

Are We Living in the Last Days?

II Timothy 3 Has a Lot to Say About This Critical Issue

We all, as God's people, want to know where we sit on the time-line of prophecy, how soon will be the return of Jesus Christ and the resurrection of His elect to eternal life. Jesus told us to learn the parable of the fig tree."

"When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it [He] is near — at the doors!" (Matthew 24:32-33).

What are "all these things" that Jesus is referring to in this prophecy? He explains Himself in the following verses. He says in Matthew 24:37 that things on earth before His return will be like in the days of Noah, just before the Flood. Life will be going on as usual — at least in terms of the culture of the day — "For as in the days before the Flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark" (Matthew 24:38). Some say that this "marrying" refers to multiple marriages, like we see happening so frequently today.

What were those days like just before the Flood? We are told in Genesis 6:1-4 that there were giants (Nephilim) on the earth in those days, the progeny of the evil sons of Elohim and human women. They were giant in stature and giant in doing evil, so that the entire earth was corrupted by intermarriage with these god-human hybrids — except for

Noah and his family, for Noah was "perfect in his generations" (Genesis 6:9). Society upon the earth was in a terribly corrupt state.

"Then the Lord saw that the *wickedness* of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5).

"The earth also was *corrupt* before God, and the earth was filled with *violence*.

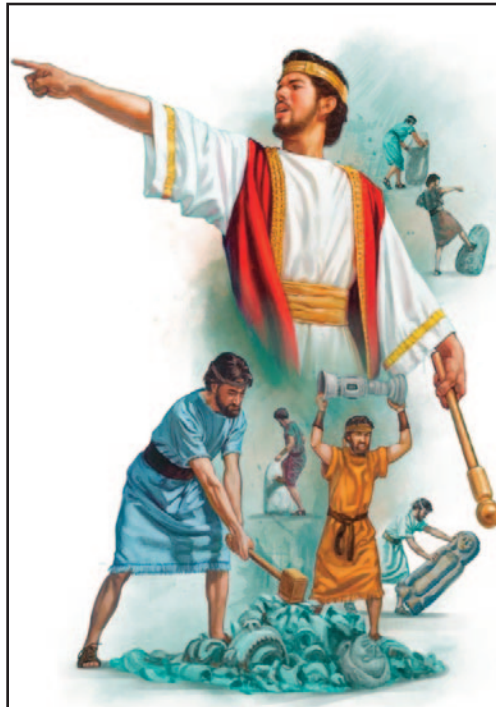
And God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was *corrupt*: for all flesh had *corrupted* their way on the earth" (Genesis 6:11-12).

wickedness = *marah*, "bitterness, angry, discontented."

corrupt = *shachath*, "dissolution, corruption, to decay or ruin."

violence = *chamac*, "violence, wrong, raucousness; the disruption of the divinely established order of things." The word connotes a violent wrongdoing which has not been righted, the guilt of which lies on an entire area and its inhabitants, disrupting their relationship with God and thereby interfering

with His blessings. Thus, the phrase in Genesis 6:11 that "the earth was filled with violence" could be stated, "the earth was full of violent wrongdoing."



The Nephilim were giant in stature and totalitarian in their character. Nimrod is thought by some to have been a giant.

II Timothy 3

Let us now examine II Timothy 3 to see whether or not the predictions of how things on earth will be just before Christ's return match the way things were before the Flood ... and if those conditions match what we see in society around us today. Verse 1 of that chapter says, "But know this that in the last days *perilous* [*chalepos*, "difficult, dangerous, furious"] times will come." Thereafter, Paul lists 19 traits of people that will be extant in the "last days." These qualities will make those days "perilous." Let us examine each of those traits in verses 2 to 7, and compare them with what we see around us in the world today.

1. **Lovers of themselves.** *philautos*, "fond of self, i.e. selfish; a lover of oneself"; from *philos*, "loved, dear, friendly," and *hautou*, "self."
2. **Lovers of money.** *philarguros*, "money-loving"; rendered *covetous* in the KJV; from *philos*, "loved, dear, friendly," and *arguros*, "silver, the metal in coins." See I Timothy 6:10. "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."
3. **Boasters.** *alazon*, "a boaster, a wanderer about the country; a vagabond, hence an imposter, one who is full of empty and boastful professions and only while in the

company of others."

4. **Proud.** *hyperephanos*, "one who compares himself with others, either secretly or openly, and lifts himself above them; his arrogance consists in claiming honor for himself; his comparing himself is not the sin but it is his sin that causes him to compare; the word is always used in an evil sense of being arrogant, disdainful, or haughty." See II Corinthians 10:12. "For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves among themselves, are not wise."
5. **Blasphemers.** *blasphemos*, "abusive, speaking evil"; from *blapto*, to hurt, hinder, or injure," and *pheme*, "a saying, report, or rumor."
6. **Disobedient to parents.** *disobedient* = *apeithes*, unwilling to be persuaded, spurning belief, disobedient"; see Exodus 20:12. "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you."
7. **Unthankful.** *acharistos*, "ungrateful, thankless."
8. **Unholy.** *anosios*, "unholy, profane." See I Timothy 1:9. "... knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for

manslayers"

9. **Unloving.** *astorgus*, "without natural affection, especially of parents for children and children for parents"; from *storge*, "love of kindred," and *a*, the negative of that.
10. **Unforgiving.** *aspondos*, "without a libation, i.e. without a truce, as a libation accompanying the making of treaties; one who cannot be persuaded to enter into a covenant; a trucebreaker."
11. **Slanderers.** *diabolos*, a traducer;" from *ballo*, "to throw, more or less violently"; applied to Satan the devil. The word literally means to blame falsely.
12. **Without self-control.** *akrates*, "powerless, incontinent."
13. **Brutal.** *anameros*, "not tame, savage"; from *hemeros*, "gentle", and "a," its negative.
14. **Despisers of good.** *aphilagathos*, "opposed to goodness and to good men; from *philagathos*, "fond of good," and "a," its negative.
15. **Traitors.** *propotes*, "going forward into another's (the enemy's) hands; a surrender."
16. **Headstrong.** *propetes*, "falling forward, metaphorically to signify rashness or recklessness"; from *pro*, "forwards," and *pipto*, "to fall."
17. **Haughty.** *tuphoo*, "to wrap in smoke, to be lifted up in pride"; from *tuphos*, and used metaphorically as "conceit."
18. **Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.** *lovers*

of pleasure = philadonos, "fond of pleasure, i.e. voluptuous"; from philos, "dear or fond," and hedone, "sensual delight, desire."

19. Having a form of godliness but denying its power. *form = morphosis, "appearance"; godliness = eusebeia, "piety"; power = dunamis, "force, or miraculous power."*

The Nature of Today's World

These 19 qualities in people that Paul is referring to in II Timothy 3:2-5 are to be signals for the end of this age. Surely people throughout human history have displayed some of these negative qualities: Cain and his brutality (Genesis 4:8), Nebuchadnezzar and his boasting and haughtiness (Daniel 4:30), Joseph's brothers and the Pharisees in their pride (Genesis 37:18-24; Matthew 23), Gehazi and his love of money (II Kings 5:21-27), Diotrefes and his self-love (III John 9), and Balaam and his unholiness (Numbers 22 to 25). But the implications of Paul's warning to Timothy is that these evil qualities of people would become rampant among people throughout the nations ... much like in Sodom and Gomorrah before fire came down from heaven and destroyed them.

Let us take a close look at how each of these 19 points mentioned by Paul in II Timothy 3 are being played out in today's world. Notice the comments found in major publications throughout the world.

1. Lovers of themselves.

"[People are] insistent on doing their own thing as never before. [They] are becoming gods, and expect to be treated as such" (*Financial Times*, United Kingdom, www.ft.com).

"The monetary costs of financial and property crimes are staggering. In 2016, credit card fraud and identity theft cost consumers \$16 billion, and that figure reflects only direct losses to victims. The costs to banks and merchants, which of course are indirectly passed on to consumers, are much higher. Shoplifting and worker theft re-

sulted in \$32 billion in losses to businesses, burglary and personal theft accounted for about \$14 billion in losses to individuals, and phone scams bilked people out of almost \$10 billion.

"And these figures don't include what individuals and businesses spend on an array of security systems to protect themselves from crime, nor the costs of law enforcement and the judicial system as they deal with those who prey on us. And, as staggering as the dollar amounts are, they don't reflect the deep emotional impact on those who are victimized.

"These numbers reflect a scourge of abject selfishness. Virtually all behavior that intentionally harms other people is rooted in the perpetrators' beliefs that their own desires are so much more important than other people's that they are entitled to rob, scam, cheat, and hurt others in order to get what they want" (Mark Leary, *The Scourge of Selfishness*, September 11, 2017, www.psychologytoday.com).

2. Lovers of money. "The ego of materialism has in recent times overpowered the spirit of modesty. Unless you are seen as rich in society



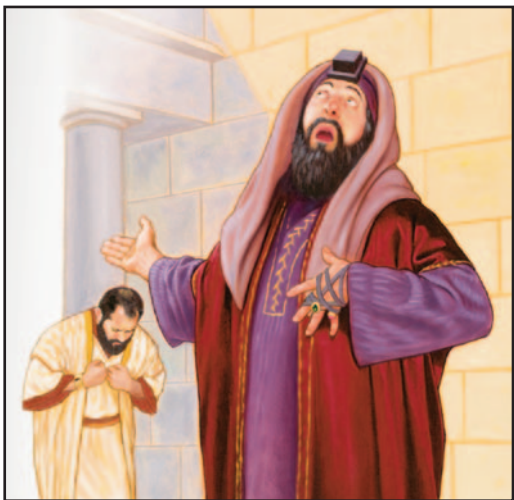
In today's world many people are self-indulgent, doting on their self-image and seeking self-gratification rather than the character of almighty God.

your life is not worth living' (*The Jakarta Post*, Jakarta, Indonesia, www.thejakartapost.com).

"Money is the most highly addictive substance on the planet. It is a powerful addiction, unrivalled in its ability to trigger good feelings, and what's most frightening about it is that you can't ever physically overdose. Cocaine, heroin and crack will kill you if you do too much, but not

money. Money won't harm you, physically anyway. The cash addict can madly mainline moolah from the trading floor, the Senate floor or, with smart phone in hand, the bathroom floor without ever risking a deadly OD. It would be comical if it wasn't so tragic. yet it is very tragic indeed, for the addict, their families and society at large.

"Make no mistake about this. Like all addiction stories, wealth addiction is tragic. Like all junkies, cash junkies will do anything to service



Boasting is common nowadays, but unlike the Pharisee pictured above is often cloaked in attitudes to claim superiority above others.

fine. They will 'keep it in the family' as they dissemble, distract, and confuse. They will buy nannies and ponies and cars. They will snort cocaine and go shopping and jet off to exclusive resorts to hobnob with other wealthy people.

"And it's not just the neglected family that suffers. There are no boundaries. Like a fentanyl addiction, it takes over and distorts everything. Cash addicts in the U.S. government, their campaign funded by the wealthy, will steal from the poor, destroy the environment, rip off sick children, engage in colonial exploitation, start wars, and even sacrifice kids in yet another school shooting if it means they can make some more bucks. And that's not even the worst of it. The addicts will hijack human spirituality, explicit hatred, brainwash the masses, derail democratic politics, and tinker with fascism in their desire to have more" (Beth Daly, How money is destroying the world, May 21, 2018, www.theconversation.com).

3. Boasters. "Bragging gets a boost from social media [like Facebook and Twitter]. Boasting is out of control. How did this happen? Clearly, the Internet has given us a global audience for our bombast, and social media sites encourage it. We're all expected to be perfect all the time. The result is more people carefully stage-managing their online image.

"Boasting isn't just a problem on the Internet. In a society of unrelenting competition — where reality-show contestants duke it out for the approval of aging celebrities and pastors have publicists, is it any wonder we market ourselves relentlessly? In part, you can blame the economy. In the most competitive job market in memory, the lesson is clear: You must demonstrate — on multiple platforms — that you excel above all others.

"Changes in parenting style also play a role. Nowadays, every moment — first day of school, exhausted nap in the back set of the car — is documented. The problem is that these shared moments can easily come off as crowing about how great Mom and Dad are to have raised such an adorable kid.

"We've become so accustomed to boasting that we don't even realize what we're doing, and it's harmful to our relationships because it turns people off.

"So why keep it up?

"'We brag because we can,' says Julie Hanks, a licensed clinical social worker who has a therapy clinic in Salt Lake City. 'And a lot more people are listening.'

"People brag for all sorts of reasons, she says: to appear worthy of attention or love, or to try and coffer up our deepest insecurities. To prove to ourselves that we're OK, that people from our past who said we wouldn't measure up were wrong. Or simply because we're excited when good things happen to us.

"And talking about ourselves feels good. According to the results of a series of experiments conducted by Harvard University neuroscientists and published in May in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, the reward areas of our brain — the same areas that respond to 'primary

rewards' such as food and sex — are activated when we talk about ourselves. We devote between 30% and 40% of our conversation time to doing just that, according to the study" (Elizabeth Bernstein, *Are we all braggarts now?*, August 14, 2012, www.wsj.com).

4. Proud. "Ungodly and hateful pride is a growing reality in the modern world. Instead of emphasizing personal responsibility and gratitude, this world emphasizes self-worth and self-centeredness. From the time when Lucifer developed pride because of his beauty (Ezekiel 28:17) to today, when modern political candidates and celebrities flaunt their greatness, the entire span of history shows us how infectious and dangerous pride can be.

"Pride can also affect us in subtle ways. It is always lurking in the background of our lives, and we might not even be aware of it. Facebook and other social media can be amazing tools for staying connected with friends and family. However, social media can also be a breeding ground for personal pride. Pride can reveal its ugly face on social media outlets, by constantly checking to see how many people liked or commented on something we posted, or how many 'hits' we receive, and feeling upset if 'not enough' people responded" (Eddie and John Foster, *Three ways pride may be infecting us all*, www.lifehopeand-truth.com).

5. Blasphemers. Being abusive and speaking evil of others Social media is widely used nowadays, by about 72% of the United States population, and 50% of the world's population. This use of such a media has the effect of making people angrier and more extreme.

"For radicalization researchers, social media offer an interesting observational study. Research on face-to-face groups discovered that discussion among like-minded people radicalizes their average opinion. A group that starts out slightly pro-life ends up more pro-life; a group that starts out anti-guns ends up more so.

"Two forces radicalize opinions in group discussion. One is informational: people learn new arguments to support the opinions they already

hold. The second radicalizing force in group discussion is social: people admire and want to emulate those expressing the most extreme opinions.

"Social media discussions carry both informational and social aspects of group polarization. In news-related Twitter threads, tweets that offer new arguments supporting a particular attitude (useful facts, catchy metaphors, moral judgments) get more 'likes' and retweets. Twitter users learn relevant arguments to reinforce their own opinions. Users with more radical opinions get larger followings, precisely because their tweets use expletives and polarizing rhetoric. More radical individuals have more social influence.

"Social media are more radicalizing than face-to-face groups because they are larger collectives (more sources of information), and because in these large collectives there is more likelihood of



Television and radio commentators can be the most abusive purveyors of evil speaking, twisting the truth to pursue a selfish, evil agenda, especially in politics.

encountering radical individuals. There's a third reason social media groups are more radicalizing. In a face-to-face group, dissenters can be ignored or expelled — but only with some unpleasantness. On a social media platform, selection has no downside; just press the mute button or the block button.

"Some cases of social media radicalization have already come to light. The Arab Spring, the Ukrainian Revolution of 2014, and the Armenian revolution of 2018 evolved on social media, where opinions radicalized first, and then action was planned and coordinated. ISIS' use of social media to recruit fighters, wives, and supporters around

the globe resulted in thousands of Western youths traveling to Syria and Iraq. Russia used Facebook and Twitter to try to twist the U.S. electorate with radicalizing posts” (Sophie Moskalenka, Why social media makes us angrier — and more extreme, July 6, 2018, www.psychologytoday.com).

We cannot minimize, however, the blasphemy spewing from television and radio nowadays as the controlled, censored media spews forth lies and distortions of truth to attain a desired end, especially in politics to favor one candidate over another, or to push an agenda. This method of communication can also further the misinformation of pharmaceutical companies that attempt to hide the harm done by drugs and vaccines, when, for instance, these companies have refused until recently to turn over data showing that one-third of those taking one of the COVID shots in the U.S. reported adverse reactions to the V-Safe program of the CDN (V-Safe Covid vaccine adverse health impacts, Informed Consent Action Network, www.icandecide.org).

6. Disobedient to parents. “Parents are puzzled to find their four-year-old ordering them around like he’s [French King] Luis XIV, or their eight-year-old screaming, ‘I hate you’” (*American Educator*, www.aft.org).

“In times past, the family was a haven of love and support. There was no question about the roles and responsibilities of family members. Men were the breadwinners. Most women stayed home and cared for children and household chores. Together they taught their children values



Rebellion of children to the teachings of their parents can take many forms, and in today’s world is more common than ever.

and principles. Children were often too busy handling household chores to engage in serious mischief.

“The events since the outbreak of World War I in 1914 have shattered this idyllic picture. This age of travel places immense distances between family members who make individual trips. Freed by technological advances from much of the drudgery of housework, many women trade homemaking for a place in the job market. School teachers and day-care workers have become substitute parents. Children fight boredom as electrical appliances do the household chores.

“These recent developments have greatly increased family tensions. Divorce rates have skyrocketed. So has the incidence of one-parent households. One single mother says about the difficulty of raising a child alone: “By the time I get home from the office, my children have been out of school for three hours. There’s no way I can keep track of what they’re doing. I’m sure my 16-year-old daughter is having sex with a boy in her class, and that my 13-year-old son hangs out regularly after school at the local pool hall.

“Perhaps no other generation has been so obsessed with personal ‘rights.’ Pulitzer-prize-winning author Robert Coles said, ‘Many parents are afraid to bring up their children on their own — with their own convictions and their own moral faith. They’re intimidated by all these experts who write books about child rearing and tell them what to do.’ As victims of permissive child-rearing theories, parents find themselves pandering to the whims of their children...”

“Recently the National Institute for Mental Health issued a comprehensive report entitled, ‘Television and Behavior.’ The report showed that TV, besides bombarding minds with reckless violence and immorality, has other disturbing effects on family life. For example, ‘in a surprisingly large number of instances,’ the decision as to which show to watch is left to children, who ‘often have emerged as arbitrators of what the family will view; they have become family decisionmakers.’

“The book *Generation of Narcissus* claims there is another insidious side effect of TV. It states that because of television ‘children experience the so-called real world from a unique van-

tage point. It is a world which seemingly extends outward from their own bodies.' Yes, it may be that the child addicted to television develops a view of life that is entirely self-centered [and unreal].

"The increase of lawlessness among youths is one of the more obvious signs that some youths are revolting against parental authority. For example, it is reported that 'a quarter of all serious crimes in Greater London [England] are committed by school children.' In the United State, 'juvenile arrests for violent crimes ... increased 293% between 1960 and 1975; and the overall rate of juvenile arrests is growing 10% a year — twice the adult rate.' Reports from China tell of juvenile 'murder, fraud, theft, rape, drug trafficking, and rackets.'

"Some of this brazen violence is even being directed toward parents. Sociologist Richard J. Gelles helped conduct a study that revealed that 'more than 2.5 million adolescents [in the United States] were reported as having struck a parent at least once. Nearly 900,000 parents of adolescents ... were either punched, bit, kicked, hit with a hard object, beat up, or were threatened by or had a knife or a gun used on them'" (*The Urban & Social Change Review*, Volume 15, Number 1, 1982; Disobedience to parents — a sign of the last days?, www.wol.jw.org).

7. Unthankful. The lack of thanksgiving is a natural offshoot of our increasingly secular, humanistic society. We were told by the Apostle Paul in Romans 1:21 that because people do not glorify God they likewise are not thankful, and became futile in their thoughts, their hearts darkened. This attitude is the opposite of what Paul admonished the Philippians to do in Philippians 4:6:

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God"

People who do not acknowledge God as an active catalyst in their lives are going to be unthankful. In the period of 1944 to 2011, over 90% of

Americans said they believed in God, according to a long-running Gallup survey. However, a recent poll taken in 2022 shows that number has dropped to 81%. The sharpest drop was among young adults and those who identified as liberal and Democrats; these groups experienced a drop of 10 or more percentage points since the average value for 2013 to 2017. (Jeffrey Jones, Belief in God in U.S. drops to 81%, a new low, June 17, 2022, www.news.gallup.com).

One cannot separate those who believe in evolution from those naysayers cited above, for such people deny God as the Creator. These people would as a result be less thankful than those who understand that not only does God exist, but He is the One who made all that we see.

8. Unholy. Holiness, or reverence for the Creator God, is under attack today as never before. As stated in point 7, there is an exodus from the belief that God exists, and at the same time there has been a dramatic rise in the worship of Satan, the



Satanism is on the rise in the U.S. and world, with the grotesque icons of ancient Luciferianism making a comeback.

occult, and paganism.

"Membership in pagan, occultist, and Satanic worship organizations in America is on the rise. Three days following the 2016 presidential election the Satanic Temple (established in 2013), announced a sudden surge in membership of 50,000 people, bringing their total numbers to around 100,000. Observers and former members [of the Church of Satan] estimate its membership at 4 million in the U.S., and at least 10 million worldwide. In the meantime, interest in witchcraft, Wicca, and other forms of paganism has grown to

epic proportions. A 2010 census revealed witchcraft as the fourth-largest religion in America, with approximately 200,000 registered witches and an estimated 8 million unregistered practitioners. While pagans and the occultists promote a more indirect, and even at times unacknowledged worship of Satan, Satanism is thought to embrace him more openly. However, with a strong sense of irony— perhaps even a predictable one — both the Temple of Satan and the Church of Satan ‘officially’ deny their namesake’s existence even as they commonly invoke his name in many of their ‘worship’ rituals.

“If Bishop Sheen was correct, perhaps it is only natural that the two largest organizations promoting Satan’s beliefs and his adulation would actively disavow his reality, while at the same time depict him as a being deserving of our respect and admiration. Regardless of one’s beliefs, the fact is that Satan has cleaned up his act — he is going ‘mainstream’ — and is seen as admirable, cultivated, and even cool.

“[The Church of Satan has] introduced the ‘After School Satan Clubs,’ an extracurricular program designed to counter what is roughly characterized as the evangelical Christian influence on schools across America. According to its website:

‘It’s important that children be given an opportunity to realize that the evangelical materials now creeping into their schools are representative of but one religious opinion amongst many After School Satan Clubs will focus on free inquiry and rationalism, the scientific basis for which we know what we know about the world around us. We prefer to give children an appreciation of the natural wonders surrounding them, not a fear of

everlasting other-worldly horrors.’” (Joseph Baity, *The Satanic surge*, *World Watch*, June 8, 2017, www.cgg.org).

Alongside the rise of Satanism in the modern world has been the horrible plague of the murder of pre-born children. Approximately 125,000 innocent lives are snuffed out each day worldwide, for an estimated 40 to 50 million deaths each year (www.worldometers.info). Over 64,000,000 such murders have occurred in the U.S. since the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, while close to 2 billion (yes, that is *billion!*) children’s lives are estimated to have been terminated worldwide since the mid-1970s. (1.72 billion abortions worldwide in the

last 40 years, April 1, 2013 (www.lifesite news.com; Number of abortions — Abortion counters, November 13, 2022, www.numberof abortions.com).

These child sacrifices are the modern version of child burnings of Baal, Molech, and the other gods of the pagans, as described in Jeremiah 3-6 and elsewhere, and are a vivid symptom of unholiness. These deaths

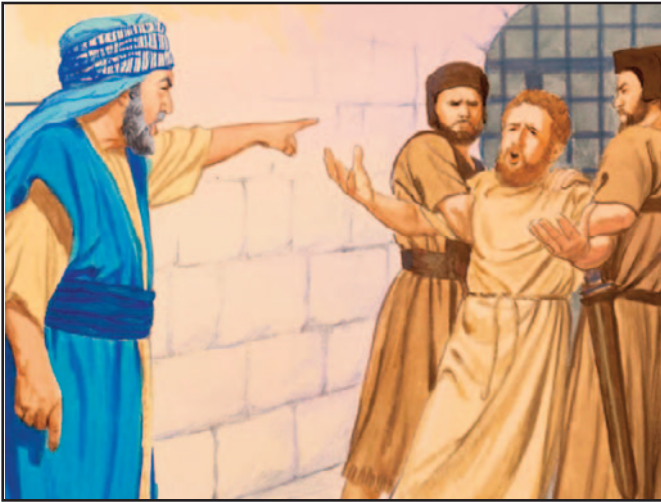
represent a direct affront to the God of creation who made mankind in His own image, and commissioned him to “Be fruitful and multiply ...” (Genesis 1:28; 9:1), and to worship only the one true God, and not murder one’s fellow man (Exodus 20:2-6, 13). These child sacrifices are increasing year by year as more nations are condoning such evil, and the sanctity of life continues to be attacked. Besides these deaths, we have no figure of the number of older children sacrificed in pagan Satanic rituals even today.

9. Unloving. Also termed “without natural affection,” this word is well described by the *Journal of the American Medical Association* magazine (www.research.com): “Family violence is the dom-



Child sacrifices to Baal and Molech in ancient times is little different than the murder of unborn children in today’s world.

inant factor in the everyday life of communities around the world.” We can add to that the fact that divorce rates are at high levels, even though a husband and wife by inborn nature are made to desire one another (Genesis 2:22-25; 3:16) Thirty-seven percent of Caucasian men and women experience divorce at least once during their lifetimes, with other ethnic groups experiencing divorce to a greater or lesser degree. In the



A lack of forgiveness plagues the modern world, perhaps even more than in ages past, like in the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Matthew 18:21-35).

U.S., from 1901 to 1906 the divorce rate was 0.08%. By 1940 that rate had crept up to 0.20%, and in 1946, right after WWII the rate shot up to 0.43%. The rate thereafter dropped, but shot up again, to 0.52% by 1980. While the rate of broken marriages is currently declining, that decline is explained by lower marriage rates and a growing acceptance of “shacking up” by unmarried couples. Very few couples lived together before the 1970s, but by 2018 almost half of young adults aged 20 to 40 were cohabiting instead of marrying, preferring to live in sin rather than follow Biblical standards. (Increased number of unmarried couples living together, November 20, 2018, www.study-mode.com; Jennifer Betts, Historical Divorce Rate, Statistics, July 10, 1918, www.divorce.lovetoknow.com). This is a nearly 1,000% increase in cohabitation at the same time that the marriage rate has dropped by more than 40% since 1960.

Add to this the broken home problem In 2017, 34.1% of U.S. fathers were under orders to

pay child support, but only 72.9% of these children actually were receiving this support (Brandon Gaille, 25 important deadbeat dads statistics, May 24, 2017, www.brandongaille.com). Deadbeat moms are also prevalent. A lack of natural affection is severely lacking and growing within so many families, and children lacking respect for their parents is a growing trend as well.

10. Unforgiving. Trucebreaking This term ties in closely with point 9 above, in that the vows said at marriage are often tossed aside as marriage partners go their separate ways. While truces have been broken by agreeing parties throughout human history, the lack of trust is common in our big-business, materialistic world, where moral integrity is compromised when selfish gain is in the balance. There is no lack of increase in trucebreaking and a lack of forgiveness in today’s world. Evidence of this fact can be seen by the number of lawsuits filed each year. According to the National Center for State Courts, in 2018 there were about 3 million contract cases, 2 million small claims cases, 700,000 probate/estate cases, and 300,000 tort cases filed (Anthony DeWitt, How many lawsuits are filed in the U.S. each year?, www.quora.com). To prosecute these cases, there were about 1.3 million lawyers, a number that has increased steadily for decades (Number of lawyers in the United States from 2007 to 2022, www.statista.com).

Compare this with the statement of Jesus in Matthew 5:25: “Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and be thrown into prison.” Nowadays trials and judgments are oftentimes strung out for months and years. For instance, in Maine a young man has been waiting in jail for nearly 2 1/2 years after his arrest. He is one of more than 26,000 pending felony and misdemeanor cases in Maine courts as of March 25, 2022 (Emily Allan, Backlogs causing delays in thousands of Maine court cases, April 3, 2022, www.centralmaine.com).

11. Slanderers. The tendency for people to falsely accuse others of something they did not do

is tied to a breakdown in moral ethics, inherent to a godless age. As belief and trust in the Creator has waned over the past decades, so has the increase in slanderous activity, especially by the mainstream media when it attempts to picture opponents of the Democratic Party as evil agents of disinformation ... when in reality these accusers are guilty of the very crimes of which they accuse others. This is a ploy used by Satan the devil, and he is termed "... the accuser of the brethren, who accused them before our God day and night ..." (Revelation 12:10). "When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it" (John 8:44). As the work of Satan have multiplied in this end time, so have his slanderous attacks on the innocent multiplied, along with those of his minions in governments, the media, and in all phases of society.

12. Without self-control. As one newspaper reported, "Many stories that occur on the newspaper's front page every morning reflect minds lacking self-control, moral fiber, and mercy towards

their fellow human beings and even themselves If our society continues to favor aggression the way it is now, our society will soon enter a phase of moral annihilation" (*The Bangkok Post*, Bangkok, Thailand, www.bangkokpost.com).

The violence of out-of-control mob organizations such as ANTIFA and Black Lives Matter — which are affiliated with the Communist takeover efforts in the U.S. — illustrates this spirit of loss of self-control by the people captured by the senseless mentality of these organizations bent on destruction: arson, destroying property, spewing verbal venom, and other crazed antics. Not until recently has such widespread and organized destructiveness raised its head in the U.S.

13. Brutal. The widespread fierceness and brutality of people have been noteworthy in recent years. "Irrational anger and uncontrolled rage [are] seen on the road, in abuse within families ... and [in] the apparently gratuitous and unnecessary violence which often accompanies crime. Violence is experienced as random and unpredictable and people are left feeling disconnected and vulnerable" (*Business Day* newspaper, South Africa, www.bdlive.co.za).

Also we read, "A historic rise in homicides in 2020 — and continued bloodshed in 2021 — has incited fears that after years of plummeting crime rates, the U.S. could be headed back to the bad old days, when a crime wave gripped the country



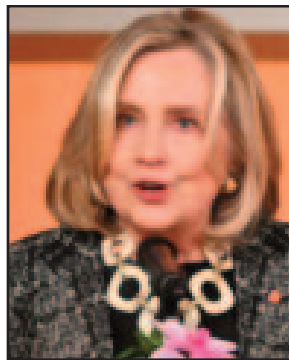
Crime is epidemic in today's world, especially since left-wing politicians and violence-oriented groups like ANTIFA have been able to operate unmolested.

from the 1970s to the 1990s. But the FBI's 'Uniform Crime Report' for 2020 released Monday suggests something stranger: Perhaps America is in the midst of what is specifically a violence wave, not a broad crime wave. Even as violent crime rose, led by significant jumps in murders and aggravated assaults, property crime continued a years-long decline.

"There was no crime wave — there was a tsunami of lethal violence, and that's it.' Philip Cook, a crime expert at Duke University, wrote to me in an email. "The murder rate rose by nearly 30 percent, the largest increase on record. There were about 21,500 murders, or 6.5 per 100,000 people. Aggravated assault, the most common form of violent crime, rose 12 percent. Among other components of the violent-crime rate, robbery actually decreased and rape reports were flat. But property crimes overall fell 8 percent, led by drops in burglary and larceny — though motor-vehicle theft increased.

"One factor in the shocking increase in vio-

lence is very clear: “The rise in violence in 2020 appears to be almost entirely a rise in gun violence, rather than a more general increase in all forms of crime,” the Princeton sociologist Patrick Sharkey wrote to me in an email” (David Graham, America is having a violence wave, not a crime wave, *The Atlantic*, www.theatlantic.com).



Traitors throughout history have sought to undercut the trust of those who placed them in authority, and undermine the liberties of free men and women. L to R: Vidkun Quisling, Benedict Arnold, and Hillary Clinton.

14. Despisers of good. With an increase in lawless behavior and the rejection of God’s authority in their lives, is it any wonder that people who practice good would be despised? Psalm 37:12 states, “The wicked plots against the just, and gnashes at him with his teeth” (see also Psalm 35:16), and Proverbs 29:27 agrees : “And he who is upright in the way is an abomination to the wicked.” Therefore as is related in point 13, with an increase nowadays in brutality and fierceness by wicked people, there will naturally arise an animosity towards those whose aim is to serve the living God. Yet, we read in I John 3:15 that even hating one’s brother is murder.

According to one source, “Acts of violence based on religion or belief are on the increase globally. This includes atrocities that amount to genocide and crimes against humanity. While such acts of violence (and also severe deprivation of human rights) affect all religious groups (especially minority religious groups), over the recent months report after report has been raising the issues that relate to the persecution of Christians globally.

“A recent report, produced by the Bishop of

Truro for the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, identified ‘a global phenomenon of discriminatory behavior and physical attacks, some sadly deadly, on Christian children, women, and men, often from the world’s poorest communities.’ Studies consistently show that Christians suffer significantly higher levels of persecution and intolerance” (Ewelina Ochab, The rising trend of Christian persecution, *Religion Unplugged*, December 3, 2019, www.religionunplugged.com).

15. Traitors. This word can mean “betrayor” or “treacherous.” While we are familiar with certain traitors in history like Guy Fawkes (the Gunpowder Plot of 1605), Benedict Arnold (an American soldier turned spy for the British in the Revolutionary War), Mata Hari (a British and French agent who passed secrets to Germany in WWI), and Vidkun

Quisling (a Norwegian who supported Nazi Germany’s conquest of Norway in WWII), the rise in traitorous activity in today’s world is noteworthy.

In more recent times we see personalities like Hillary Clinton, Barak Obama, and Joe Biden who thumb their noses at the guarantees of the U.S. Constitution, and attempt to force an agenda that is akin to Communism and the World Economic Forum, whose goals are to destroy the Constitutional Republic and forge a one-world totalitarian government.

Scripture is replete with treachery as well, as David wrote in Psalm 55:12-14:

“For it is not an enemy who reproaches me; then I could bear it. Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me; then I could hide from him. But it was you, a man my equal, my companion and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in the throng.”

And, of course, Jesus Christ was betrayed by Judas Iscariot the night before He was crucified

(Matthew 26:47-49). He also told us that in the end time many people would be offended for the sake of His name, and would betray and hate one another (Matthew 24:9-10). This same attitude is present in today's world where, as times grow more difficult with food shortages, disease outbreaks, wars, and various calamities, people without the character and spirit of God will betray those who may have been their friends before, but to avoid incarceration or death will deny Christ's name and join Babylon's race towards destruction.

16. Headstrong. The trend towards rashness and recklessness among the world's population in modern times is perhaps best expressed by the incidence of violent crime, excessive eating and drinking, sexual perversions, and child murder.

"The escalation of various forms of crime, which is causing a paralyzing fear in many parts of the world, represents a significant fulfillment of Christ's prediction regarding the increased wickedness before His Return. Many persons today, as Christ predicted, are 'fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world' (Luke 21:26). The frightening increase in wickedness points to the impending judgment which Christ will soon execute upon evildoers at His Coming.

"The excessive eating and drinking of our time, which are causing untold human suffering and deaths, represent a unique end time sign. They tell us that we are living at the time predicted by Christ, when, as in the days of Noah, many are abandoning any self-restraint in their search for self-gratification. They show us that we are living 'in the last days' predicted by Paul when many would be 'lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God' (II Timothy 3:4)" (Samuel Bacchiocchi, *The end time signs of increased wickedness*, www.biblesabbath.org).

The issues of marital recklessness and infant murder have been covered earlier. What has not been discussed is sexual perversions. "The Biblical condemnation of homosexuality as sin and perversion of God's intended function of sex is vigorously attacked by aggressive organizations such as the Gay Liberation Movement. These organiza-

tions have come out of their closets and turned their former shames into militant aggression. With much skill and determination they have succeeded in promoting homosexuality as simply another legitimate form of sexual relations" (Bacchiocchi, see above).

All over the world nations come to accept perversions as acceptable. "It is not surprising that they should have succeeded in our sex-obsessed society in winning considerable professional and popular approval. No amount of rationalization, however, can legitimize what God unequivocally condemns as 'abomination'" (Bacchiocchi, *Increase in homosexuality a sign of the "end time,"* www.modernghana.com).

This reckless, sinful behavior now infects perhaps 5 to 10% of the adult population in populous areas, though the percentage is less than 1% in rural states such as Wyoming and South Dakota. No one really knows the percentage, but it is increasing as governments and private organizations push the LGBTQ agenda. The United States is a leader in this push. These organizations and efforts could not possibly have even been considered only a few decades ago.

17. Haughty. This term is also translated "conceited" or "proud." Along with the other increasingly prominent traits of the end time, haughtiness can be seen among many people. The term is the opposite of humility, which is an attitude that is essential to draw close to God.

"'For all these things My hand has made, and all these things exist,' says the Lord. 'But on this one will I look, on him who is poor [humble] and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word'" (Isaiah 66:2).

Jesus Christ also said, "Blessed are the poor [humble] in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). This is the attitude He possessed, thinking of others as being better than Himself (Philippians 2:3-5) to the point that he got down on the floor and washed the disciples' feet (John 13:3-16), showing that the servant is the greatest in the eyes of the Creator.

Such an attitude is hardly encouraged today, whereas the opposite is revered and put on display among many actors, athletes, politicians, and business people. Those who are the physically strongest and fastest, most beautiful, richest, biggest property owners, politically powerful, and most-well-known are lifted up by the media and others as the greatest. Take a look at the wealth of some of these few individuals.

Elon Musk — \$203 billion
 Bernard Arnault — \$138 billion
 Gautam Adani — \$125 billion
 Jeff Bezos — \$126 billion
 Bill Gates — \$111 billion
 Warren Buffett — \$103 billion
 Larry Ellison — \$94 billion
 Larry Page — \$88 billion

These people are applauded due to their incredible wealth, which will never satisfy their inner cravings for love and respect before their Creator. The same goes for popular figures in entertainment and sports, such as Leonardo DiCaprio, Tom Cruise, Tom Hanks, Clint Eastwood, Steven Spielberg, Pele, Jesse Owens, Mohammad Ali, Babe Ruth, and Michael Jordan.

In politics we see Mohandas Gandhi, Winston Churchill, Alexander the Great, Louis XIV, and Cleopatra as being highly popular.

Yet, none of them as far as we know can boast of a humble, contrite attitude that drew them close to the Creator. So many fall prey to pride and emptiness, drug and alcohol abuse and broken homes and marriages. This slide towards pride in today's world has been made possible by a media that is friendly to humanism, and praises those with wealth and power ... which is just an illusion, but one that nevertheless is advertised far and wide. After all, Satan is the "prince of the power of the air [waves]" (Ephesians 2:2), and he will promote those following his own prideful heart (Isaiah 14:13-14; Ezekiel 28:12-18, Job 41:34). With a censored media that is Satan's mouthpiece

— who is the father of lies (John 8:44) — which has gained considerable power and influence these past few decades, it is no wonder that a whole generation is being encouraged to emulate the pride and haughtiness of the Adversary.

"A small number of companies own most of the media and entertainment organizations in the U.S. The media only gives us the illusion of choice. Instead of hearing a variety of opinions, we are getting the opinions of a small group. These companies have a huge influence on people's political beliefs and perceptions of reality. They create the echo chamber that many Americans live in.

"Five corporations control 90% of U.S. media. The media landscape of the United States has become greatly consolidated over the past few dec-



The ultra-rich in this world have notoriety and wield power and influence, but few of these people will inherit salvation since their trust is in things. L to R: Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, and Leonardo DiCaprio.

ades. About 50 years ago, 90% of the U.S. media was owned by 50 companies. However, due to a series of mergers and acquisitions, 90% of the media we consume is now owned by just five mass media conglomerates" (Media consolidation: How five companies control the media, June 23, 2021, www.politicalnonpartisan.com).

18. Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. "Sexual liberation has become a moral crusade, in which Christian morality is the enemy" (*Boundless* Internet magazine, www.focusonthefamily.boundless.org).

The love of pleasure is usually tied to increases in material goods, which leads to a loss of faith in the Creator, as the rich farmer experienced in Luke 12:16-21.

“Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: ‘The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. and he thought within himself, saying, “What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?” So he said, “I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.’” But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’”

A person cannot serve two masters — material things and God. As Matthew 6:24 states,

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

We are instead told to first seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all of the things we need will be given to us (Matthew 6:33). We need to put the horse [God] in front of the cart



Many people in today’s world attend church services, thinking they are doing God a service, without understanding the nature of The Creator or their responsibility before Him to obey seven days a week.

[our needs].

“The word *hedonos* is only used five times in the New Testament, and each time, it conjures up the picture of people completely preoccupied with pleasure and who live for the gratification of their flesh and their own personal happiness. The *English Dictionary* says ‘hedonism’ is *the doctrine that pleasure or happiness is the highest good; addiction to and obsession for pleasure as a way of life*. Paul used the Greek word *philodonos* [lovers of pleasure] to say that society in the last days will become ‘lovers of pleasure,’ or that they will become preoccupied and obsessed with the pursuit of their own comfort, pleasure, and happiness. The truth is, there has never been a generation in history with more material goods or comfort than this present generation. Yet, despite this glut of goods and pursuit of pleasure, the worldwide happiness index is the lowest on record, especially in the industrialized world where material goods abound” (Rich Kenner, *Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God*, www.renner.org).

In fact, people in Third-World countries that possess fewer material goods are happier, in general, than people in the Western world who are buried in material things.

19. Having a form of godliness but denying its power. A former prostitute in the Netherlands “... acknowledged that opposition to legalization [of prostitution] comes largely from religious groups. She paused, then said with a grin that when she was a prostitute, several [religious] ministers were among her regulars. ‘Prostitutes always say their best clients are from the religious community,’ she laughed” (*National Catholic Reporter*, ncronline.org).

We should note that the sexual exploitation of children by Catholic priests has been reported widely in recent decades. But, this exploitation has not been limited to just the ranks of Catholics, but rather it is found amongst Protestant groups as well. We are also familiar with the revelations of adultery by Robbie Zacharias, Jim Bakker, Jimmy Swaggart, Bill Gothard, and others

People can attend church services regularly, sing hymns, pray in their own way, and

have all the trappings of a Christian on the outside, but as Isaiah indicates in Isaiah 1:12 and 14,

“When you come to appear before Me, who has required this from your hand, to trample My courts? Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; they are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them.”

The Pharisees were not less guilty of “having a form of godliness“ without acknowledging its power. They loved to be called rabbi, make long prayers, tithe on even the smallest amounts of mint and cummin, and dress elegantly, but Jesus castigated them by saying, “For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence” (Matthew 23:25).

As in ancient days, those claiming to be Godly but denying His power in the way they live are alive and well today, more abundant than ever. Many preachers of the “gospel of wealth” are among them, and while I cannot judge them, preachers like Kenneth Copeland with a \$760 million net worth, three luxurious private jets, and a 1,500-acre campus for Kenneth Copeland Ministries appear to be accumulating wealth for themselves. Others include T.D. Jakes, Pat Robertson, Benny Hin, Jesse Duplantis, Joel Osteen, Joyce Meyer, John Hagee, and Rick Warren (Akil Dathorne, Holy millions: 10 richest celebrity preachers in the world, December 14, 2021, www.the richest.com).

Most so-called Christians, while not so wealthy, will attend a Sunday Protestant or Catholic church service, or watch on-line, then go golfing or fishing in the afternoon, and live their lives the other six days of the week without regard to the laws of God, and their responsibility to observe His Sabbaths, love one’s neighbor, and visit orphans and widows in their trouble (James 1:27).

But Know This, That in the Last Days

We have seen by the evidence shown in this paper that the warnings of the nature of people at

the end of the age are coming to pass right now! The character of self-love, boasting, pride, unforgiveness, and brutality is increasing in people all around us in today’s world ... not that such traits have not been present throughout history. Even at the very beginning of this eon Cain slew Abel, but nowadays the nature of people has been degenerating at a rapid pace. Truly, the slide towards anarchy and chaos has accelerated these past years, and appears to be picking up speed to indicate that the end of the age and the return of Jesus Christ and the resurrection are imminent. Might we say that He is “... at the doors” (Matthew 24:33)?

This fact should be a sobering reminder for all of us to renew our efforts each day to draw close to our Creator, and to diligently follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ (I John 2:6). Above all, we are admonished in II Timothy 3:5, right after all of these traits of the end of the age are laid out, to “... from such people turn away!” Do not be friends of those living by fleshly lusts in the world, for as Proverbs 22:24-25 warns,

“Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul.”

Let us not learn the ways of lawless people in the world, but be friends with brethren seeking the mind of our heavenly Father. Let us heed the admonition of Jesus’ brother in James 4:4.

“Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”