

Survival

#0871

Study by W. D. Frazee—August 25, 1961

I want to study the problem of survival. That word is being used a good deal today, as you know. Think of it. We are living in an hour when sensible men in high positions are sitting at the counsel tables facing the problem of survival. They are trying to think through what will happen here in our nation. If sixty million people are blotted out, what will the rest do? The problem is survival.

This is not a civil defense lecture, although that is important. But what we are going to study is infinitely more important. As terrible as the pictures are that sober men are painting today of the catastrophes that may take place at any time, the reality of what is really going to take place is worse. The problem of survival is very real.

The dictionary says that survival is the act of surviving. And to survive means to outlive, outlast, live through. There are some people in this world who are going to outlive the myriads of earth's inhabitants. They are going to live through. Let's notice how the picture is painted in Isaiah:

"Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof" Isaiah 24:1.

It doesn't make any difference what class of society you belong to:

"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" verses 2-6.

There are going to be some left. How many? Few. Will you be one of the few, or will you be one of the multitude that go down in these earth devastating judgments?

"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" verse 13.

Did you ever go out in harvest time and shake a hickory tree, or a walnut tree? Where the Bible was written they had many olive trees. When it came time to harvest, what did they do? They shook the tree. But in all this there are a few berries that do not let go. They remain. They are the survivors.

"And few are left on earth, as few as berries once the olive bows are shaken, as grapes when once the vintage has been taken. verse 13, Moffatt translation.

Go over to the vineyard on the hill and you will see some of the vines now laden with grapes. There are some vines where the grapes were picked a few days ago. You will probably have to look for quite a while before you will find any grapes left there.

So God pictures those who survive this great time of trouble which is about to burst upon the earth.

You and I are familiar with the description of these times of trouble just ahead. We know about the awful plagues described in Revelation 15 and 16. We understand about the great earthquake and the hail storm that closes those plagues, and the appearing of Jesus in glory, surrounded by the angels. The wicked cry in terror to be hid, saying, the great day of His wrath is come, and who will be able to stand.

Indeed, who will stand? Anybody? Oh, yes. Some people are going to stand. Some people are going to survive.

"The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. Thine eyes shall see the king in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off" Isaiah 33:14-17.

Here is survival, my friends. There are going to be a few who are going to go through all that this world experiences. They will have a place of defense. Their food and water will be sure. They will see the King in His beauty.

You can see that various types of disasters and problems are suggested. I want to suggest a few for us to think of, and in connection with them the problems of survival. I want us to think of the tremendous economic problems that lie between us and the coming of the Lord. I want us to think of the physical problems, the problems of disease, both physical and mental, and in connection with those the problems of survival.

When the plagues are poured out the first evidence of them will be the breaking out of a noisome and grievous sore that can't be cured. And while men are suffering from that physical epidemic this world will be suffering a complete nervous breakdown. The whole world will be insane.

But some people are going to survive. They are not going to fall prey to those diseases. They are not going to lose their minds. They are going to be kept. Those who will survive will have been subjected to the most terrific assaults of the enemy as he works through human agencies trying to brainwash the people of God. They are going to survive. They are going to go through and have their wits about them.

They will pass through that terrible earthquake. They will not be hit by the hail. They will welcome the King in His beauty.

Before those awful scourges come they will enter into these terrific tests of economic survival. That is suggested in Revelation:

"And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" Revelation 13:16,17.

Can you survive?

I want to share with you an interesting picture from the servant of the Lord in a letter to Elder Butler and Haskell, January 20, 1884:

"Friday night several heard my voice exclaiming, 'Look, look.' The time of trouble was upon us. I saw our people in great distress, weeping and praying, pleading the sure promises of God, while the wicked were all around us, mocking us and threatening to destroy us. They ridiculed our feebleness. They mocked at the smallness of our numbers, and taunted with words calculated to cut deep. They charged us with taking an independent position from all the rest of the world, and they had cut off our resources so that we could not buy nor sell, and they referred to our abject poverty and stricken condition."

There is no air conditioned pullman running between here and the kingdom. We are going to walk. The journey is going to be rough, and the pressures are going

to be great. But some people are going to survive. They are not going to starve to death when the mark of the beast is enforced. They are not going to lose their minds when men and devils are turned loose with satanic fury to try to brainwash them. They are going to survive.

I like these promises we have read. I would like us to turn to the psalm which, as I have been meditating on in recent days, I have labeled the psalm of survival. See if you think that is all right. It is written for this time:

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust. Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: His truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways"
Psalm 91:1-11.

That psalm is mine tonight. Thank God for these glorious promises written for this hour, the hour of survival when few men are left. Thank God you and I can share the abiding confidence that this psalm brings.

The only way we can enter into the glorious triumph is to share the plan of battle. We must know our Lord's purposes, and intelligently and sincerely enter in with Him in carrying them out.

God has a plan. That plan includes as one of its most important features separation from the world in body, mind, and spirit. The world will soon be trying to cut us off. If you and I really believe that, we will be studying how to get anchored and rooted in something that will not cut us off. We will be separated from the world, abiding in God.

That has its practical features. Before Sodom was destroyed God sent angels there, and said to Lot and his family to get out. Did the angels help them? Do you think the angels are willing to help people today?

Does this have to do with the problem of survival? Definitely. I read:

"The plagues of the last days are to be poured out upon the inhabitants of the world who have shown marked contempt for the law of God. God's people should seek to reach the people of the world, proclaiming the truth as it is found in His Word. But the time will come when they will have to move away from the cities and live in small companies by themselves. If our people regard God's instruction as of value, they will move out of the cities so they will not be pained by its revolting devices. Those who choose to remain in the cities surrounded by the houses of unbelievers must share the disasters that must come upon them" *Review and Herald*, November 19, 1906.

Do you want to survive, friends? Well, here are instructions from headquarters on how to survive. Let me tell you, it will not be enough to build bomb shelters in a great city.

One night the American air force was bombing the city of Hamburg in Germany. Thousands and tens of thousands of people headed for the bomb shelters. They were asphyxiated as that poisonous monoxide gas from the terrible fires settled down into those bomb shelters.

My friends, there is only one way of safety. There is only one plan of survival. That is carrying out God's instructions.

God pity His people in this hour, and help us to make wise plans, sensible plans to carry out His instructions.

I have here a page from the *Review and Herald*, March 20, 1947. At that time Elder Haines was the General Conference man especially appointed to present this warning to our people. He kept at it. Time after time he spoke on this subject. Time after time he wrote for our papers on this subject. This is one of those articles. It is titled, *Tarrying in the Cities*:

"Seventh-day Adventist are not the first of God's servants to receive a message of mercy to get away from the cities before the judgments of God fall upon them. Lot and his family in Sodom were favored in the same way. They accepted the message, but put off acting upon it. There were advantages in Sodom they were reluctant to abandon. They were getting along well, so they lingered. Lot lost his family that way, and was barely saved himself.

"Nearly half a century ago God told His people to leave the cities, that they would be better off in rural places, that His work could thus be better advanced, that their welfare could be better safeguarded. He told them that labor troubles would increase, that they should not join labor

unions, that fearful disasters were coming upon the cities, that the cities would become cesspools of corruption and vice, that their families would be safer in rural areas, and that the time had come for the move away from the cities to begin. Not many heeded the messages of mercy. There were advantages in the cities. It was not easy to abandon them. There were disadvantages in the country. It was difficult to make the necessary readjustments. And so many tarried. Many are still tarrying. Meanwhile, many a family has been lost.

"Many a servant of God has thought it necessary to disregard the counsel of heaven about labor unions. Many a child has been swallowed up by the world. Although a most encouraging number have made the break and gone to rural places, and many others are making their arrangements to do so, still a large number put off the difficult decision, delay the move, remain in situations of peril, and for one reason or another linger in the cities." *Review and Herald*, March 20, 1947

Then he quotes the Lord's messenger, "They stay where they are until Satan gains full control of their children."

It is not just a question of economic survival. It is not just a question of surviving some bomb. It is a question of survival of your home and children. There are perils worse than the atom bomb. There are perils worse than any earthquake. The moral and spiritual perils of daily contact with sin and vice. Oh, how terrible those things are.

Satan has studied this time, and he has taken advantage of wonderful inventions that, properly used, can spread the message quickly, to take the sin of the cities and bring them out to the country.

What am I talking about? Radio and TV. Listen as I read, and tell me what will the people who survive be doing with most of what is coming over the radio and TV today?

"The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil" Isaiah 33:14,15.

To stop the ears and shut the eyes is the price of survival, my friends. That's it. Notice how Moffatt translates this last phrase of verse 15:

"He who will not look at crime."

There is a lot to look at in the public press that we will leave alone then. Right? There is a lot that is coming over the radio and TV that we will have no time for. Not simply because it is worthless, but because our hope of survival depends upon separation from the sin, the vice, the folly of this wicked world. So we are not only to get out of the cities physically, we are to get out of the cities as far as depending upon them for that which will fill our minds. It is not merely our lungs that need to be saved from polluted atmosphere. It is our very brain cells.

"Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off" verse 17.

Those are the ones who will dwell on high during the time of trouble, saved by the angels of God. Bread shall be given them, and their waters shall be sure. I want that experience.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee" Isaiah 26:3.

I am so glad for this book of Isaiah in preparing us for the times ahead, aren't you? Looking at Jesus we will be kept in perfect peace through earthquakes, storm, war, disaster of every kind. Won't it be wonderful to have peace in the midst of a storm? We are to learn that lesson now.

But you can't have your mind on God very long while watching those dancing images on the TV as they echo the words of this world and give us visions of the follies of this world. No. Oh, let us rejoice in our privilege to come out and be separate in everything. Be separate in reading, music, companionship, recreation and amusement, in everything in life. Come out and be separate. It is the price of survival.

If we share with the Godless world in its mirth and folly we shall share in the annihilation that is soon to overtake modern Sodom. God pity us and help us to be wise.

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