

# Flee the Cities

#0719

Study by W.D. Frazee, August 30, 1965

I have brought with me the last three issues of *News Week* magazine. I call your attention to something very interesting. The headline article in the first issue is titled *Crime in the Streets*. There is a picture of a policeman rounding up criminals. The leading article says that J. Edgar Hoover, the head of the FBI, reports that every category of crime is on the increase. Since 1958 crime has spiraled up at a rate five times that of the population. The cost is tens of billions annually. Murder, robbery, and many other crimes are rising all the time. That was in *News Week* of August 16.

In *News Week* of August 23 the leading article is the water crisis. In New York City, and all the region about is in a great water crisis. They predicted that the huge upstate systems of reservoirs would be dry by next February. They are down to forty-three percent in capacity. There are twenty million people who are in danger from lack of water. It is the greatest concentration of population anywhere in the country. Yet right by New York City flows the great Hudson River. It is an open running sewer. It is so polluted with industrial waste, human waste, and city waste that people realize it is impossible to get water from that river.

Then *News Week* from August 30 has a headline about the riots in Los Angeles. A fifty square mile piece of the city of angels, after four nights of fury, turned into a nightmare. Whole blocks are lying in rubble and ashes. Thirty-six dead, nine hundred injured, two hundred million dollars in property damage.

Going back to last month, the *US News and World Report* of July 5 says that death is in the air in New York City. New Yorkers have been given the grim warning that the air they breathe may be killing them. Reports cite air pollution as a factor in the rising death rate from lung cancer and respiratory diseases. Each month an average of sixty tons of dust falls on each square mile of the city. Crops are being damaged. Trees and shrubs along the highways are being killed. Even a layman can draw one basic conclusion that the air they breathe is killing them. In fact, by testing the air in New York City they reached the conclusion that everybody on the streets gets as much of a cancer producing hydrocarbon as if they smoked two packs of cigarettes a day.

Then from the same issue there is an article about noise. More than three American men out of five have lost some hearing. They will never get it back, and they are likely to lose more and more. This is the conclusion of the director of the hearing and speech center of the American Medical Association. The reason is the increasing noise of modern life, particularly in the cities. The director's conclusion is that it is a noisy world, and getting noisier.

*News Week* of July 5, 1965 has a similar report on the air pollution of New York City. The new issue of *Reader's Digest* has a leading article on the

investigation of air pollution and waste in the great cities of our country. Air pollution is rapidly growing worse in some seven thousand communities according to the public health service. It speaks especially of the area from Portland, Maine to Richmond, Virginia which is one great metropolitan area. It contains thirty-eight million people, and presents one of the world's greatest air pollution problem. This area is so thickly overcast with pollutants that frequently no portion of its six hundred and forty-five miles in length can be navigated visually from the air. Airplanes can't see the cities below. They are all covered with smoke and dust and smog. And what disturbs health authorities most is not that pilots cannot see through the soup, but that people are breathing it.

As I have been looking at some of these reports again and again my mind turns to Jeremiah.

“For death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without, and the young men from the streets” Jeremiah 9:21.

All of this is getting worse and worse, and will get worse in Los Angeles and Portland and Seattle, in Chicago and New York City, and in every city in this world. It is all a fulfillment of the second angel's message which we repeat from time to time

“And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” Revelation 14:8.

The cities are falling. They have fallen, and they will fall. I am glad that God doesn't leave us without a prediction of this old world. He tells us what to do:

“And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” Revelation 18:1-4.

If we choose to remain in these cities we must share in their destruction. It is true that God is going to take His people away from this planet because the whole world will soon be unfit for life. It is also true that while we are on this planet, God has a plan for those who will listen to escape much of the trouble. And if we will

listen and understand God's plan, oh, what a blessing we can have. I want that blessing, don't you?

Does anybody have a loved one in New York City? Does anybody have a loved one in Los Angeles? Does anybody have a loved one in some other great city? I thought of dear Abraham sitting out there under the oaks of Mamre. What do we see Abraham doing as the angel messengers are on their way to Sodom? We see him interceding. And the prayers of Abraham got Lot out of Sodom. Ah, God give us the spirit of prayer for the loved ones who are trapped in the cities.

Babylon is fallen. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Tell me, what would you do if you had a million dollars? Would you head for the bright lights in the big cities and spend a few thousand? One of the reasons God doesn't let many of us have very much money is that the bright lights would attract us just like they do these mobs. And it is in mercy that God lets us be poor.

But Abraham was rich, and he stayed in the country. Lot was rich, and he went to Sodom. But he left Sodom with nothing but the clothes on his back. And the refugees are going to be streaming out of these cities in a short while. And there will be thousands and hundreds of thousands who will have nothing more than Lot had. In fact, some of them are not going to be able to get out.

"Erelong there will be such strife and confusion in the cities, that those who wish to leave them will not be able. We must be preparing for these issues" *Selected Messages*, Book 2, page 142.

It may be there will be soldiers on the highway who will allow nobody to get out. They will say there is a curfew on, and nobody will be able to move. Strife and confusion.

This statement was given three years before I was born. I wonder if the Lord has given us enough time to prepare? When it is time, what are we doing with the time?

"The world over, cities are becoming hotbeds of vice. . . . The tide of corruption and crime is continually swelling. Every day brings the record of violence,—robberies, murders, suicides, and other crimes unnamable.

"Life in the cities is false and artificial. . .

"Serious troubles are before us; and for many families removal from the cities will become a necessity.

"The physical surroundings in the cities are often a peril to health. The constant liability to contact with disease, the prevalence of foul air, impure water, impure food, the crowded, dark, unhealthful dwellings, are some of the many evils to be met.

“It was not God's purpose that people should be crowded into cities” *Ministry of Healing*, pages 363-365.

Who invented that idea? It was Satan. Who did he use? Cain. Who was Cain? The first murderer. The first murderer was the first city builder on this earth. And when the results finally mounted to the point where God had to sweep away the Antediluvian world with that awful flood, who was it that started it all over again? Nimrod. He lifted his hand against heaven. He was the first great despot. And the name of the tower he built was Babel. What is another word for it? Babylon, or confusion.

Way back there God called Abraham out of that rich valley with its mighty cities. He brought Abraham out there as a pilgrim and a stranger in the land of Canaan.

All through the ages God has been trying to defeat Satan's purpose. Satan has been trying to defeat God's purpose. It is all very practical. It relates where we live and how we live, and what we live for.

“Let it be your study to select and make your homes as far from Sodom and Gomorrah as you can” *Adventist Home*, page 139.

If we are trying to keep ourselves and our children out of the cities, what do you think about keeping the cities out of us? Wouldn't it be too bad to get out of some smog covered city like Los Angeles or New York, and then have a pipeline where you could pipe in the air from them into your living room? Is there an atmosphere far more dangerous than what we breathe in through the nostrils? Is there an atmosphere we take in through the eyes and ears that penetrates the mind and effects what we think and how we think, our ideas, or lack of them? Oh yes. By beholding we become the same. Jesus tells us:

“Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken” Luke 21:26.

There never was a time when so many could see so much of trouble as at the present hour. So these very scenes of violence are being brought to the attention to millions of people. It is not enough for the ordinary audience to view the realities of crime and violence. But those things must be brought through fiction until today the average teenager of sixteen has already witnessed twenty-thousand homicides.

Back in the days before the flood one of the reasons given for that awful judgment was because the earth was corrupted before God, and the earth was filled with violence. Oh friends, it is crowding in upon us in the streets of the cities of the great cesspools of crime. But what will it avail us to breathe mountain air into our lungs if we get cesspool atmosphere through the eyes and ears? What will it avail us if we remove ourselves and our families from the streets of the cities only to have

its crime and vice piled in upon us three times a day, and more, through the radio and the TV? God help us. "Let it be your study to select and make your homes as far from Sodom and Gomorrah as you can." The Lord grant it.

"Make your homes in the quiet retirement of the country, even if you can ever become wealthy by so doing. Locate where there is the best influence... "Fail not to keep your children within your own premises" *Ibid*.

The children of Lot got to playing with the young people in that city of Sodom. You know what happened. All but two were burned up with Sodom, and the other two might better have been. What they learned in the streets was not good. People are learning the same things in the streets today. Immorality of every kind. Open, blatant, and bold. God help us to get back under the oaks of Mamre with Abraham. What do you say?

"Take your families away from the cities is my message. "Gather your children into your own houses; gather them away from those who are disregarding the commandments of God, who are teaching and practicing evil. Get out of the large cities as fast as possible" *Ibid*.

"He wants us to live where we can have elbow room. His people are not to crowd into the cities. He wants them to take their families out of the cities that they may better prepare for eternal life. In a little while they will have to leave the cities.

"These cities are filled with wickedness of every kind—the strikes and murders and suicides. Stan is in them, controlling men in their work of destruction. Under his influence they kill for the sake of killing, and this they will do more and more.

"If we place ourselves under objectionable influence, can we expect God to work a miracle to undo the results of our wrong course? No, indeed. Get out of the cities as soon as possible, and purchase a little piece of land, where you can have a garden, where your children can watch the flowers growing, and learn from them lessons of simplicity and purity" *Selected Messages*, Book 2, page 356.

If we get out into the country the flowers are growing all around us. They have fragrance. And there is fresh air and sunshine.

If all you and I get out of what we have studied tonight is to think about how we can save ourselves and our families, we have missed a lot of the point. What did Enoch do? He lived in the hills, but he went to the cities. What for? To give the message and to get people, just as a fireman goes into a burning building and in the

smoke gets hold of a man and pulls him out. That is his business. He is a fireman. You and I belong to the rescue squad. But don't forget our text in Revelation 18:4. The message we are to give in these cities is what? "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Oh, let us study how to get in there and get people out. And when I say there what do I mean? Everyplace where people are under the influence of the enemy. Everyplace where people are being hypnotized through watching the Devil's pictures and listening to the Devil's words. Everyplace where health, physical and spiritual, is being undermined by the habits of this generation. Everyplace where people need God. Jesus is sending you and me to say, "Come out of her."

Isn't it wonderful, like Enoch, to have some place to bring them? Oh, yes. And that is what every Christian home is meant to be in these days. It is meant to be a city of refuge, a place of retirement where people can be brought. God help us to be lifesavers. What do you say?

The first word of the message in Revelation 18:4 is come. With that I want to put another text. Jesus speaking to those multitudes said:

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,  
and I will give you rest" Matthew 11:28.

Rest instead of noise and excitement. Peace instead of strife. Security instead of crime and violence. The river of the water of life instead of open sewers. Come unto Me and I will do what? Give you rest.

Have you come? Has He given you rest? Have you found the quest of your soul? Have you found a way of life which satisfies? Ah, if you have, tell others how they can find it too.

Dear Father, as the troubles of this poor planet are increasing, may our understanding of Thy beautiful plan of true security increase. We have heard Thy sweet invitation saying, Come, My People. Enter into thy chambers and shut thy doors about you. Hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment until the indignation be past. Teach us how to enter into the true shelters, and teach us how to draw as many as possible with us. We ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.

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