

# Overwhelming Surprise 3 of 8

## *Cares of This Life*

#0419

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—November 1965

“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then *sudden* destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape” 1 Thessalonians 5:2–3.

Now notice all this is told to us so we will avoid that. Now, I'd like to stress this fact this morning, and don't miss this—this is very important. The *light* that we have is not the light concerning time, concerning chronology, concerning the hour. Over and over again Christ says, "The Son of Man cometh in an hour when ye think not." So the light that God has given, I want to repeat that, is *not* that we can look ahead and say on a given day in a given year, *then* Christ will come, or then probation will close. That is not the light we have. We have the knowledge, of course, that we're in the time of the end. We've been there for some time. We have some knowledge of the sequence. But the great light that God has given you and me is the light on how to avoid the experiences, the state of mind, that gets Babylon into this awful crisis. That's the thing I want us to note.

They say, peace and security. They are willing to sell the truth in order to buy peace. That's the *whole* basis of this interest in the Pope coming over to the United Nations. That's why all the world wonders after the beast. They think that he's going to keep them from this terrible atomic war, this awful hydrogen bomb. And so they're willing to give up their doctrinal differences. They're willing to sacrifice truth in order to receive the peace that unity is supposed to bring. But, as I showed you yesterday, they won't even get the mess of pottage. They sell their birthright of truth for that mess of pottage, the promised peace, but they won't get it. The spirits of devils coming out of the mouth of the beast, along with the dragon and the false prophet, are going to lead the world into the greatest slaughter of all time.

As the curtain rings down on the last act in the drama, we see the world deluged with blood and the bodies of the slain from one end to the other. And remember, they were promised peace. "For when they shall say, peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them." The reason destruction came was not merely that they were surprised in point of time. They have sacrificed truth. They have cut the tie of love and obedience between themselves and God, and the inevitable results is destruction. They're not only saying peace but safety and security. Those are the two great words on the lips of people today—peace and security. And as the Pope is supposed to work out the peace, so the United States is being looked to as the great world leader to work out this problem of security. In our nation the great society is being talked about now. Where everybody has everything they need, and you might say that they want, and the result is security.

In Luke 21 are the words of Jesus on the Mount of Olives to His disciples. He's warning them, just as Paul warns in Thessalonians, of the approaching crisis. After speaking of the signs in the sun, moon, and stars, "and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity." "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth," and picturing the coming of Jesus, He gives the warning:

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares" Luke 21:31.

That's the whole thing, you see: this *sudden*, unexpected calamity, this *overwhelming* surprise. What is it that leads the world into that condition? The way they eat, the way they drink, the way they work, the way they play, the way they live. It isn't that they don't have a calendar or a schedule. Their *whole* way of life leads to that terrible disappointment at Armageddon. That awful disillusionment that they have worked for crumbles to ruin before their eyes. All goes down in just a terrible heap. The cities of the nations fell. Everything is going to be in ruins. So Jesus says, "Take heed to yourselves," lest you get caught in this trap. It's not merely the fact that it will come on the day you may not expect it. The *trap* is earlier than Armageddon. The trap is now. That's the thing: *keep out of the trap!*

"For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth" Luke 21:35.

That word snare means *trap*; that's what the Greek word means. "For as a trap shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." All who make this world their home are going to be *caught* in the trap, and they're getting caught now: that's what I want you to see. So Jesus says:

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" Luke 21:36.

Not watch the calendar to find out which day Jesus is going to come, and then scamper and run? Oh, no.

"Watch ye therefore and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and stand before the Son of man" *Ibid.*

Thank God, friends, we can live in this world without being contaminated by it. We can walk in and out and around all these traps and not get caught. Isn't that wonderful? That's what God wants. That's His plan. And if we will *listen* to Him, He'll keep us; He'll help us.

Now, as we pointed out, the search is not only for peace, but for security. What do men want security for? Well, they want money so they can get what they want. They want money because it gives them status. They're proud. They want to

be somebody. They want to drive a Cadillac or Rolls Royce, or something that costs a lot of money. So that as they ride down the street, their neighbors view them with envy. That makes them feel good. Interesting, isn't it?

Now watch friends: it isn't just the people who have money to get that great big expensive luxury car that get caught in the trap. Oh, no. The trap is not the car. The trap is not the expensive house and the extravagant furniture. It is the state of mind that wants that and tries to get it. And for one who succeeds, there're a hundred others who are caught in the same trap that never get the bait. They got the hook without the bait. But hook and bait together, or hook without the bait, they're all hooked. Do you see what I'm getting at?

Notice how good God is to warn us about these traps:

“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition”  
1 Timothy 6:6–9.

Whether we go by grave or translation route, we're not going to carry any of the gold of this world or any of the fine cars or expensive furniture. Most people are not content, and it doesn't make any difference whether they're poor or whether they're millionaires, they're not content. They're in the *trap* of discontent, restlessness, selfishness, envy, covetousness. But we that are walking in the light are what? Content. Are we? Well, if we're in the light, we are, friends. Having food and raiment let us be therewith content. “But they that will be rich”—that is they that are striving to be rich, those that want to be rich, those whose whole endeavor is to be rich; not merely the ones who succeed, but the ones that are wanting it and striving for it and working toward it, by hook or crook as we say—fall into temptation and a snare.” As a *trap*, it's coming. And those who will be rich, those that are determined to be rich fall right into the trap. Some get the pleasure of eating the bait while they're in the trap. But many of them don't even get the bait! There they are, caught in the trap. Determined to be rich and never get there. Live and die in the mad rat race. Isn't it awful, friends? Shall we envy them? Oh, no. Pity them, pray for them, and plead with God for love and power to *pull* them out of the trap before it's forever too late.

A man could drown in honey as well as in ocean water, couldn't he? It'd be a sweet death, but he'd be just as dead, wouldn't he? And so, people are *drowning* in the foolish and hurtful lusts of this world. A few of them have what they call a good time in the process. Most of them are largely sorrowful, largely disappointed. Yes, that's right; it could be perfume. The Devil would be willing to perfume the waters to tempt men to jump in and drown, wouldn't he?

“For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of

God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness,  
godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness”  
I Timothy 6:10–11.

Jesus is pointing out the trap so that we may avoid it. He’s pointing out the way of light that we may walk in it. Let’s do it. What do you say?

Now, let me show you something, friends. Something is happening in this world to really get people in the trap. Never in all the history of the ages have so many people been in debt as they are at the present time. Look at these cars going up and down the highway. You say America must be a rich country. Yes and no. How many of those cars are paid for? Very few. And by the time they get paid for, if they ever do, they must trade them in for another one, and repeat the cycle. But that’s just the beginning—refrigerators, radio, television, hi-fi, furniture, taking trips, *anything*. Borrow money, and start paying it off. Borrow money, and keep paying it off.

The private debt of the people in the United States today—not the public debt, that’s terrible, it’s astronomical, but just the private debt of individuals, what people owe—is greater than *all* the debts of *all* the human family in *all* past history.

Let’s get some advice from the Word of God. What a strange verse: strange because it’s so forgotten.

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he  
that loveth another hath fulfilled the law” Romans 13:8.

What are the first five words? Owe no man any thing! Oh, surely not, Paul. Well, there is an exception; what is it? “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another.” Yes, we owe love to everybody, and we’re to keep paying on that all the while, aren’t we? Does God desire His children to be in debt? Why not? Why He wants them to be happy. Debts don’t make people happy. Many a suicide has taken his life because *suddenly* a mountain of debt falls like an avalanche upon him. Oh, how it *gnaws* at the vitals.

What if somebody says, “Well, a lot of people, it doesn’t seem to bother them at all.” More is the pity, friends. In their case, debt works like an anesthetic, like a tranquilizer. But all that drug action is artificial and injurious. We’ve had some counsel on this point:

“Let all now seek most earnestly to avoid the mistakes of  
the past. Let them guard themselves as with a fence of  
barbed wire against the inclination to go into debt”  
*Testimonies for the Church, Volume 7, page 236.*

Lest some should misunderstand, there are cases where the Lord has plainly indicated that it’s proper and right to go into debt to get a facility up for the Lord’s work so that things can get going. Sister White herself at times borrowed money, and even paid interest, in order to get a meeting house up or get a sanitarium established. But, in those cases, she had security to make sure that the debt would be paid. But those *exceptions* do not do away with the rule at all. The rule is to owe no man

anything. Keep out of debt. If you're in debt, get out. If you're out of debt, keep out. Is that good counsel? And that's the way to avoid the *trap*, you understand.

Here's a man who hears this message. He wants to keep the Sabbath, but he has a family to support, and if he starts to keep the Sabbath, he's going to lose his job. Now that was hard enough a hundred years ago or fifty years ago. But there's something about the situation today that makes it much harder. There *was* a time that a man could step out to keep the Sabbath, and if he lost his job, all right. At least, whatever he had was his own. That time is largely gone. The man who steps out today to keep the Sabbath and loses his job runs the risk of losing *everything* that he's got. All that he has invested: in property, in furniture, in automobile, in everything. It all is under that shadow of debt.

Do you see what I mean? Do you see how the Devil has engineered things to make it difficult for people to make a move of faith? He's *stacked up* the odds against them—the same in doing a *work* for God. Here comes the call to someone to do a work for Jesus, perhaps to go into the colporteur work, perhaps to go into some other phase of self-supporting labor for Jesus, *but* he's in debt. Dear friends, if we knew how many people are working on getting out of debt so they can go into the Lord's work, the figure would astonish us. But the Devil is a great general. Once he has them in that trap, he doesn't like to let them go.

I've seen more than one young man or young woman say, "As soon as I can get a car, or as soon as I can do this or that, *then* I'm going to give my full time to the work." So they go into debt, and *oh* how they're held—sometimes forever, sometimes they finally get loose, *seldom* as soon as they think they will. There's something about it—it's a trap. The Devil is trying to get the *whole* world into this kind of a trap. And Jesus is telling us, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares."

I mentioned one reason why people want money and want to be rich is status. Another reason is indulgence. A man thinks if he has lots of money, he can buy anything he wants to eat. He can buy anything he wants to drink. He can take it easy and just indulge himself to the limit. If he's interested in lust and passion, in sex indulgence, if he has lots of money, he thinks he can indulge himself in that. So whatever his particular taste, indulgence is, *money* is the means to satisfy it. But Jesus says they *drown* themselves in those foolish and hurtful lusts.

Why friends, instead of money being *sought* after because it's the key to its self-indulgence, that's one of the great reasons to give it a second look. The only reason some people are going to be in Heaven is that God, in mercy, let them be poor so they wouldn't *have* the money to indulge themselves so much. That's right. Oh thank God, friends, if He has given us even a measure of poverty, it may be we can keep our brains clear so we can *think* and avoid the traps of the Devil.

You remember that in our first study, we noted that this passion for peace and security, this desire to not be worried or anxious about anything, has led men, and is leading men to confederacies and associations. Isaiah says to the nations and the

people of this world that if they indulge in that solution of their problem, they'll only find disappointment. God says to His children, "Don't walk in that road."

"The world is a theater; the actors, its inhabitants, are preparing to act their part in the last great drama. With the great masses of mankind, there is no unity, except as men confederate to accomplish their selfish purposes. God is looking on. The world has not been given into the hands of men, though God is permitting the elements of confusion and disorder to bear sway for a season. A power from beneath is working to bring about the last great scenes in the drama—Satan coming as Christ, and working with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those who are binding themselves together in secret societies" *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 8, pages 27–28.*

Here's another angle of this confederation, these secret societies. That's what all these lodges are, you know. And that's what the labor unions are. And Satan is coming as Christ, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness to those who are binding themselves together in these secret societies.

"Those who are yielding to the passion for confederation are working out the plans of the enemy. The cause will be followed by the effect.

"Transgression has almost reached its limit. Confusion fills the world and a great terror is soon to come upon human beings. The end is very near. We who know the truth should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise" *Ibid.*, page 28.

How can we prepare? By avoiding the trap: the trap of confederacies with the world, the *trap* of this ecumenical idea, the *trap* of debt, the *trap* of running to be rich, the *trap* of these labor unions, the *trap* of living for selfish ease, selfish pleasure, selfish indulgence. Avoid all that. That's the way. That's what Jesus says. "Watch and pray, and don't let your heart get overcharged with eating and drinking and the cares of this world." It's coming as a snare, He says. "But you, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake *you* as a thief." You're not going to get caught in that trap. You're walking in the *light*: the light of love, the light of unselfish ministry, the light of dedication to the unfinished task, the light of looking to *Jesus* instead of men.

Oh friends, haven't we a wonderful Savior and a wonderful program, a wonderful way of life? Let's thank God every day for it and make Him *happy* by letting Him know that we appreciate it. Shall we?

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