

SURVIVAL 1

Time of Trouble and Survival

Study by W. D. Frazee

This is a series on things that lie between us and the coming of Jesus. The subject is survival.

Three years before World War II, as the storm clouds were gathering over the world, there was a man who was looking around for a place where he might retire in safety. He thought there would be trouble in Europe. He looked at other parts of the world. There was something wrong with every place he considered. He finally settled on an island out in the Pacific. There he built himself what he thought was a safe place of retirement.

The Island's name was Guadalcanal. Some of the bloodiest battles of World War II were fought on that island.

The man had a good idea, but his problem was that he didn't know the right place. He didn't know the program of coming events. He wasn't able to make a wise choice.

We have a searchlight on the road ahead which, if you and I will pay attention to, we can avoid the mistake of this man:

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" 2 Peter 1:19.

The future is always dark to the mind that cannot see ahead. It is dark in the sense that it is uncertain. It is dark with fear, tension, strife, uncertainty. But we have a sure word of prophecy. It shines. It is a light in a dark place. It illumines the road ahead.

We want to focus that prophetic searchlight on the pilgrim way that lies between us and the coming of our Lord. Solomon says:

"A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished" Proverbs 22:3.

Oh, I hope we will be wise men and look ahead, see what is ahead, and get ready for it. What do you say?

I want everyone of you to be survivors in the great trouble that is ahead. You and I are destined to see the greatest financial panic of this world's history and not lose our riches. We shall see the greatest famine in six thousand years of this world's history and not starve. We shall experience the greatest earthquake of all time and not be touched by it. We shall witness the greatest war in the history of the world and not be slain in it. We are going to see the greatest pestilences and not be sick. We are going to experience the greatest boycott and not be strangled by it. We are going to witness the greatest miracle, wrought by Satan, to deceive the world, and not be taken in the snare. Yes, we are to experience all these things and more and not fall or fail, provided we see what is ahead and make provision for it.

I want you to be among the survivors. I want you to see a picture of this time that is just ahead, and watch for the survivors. There is a picture of the survivors, and you can be among them.

"Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him. The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word. The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left" Isaiah 24:1-6.

Few men are left. When the whole earth is burned from pole to pole there are going to be some survivors. Do you know how to survive it?

You have read of some of the great earthquakes in history. The Lisbon earthquake in 1755. The great Japanese earthquake of 1923. Tens of thousands of lives lost in those great catastrophes. But the greatest earthquake ever seen is predicted in the last verses of Revelation 16. It is going to shake every island and mountain in this world. Millions will be buried under the falling buildings and rocks as they come crashing down. But you can be one of the few survivors of that earthquake. Do you know the way?

Think of the economic struggle that is just ahead; the boycott I mentioned. You can read about it in Revelation 13. How can you and I go through this world in a time when we cannot buy or sell?

That particular point sounds easy for those who will receive the mark of the beast. But you and I are not planning to receive it, are we? Then how will we get through? How will we survive? This is the problem. And do not think that this problem of survival is something we leave with the Lord while we take the pullman and go to sleep and ask Him to please call us when the train pulls into Grand Central Station.

Oh, no. There is a problem of survival in these many situations that you and I must know God's plan. If we understand His plan of survival, we can be among the survivors economically, physically, spiritually. But notice that there will only be a few survivors.

To find a parallel for this we must go back to the great flood that covered the earth in the days of Noah. Jesus said that the time we are talking about would be like the days of Noah (Matthew 24). It was a great catastrophe. It affected everybody in this world. And there were few men left. Very few. So shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

I remind you that provision had been made for many survivors. Oh, how happy God would have been to save everybody. He would be happy to save everybody today. He is not willing that anyone should perish. He takes no delight in the suffering or loss or death of any of His creatures. And although He is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, nevertheless:

"The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" 2 Peter 3:10.

There is another phase to this experience of survival that must come even closer to our hearts than anything I have mentioned so far:

"When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done" Isaiah 24:13.

The prophet sees the coming time of test as the shaking of an olive tree. Do you know what that olive tree is? Paul uses the symbol of the olive tree to represent the true Israel of God (Romans 11:24). This is the church. God's true church is going to experience a most terrible shaking. A mighty shaking. And in the

shaking there are some who will not let go.

Oh, what it will mean to live through the time when multitudes leave the church because of persecution or mighty miracles of deception. I want to study these things with you in this survival series. We need to know what is ahead. Our greatest peril does not lie in the earthquake or the pestilence. It does not lie in war or economic struggle. Our greatest peril lies in this problem of how to be among those few olives that stay on the tree instead of the multitude that are shaken out. This is the problem of survival. Will you be among those that stay with the remnant church?

Someone says, I know I will.

You remember that just before He went to Gethsemane and the cross Jesus gathered His little band of disciples together and told them that there was a mighty shaking and sifting just ahead for them. He said to Peter:

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat" Luke 22:31.

He foretold that in the crisis hour the pressure would be so great that they would forsake Him and flee.

Peter said, Lord, I will never do that. I know I will stick with You no matter how hard they shake the tree. I will not shake loose. I will be right there.

What happened? When the tree was shaken Peter fell to the ground. What it will be in the crisis hour ahead to see men who were born with responsibilities such as Peter bore, to see men close to the Master like John was fail. How can you and I be sure to be among the survivors? Oh, I want you to have a certain hope. Not a bold, boastful confidence such as Peter had. That will not carry you through. But a humble, trustful faith in Jesus, and an experience such as Christ Himself had.

Concerning the remnant who go through the time of trouble ahead it is written:

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" Revelation 14:12.

They not only keep God's commandments, they have Jesus' faith. They have the same faith He had. They will need it.

The struggles we go through are more like the struggles our Lord went through than any other group of people in the history of

the world. So the problem of survival has many facets. I pray that God will lead us step by step in this study.

I have put a simple diagram representing three different steps in what lies ahead; three different periods covering the time from now until the coming of Jesus.

Notice there is first a short time of trouble. That is spoken of in *Early Writings*. I wish you would study it.

"At the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth and proclaimed the Sabbath more fully. . . .

"`The commencement of that time of trouble' here mentioned, does not refer to the time when the plagues shall begin to be poured out, but to a short period just before they are poured out, while Christ is in the sanctuary. At that time, while the work of salvation is closing, trouble will be coming on the earth, and the nations will be angry, yet held in check so as not to prevent the work of the third angel. At that time the `latter rain,' or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, will come, to give power to the loud cry of the third angel, and prepare the saints to stand in the period when the seven last plagues shall be poured out" *Early Writings*, pages 85,86.

These few sentences have sufficient material to study for several hours. I can only refer to them now. We shall study them more fully in future lessons.

But notice there is a period spoken of just before the plagues are poured out. Christ is still in the sanctuary during this short time of trouble. He is not in the sanctuary when the plagues are poured out.

This leads us into the second period I want you to notice. The great time of trouble, or the time of Jacob's trouble. If you and I are part of the Israel of God we will have to go through it. Jesus won't be in the sanctuary then. How are we going to get through that time without Jesus in the sanctuary?

After the time of Jacob's trouble, beginning with the opening of the seventh plague, comes the greatest war in all earth's history (Revelation 19).

I want you to see these three periods: The short time of trouble while Jesus is still in the sanctuary. Trouble is coming upon the earth, yet the nations are held in check so as not to prevent the work of the third angel. At this time the latter rain falls. At this time the loud cry is given. At this time all the

true hearted are gathered into the fold. It is going to be a wonderful time, but it is going to be a testing time. The olive tree is going to be shaken. Then comes the close of probation and we enter into the ordeal of Jacob's trouble. Then we go into earth's last war.

Each of these periods has something in it to prepare for what follows. Even earth's last war is the preparation for our trip to heaven. Those who survive earth's last war will take a wonderful space trip.

But before we are prepared to enter earth's last war we must go through Jacob's trouble and pass that test successfully. And before we can enter Jacob's trouble we must first go through the test of the short time of trouble and experience the wonderful blessings that come during the latter rain and loud cry time.

Before any of these three times come there is a work of preparation. That belongs to the present hour. That belongs to now. As the sure word of prophecy focuses its searchlight upon the road ahead and shows us these three great testing periods, it also shows us how to get ready now for what is coming tomorrow.

Psalm 46 is one of the great survival psalms. This psalm will be sung during the great time of trouble that is just ahead:

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah" Psalm 46:1-3.

Those who sing this song know where their help is, and even if everything in the world is giving way, they are not afraid. They are survivors. They live through these times of trouble. They do not go down.

If you were the master teacher, how would you get a group of students ready to pass a final examination like we have been looking at? As our boys were called into World War II, drafted by the millions for service overseas, they were put through a period of training. Some of you may have gone through that. The government did not say, These boys are going to have a hard time over in the jungles of the tropics or the deserts of Africa, or in terrible scenes of warfare invading the European continent. So we will give them an easy time here. That was not the program. It would not have been a good program. It would have been very poor.

After men had been trained in the experiences of the battle-field, they had to crawl on their stomachs through barbed wire with

live bullets spraying over their heads from machine guns. They knew that is they got up they would be killed. Occasionally someone got fearful and did that very thing.

You say, How terrible.

Indeed. But what was the purpose of it? To get those men ready so that when they got into battle they would not be so green they would not know what to do.

Will the greatest General of the universe know how to train His soldiers for success in earth's last war? Will He get us ready for a time of trouble such as this world has never seen by seeing to it that we don't have any troubles at all until the last war breaks?

What is the purpose then of trial? What is the propose of troubles that beset us? Are you having any problems?

Someone says, Oh, if you only knew.

God knows. And thank our heavenly Father, He has laid help upon One that is mighty. We have a great High Priest that has passed into heaven, Jesus, the Son of God.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" Hebrews 4:16.

The survivors in the great time of trouble will be those who have learned how to survive in the little troubles in daily life, in the home, the school, the factory, the shop, the office, wherever the providence of God has placed them.

If you are willing you will be taken through a training for survival.

How are you making it? Are you learning that the answer to every problem is in Jesus? Are you learning to sing this song? God is our refuge, a very present help in trouble.

Oh, for this He lives. For this He died. For this He rose. For this He pleads. For this He intercedes that you and I may know Him as a present help in trouble.

Oh, may God bless us in learning this lesson now so we may go through a greater test tomorrow, and a still greater test beyond.

And finally we will be among those survivors who will travel with Him all through the universe, and tell the wonderful story of the last battle of the great controversy.

Dear Father, we thank Thee for light on the road ahead. We thank Thee for light in the sanctuary above. We choose to lift our eyes, and lift our hearts.

Oh, we thank Thee for a Saviour who lives to make intercession for us. We know that as we place our little hands into His great hands, He will lead us and never let us go. We thank Thee in His name, Amen.

