few hundred thousand. B. only the atheists. C. only professing Christians. D. at least one-fourth of mankind!
10. Christ's second coming: A. can be accurately pinpointed. B. will catch a few people by surprise. C. will not surprise those who watch world events and are prepared for His coming. D. is being proclaimed by all of professing Christianity today.

TRUE OR FALSE

11. The reason so many prophecies apply to the end time is because they did not come to pass when they were meant to. **T F**
12. There have been over 150 armed conflicts in the world just since the end of World War II. **T F**
13. The "abomination of desolation" does not have anything to do with annies at the "time of the end." **T F**
14. Half of Jerusalem's population is yet to be taken captive in war. **T F**
15. The twenty-fourth chapter of Isaiah shows that no human being will survive the prophesied time of world

war. **T F**

MATCHING

Match the number phrase with a letter phrase.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 16. Latin America | A. Population to double in 25years. |
| | B. Already fulfilled |
| 17. Signs of our times. | C. Matt. 25; Luke 22 |
| | D. Revelation 6 |
| 18. Ezekiel | E. Matthew 24 |
| | F. Prophet of Israel |
| 19. Earthquakes | G. Prophet to Judah |
| | H. False prophets |
| 20. Four Horsemen | I. Religious persecution |
| | J. Greatest to come |

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

Rate Yourself

- 1 -A 5 - B 9- D 13 - F 17 - E
2 -D 6-B 10 - C 14 -T 18 - F
3 -C 7 -A 11 - F 15 - F 19 - J
4 - D 8 -C 12 -T 16 -A 20-D

- 13- 15 Correct Fair
16- 18 Correct Good
19- 20 Correct Excellent

WORLD PEACE COMING IN OUR TIME

Test for Lesson 2

1. World statesmen and scientists

- A. predict that world government will come in our time.
- B. are confident that men can bring about world peace.
- C. warn of shortages of nuclear weapons.
- D. warn of the annihilation of all life through nuclear warfare.

2. Which one of the following is NOT a grave threat to the survival of all mankind?

- A. Bacteriological warfare.
 - B. Globe-girdling famine and resultant diseases.
 - C. Conventional, non-nuclear weapons.
 - D. Nuclear warfare.
- 3.** According to the experts, biological weapons
- A. could conceivably render an attacked nation uninhabitable for 100 years.
 - B. are entirely predictable as to their effects.
 - C. have been proven safe to the user if handled with caution.
 - D. are more expensive to produce than nuclear weapons.
- 4.** What is man's greatest need at this time of chaotic world conditions?
- A. More time to control pollution.
 - B. More destructive weapons as a deterrent to warfare.
 - C. "A strong hand from someplace" to solve mankind's problems.
 - D. Effective birth control methods to stem population growth.
- 5.** What does the Bible say would be some of the signs showing we are in the "last days"?
- A. Scoffers saying Christ is not coming back.
 - B. Increasing national and worldwide troubles.
 - C. People's refusal to face up to the grave realities of the end time in which we're living.
 - D. All of the above.
- 6.** God gave Ezekiel a message about national captivity that was
- A. to apply to the end-time descendants of ancient Israel.
 - B. to be delivered to ancient Israel.
 - C. definitely not intended for the descendants of ancient Israel today.
 - D. so general it can't be applied with certainty to any specific time or people.
- 7.** What would people in the "latter days," or end time, be like?
- A. God-fearing.
 - B. Truthful.
 - C. Rebellious.
 - D. Righteous.
- 8.** Has Bible prophecy failed?
- A. Yes, because the time setting was always for the prophet's own day and the prophesied events never came to pass.
 - B. No - about 90% of prophecy pertains to this "end time" and therefore is yet to be fulfilled.
 - C. Yes, because the prophets of God were only guessing about future events.
 - D. There is no way we can determine this for certain.
- 9.** The "day of the Lord" refers to

- A. the time when God will directly intervene in world affairs.
- B. a day of worship- Sunday.
- C. the day Jesus Christ died.
- D. the time when Jesus walked the earth as a man.

10. Jesus Christ

- A. could return to earth at any moment.
- B. predicted none of today's world conditions.
- C. foretold a number of world events that would occur before He returns.
- D. predicted that man will indeed destroy the human race.

11. Where can we find the list of events Jesus said would occur before His second coming?

- A. Matthew 24.
- B. Mark 13.
- C. Luke 21.
- D. All of the above.

12. How long would it take for the prophesied "end-time" events to dramatically crescendo and be completed?

- A. Nearly 2,000 years.
- B. Approximately one generation.
- C. One thousand years.
- D. Six thousand years.

13. What was the first major sign Christ gave His disciples that would precede His return to earth?

- A. The conversion of the world to Christianity.
- B. The "secret rapture" to heaven of all true Christians.
- C. This world's ministers would begin teaching the truth of God.
- D. Many would be deceived by ministers claiming to be the servants of Christ.

14. In the end time, Jesus predicted that warfare among nations would

- A. occur with increasing frequency.
- B. diminish until it was the least of the world's troubles.
- C. be the world's only major problem.
- D. be effectively discouraged by the United Nations.

15. Incredible, widespread famine is certain to come

- A. because the U.S. government will drastically cut back farm production.
- B. as Christ prophesied it would.
- C. because many nations possess deserts.
- D. to only a few developing countries.

16. Which one of the following statements is NOT true?

- A. Hundreds of millions will perish in the coming globe-girdling famine that Jesus predicted.
- B. The population explosion will be a contributing factor leading to worldwide famine.
- C. Famine of worldwide proportions will be a major sign indicating that Christ's intervention in world affairs is very near.
- D. Widespread famine could not happen in the developed countries of the Western world.

17. Christ foretold that vast disease epidemics would

- A. be prevented by modern miracle drugs.
- B. strike at the close of this age.
- C. occur only in the Middle Ages.
- D. not be a sign that His coming is near.

18. What factors would contribute to the emergence of pestilence - great disease epidemics - in the world?

- A. Severe food shortages.
- B. Huge concentrations of people such as we find in many large cities of the world.
- C. Pollution of all types which inevitably weakens the body's resistance to disease.
- D. All of the above.

19. Erupting volcanoes, earthquakes and other disruptions of nature

- A. have not been increasing in frequency and intensity.
- B. are diminishing yearly.
- C. are other indications Christ gave which would show we are living in the end time.
- D. have always occurred and are no cause for us to take special notice.

20. How are the first four world conditions Jesus mentioned in Matthew 24 represented elsewhere in the Bible?

- A. As four horses and horsemen (Revelation 6:2-8).
- B. As four angels (Revelation 16:14-15).
- C. As the seven trumpet plagues (Revelation 8:9; 11:14-19).
- D. As the seven last plagues (Revelation 16:1-21).

21. The toll of human life that will be taken by the "four horsemen of the Apocalypse" is

- A. a few thousand people at the most.
- B. nearly all the earth's inhabitants.
- C. one-fourth of the world's population.
- D. not given in the Bible.

22. What special sign would clearly show that the end of the age and Christ's coming are very near?

- A. This world's churches preaching a gospel about the person of Jesus.
- B. Christ's gospel of the Kingdom of God being proclaimed in the world as a witness to all nations (Matthew 24:14).

- C. Millions upon millions around the world repenting of their sins.
- D. The sign of the prophet Jonah.

23. Which one of the following statements about the prophecy of the "abomination of desolation" is NOT true?

- A. It is dual in fulfillment.
- B. It was first fulfilled when Antiochus Epiphanes moved against Jerusalem with his army in 168 B.C.
- C. Its latter fulfillment will be another sign that Christ's return is very near.
- D. It has nothing to do with armies occupying Jerusalem in the end time and causing its desolation.

24. In order to escape the catastrophic world troubles prophesied in the Bible, Jesus said we

- A. should just watch for world events which would indicate His soon return.
- B. should join the church of our choice and attend Sunday services.
- C. must watch world events and pray daily to be accounted worthy to escape.
- D. should just continue living our normal daily lives as if nothing special is soon to happen.

25. The Bible clearly reveals that

- A. there is no foreseeable hope for the survival of the human race.
- B. a loving God will refrain from intervening in world affairs to save humanity from itself.
- C. God will allow heedless mankind to destroy all life on this planet.
- D. Jesus Christ will come with the power of God to save mankind from annihilation.

ANSWERS TO LESSON 2 TEST

Rate Yourself

1 - D	2-C	3-A	4 - C	5-D
6 - A	7 - C	8 - B	9 - A	10 - C
11 - D	12 - B	13 - D	14 - A	15 - B
16 - D	17 - B	18 - D	19 - C	20 - A
21 - C	22 - B	23 - D	24 - C	25 - D

19 - 20 Correct Excellen

16 - 18 Correct Good

13 - 15 Correct Fair