THOUGHTS OF FEBRUARY, 2020

First, a teaching on the coming great difficulties, expected to become severe before the rapture, but nothing as progressively severe as will occur after the rapture during the second half of the seven-year tribulation.

1. This little teaching is meant to prepare us for the apostasy and anarchy that is to increase this year, unless the Lord mercifully intervenes. Definitions:

a) Apostasy is a falling away from one’s belief, whether religious, political or otherwise. A more full definition is that apostasy is a falling away from any established state of being, from things firmly established, from ancient basic ways – especially from ways that have “always been.” The main point of this definition is obvious, that “ways that have ‘always been’” are the ones established by the Lord God, the one who in humility, righteousness and truth said, “I am the way [to not fall away from Me – ed.].”

b) Anarchy is a lack of submission to any type of governance.

1. Paul addressed our situation in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 – [Read it, focusing on the current restraint of evil by the presence of the Holy Spirit in the church.]. Question: If today is the day of restraint, how will it be when there is no restraint?
2. Three approaches to how it is today:
3. A list of overt sinnings [exhibitions of sin]:
4. Overt rebellion against authority.
5. Reversal of the definitions of sin and righteousness, of simple right and wrong, even the denial of such a thing as sin.
6. Reversal and confusion of sexual identity.
7. Approval of homosexuality, and of heterosexuality outside of marriage.
8. Approval of same-sex “marriage.”
9. “Freedom of choice” as the basis for abortion, sexual preference, and other personally desired sins and behaviors. “Choice” means having or making a choice other than the will of God.
10. Licentiousness, including sharing of public bathrooms and showers.
11. Men not ruling over women; women not submitting to men – family, politics, workplace, military.
12. Parents not ruling over their children; children not submitting to their parents.
13. Parents not forming godly family life and structure.
14. Employees ruling over employers; employers unrighteously ruling over employees.
15. Church leaders refusing to live and preach the gospel, and to lead their flocks accordingly. Christians not obeying their leaders.
16. Lying being smart and wise behavior [unless liars are caught].
17. Abortion and euthanasia.
18. Lack of righteousness and wisdom in civil government.
19. Freedom of speech being denied and punished in the name of free speech.
20. Theft and greed being approved and legalized on the basis of political power.
21. Lying-stealing-deceptive scams of all sorts – identity theft, computer hacking.
22. Refusal to hold sinners responsible for their sins – adjusted justice, etc.
23. Law enforcement agencies, cities, and states refusing to enforce laws usually because they disagree with the laws or are afraid of the lawbreakers.
24. Jailing parents for [even properly] disciplining their children.
25. Altering human genes by combining animal genes with human genes. That which God made, He pronounced “good” and instructed it to continue as was.
26. Occult practices expanding into public, political and business life.
27. And the list of overt signs of apostasy and anarchy seems endless. In the face of this increase of evil, there is increasing faithfulness among believers to one another and to the Lord.
28. The Lord’s own list of more basic, cancerous, sources of sinnings [exhibitions of sin]:
29. Rev. 2:4 – We have left our first love, Jesus.
30. Rev. 2:10 – We fear that which the devil may do to us, instead of fearing the Lord.
31. Rev. 2:14-15 – We don’t hold to a clear view and conviction of sin and righteousness.
32. Rev. 2:20 – Male abdication and female usurpation of authority, orderliness and responsibility.
33. Rev. 3:1 – Insensitivity to the Holy Spirit, and spiritual death in the church.
34. Rev. 3:9 – Lack of faithfulness in the time(s) of little things. Little folks enjoy and are encouraged by Zechariah 4:10.
35. Rev. 3:15-16 – Lukewarmness, getting along with the world, maintaining a “good, normal public service and testimony.”
36. The primary, most ungodly and destructive reason: We have not loved the Lord with all we are and have, nor our neighbors as ourselves. Despite our many failures, loving the Lord to this degree is still our assigned target and is within our present reach.
37. The Holy Spirit is working, mostly in quiet, hidden, unpublished ways:
38. He said He will treat His church in Corpus Christi as “one parish.” a) The denominationally-minded churches will stay as they are, with separatist doctrines, attitudes and practices, while b) a solid, life-giving move of the Lord unifies the spiritual church, each of which varies in many ways but actively asks for, works for and has open fellowship with the Lord and one another. That is the result of walking or not walking the one same narrow path.
39. There is a worldwide spiritual revival going on which is being led and powered by the Holy Spirit, in which Jesus Himself is being personally active in bringing unbelievers to faith, and linking them with other believers. As always, He has continued showing Himself [instead of sending others] to those who are prepared to follow and obey Him at great personal sacrifice to themselves [“You cannot be My disciple unless... “ said Jesus; “Have I not seen the Lord,” said Paul; etc. of the Old and New Testaments].
40. During soon-coming spiritually tough times, cities will be in great turmoil from deliberate, planned, organized anarchy. The Lord will protect the countryside and smaller cities from the more severe effects because there the spiritual church will be more united.
41. It is the time of both apostacy and revival – apostasy in the denominationally-minded religious organizations and spiritual revival in the Jesus-minded spiritual church.
42. The spiritual church is making disciples, imparting to them Spirit and truth, and teaching them to do all things that Jesus taught His disciples. The traditionally-minded church continues teaching tradition, religion and selected scripture, the process which the devil has designed to devalue the Lord and His word and to cause separation among people.

Now the more traditional type of Thoughts for February, 2020.

1. How “all” is Jesus Christ to us? How do we grow into His “allness” more and more daily? Did I really receive “all” of Him when I was born again [yes, but we did not receive everything that He plans to do to and for and through us], when He placed His Spirit in me? “We are the righteousness of God in Christ” – 2 Cor. 5:21.

If we are not in Christ [born again of His Spirit] we are not the righteousness of God. The in-placement of Himself into us is a unique action of God Himself, of which no person can rightly boast. All of that “only-God action” of the accomplished work of Jesus means that He has placed in us “.. wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, ‘Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord’” – 1 Cor. 1:29-31.

Then, we may say, “Well, then where is all of that godliness that is in me and in the church? If it is in me, how may it be shown or better developed?” Very good question. We may 1) try harder, and fail more – by which we may have variable external displays of success but no or little internal improvement. Or, 2) we may accept the fact that “all” of that goodness is indeed in me, but that my sinful patterns of thinking and behaving are dominant over my trying.

Bingo! We don’t develop wisdom by trying to be wise, we don’t develop righteousness by trying to be righteous, we don’t become sanctified by trying to be sanctified, and we don’t become redeemed by trying to be redeemed. “All” happens through faith, through believing the Lord and trusting Him to work all of those “seeds” into my life experience. We grow them outwardly by watering the ground of our souls with faith – allowing Him to be who He is through me. As I have said before, take your hands off of your souls. We are His workmanship – Eph. 2:10.

1. It is an old saying that an idle mind is the devil’s workshop. I believe that was used on us as kids when we were lazing around doing “nothing” when we thought we were doing “something” and wanted to continue doing it. Perhaps that can be applied also to idle or neglectful police forces, parents, school teachers, news media, etc. – when each should be doing their God-assigned work more attentively. Laxity of duties allows disorder and degrees of anarchy.

When no one was watching the workshop in Russia, the moderate amount of freedom they already had begun to erode, so that the Soviet news agency [TASS] could say in 1959, “We have no censorship, only control to prevent misuse of the freedom of the press.” That is the sort of neglect of words, politics, and freedom that has been going on in America for the past fifty years, and before then to a more minor degree.

I look at the redefinition of words during my lifetime and see the twisting of basics like “freedom,” “life,” “rule of law,” “constitutional,” “love,” “gay,” “free speech,” and “church” and wonder briefly “who was asleep at the switch?” It is easy to blame the courts, educational system and news media, but there are the parents and the churches, and then there is the devil. Somewhere in the stew we have to find ourselves and share the blame. That will put us in a good position to share the glory when the Lord puts it aright again.

Example: Joseph, Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah were carted off to slavery [Jesus was killed]. They kept their faith alive in the Lord, worshiped alone or with like-minded ones, and did not allow a bad attitude to develop. When the opportunity arose, they blessed their captors with the Lord’s word and Spirit, and in turn were blessed with good workplace results. When everything was going “wrong” they stayed their course.

Their minds were fixed on righteousness and faith. They were not self-centered, meaning they did not think that their enslaving nations [Egypt or Babylon] revolved around them although, humanly speaking, those empires depended on those few righteous ones. They did not develop a system of situational ethics [“That which is right for you may not be right for me, but next time may be right for me.”]. They lived basically righteous lives in variably unrighteous cultures, their fruit ripened, and the Lord dangled it before those whom He had prepared to see and enjoy it. Our righteousness still dangles before Him and others.

1. So, are you being prepared for that type of watchful, purposeful life? If so [and you are!], you have noticed, or may now notice, that your time of preparation has gone on *a* l-o-o-o-ng *time*! Of course, the earthly exhibition of the purpose of the Lord’s longtime work in you may not be evident on this your first pass through earth; this may be preparation for your second, the millennium. The Lord is absolutely purposeful, is not wasteful of time or action, and wants us to know and experience that about Him.

So, He has a purpose and a destiny for you to fulfill, and He will see to it being fulfilled. If we will actively and faithfully pursue it [specifically and generically], He will also be pleased with the performance of His dearly beloveds, who are every born-again child of His. Although things won’t always go the way we think they should [“Thank God!”], He has called us to things much grander, things beyond ourselves [another, “Thank God!”], things that we cannot imagine or start or continue or complete without Him. There is grace to be found as we stand against the winds of opposition within us and around us.

1. The Lord is on the verge of doing things never before done – although there is nothing entirely new under the sun. As children of the light, we should have some understanding [at least in simple, outline form] of our Father’s plans, so we will not be unduly surprise and overcome. His things will be a quiet and powerful move of His Spirit in the midst of loud, distractive, and seemingly powerful apostacy and anarchism – very distractive stuff, like in 2 Kings 2:1-14, when Elisha refused to be distracted from what God was doing in the midst of a whirlwind, horses, and chariots of fire with horsemen. So, watch for and listen to and seek after what the Lord is doing throughout the months and few years ahead, although some of us who are present this early 2020 will not be here later due to scheduled earthly death or the rapture of the church. So, what will be going on, in light outline order?
2. In heaven – God is bringing all things and people back into perfect order with Him. He makes all preparations and takes all first steps. Heaven is the first to be ready.
3. In the universe – Spiritual warfare, unseen at first, then obvious but not understood by the unlearned.
4. In the world – The destruction of Russian-Islamic forces that invade Israel. Jerusalem, Israel is the umbilical cord to heaven but does not have its awareness of such. The church knows.
5. U.K. – God’s mercy reaching out to extract it from the menacing tentacles of the coming anti-christ, into fellowship with other rescued nations, as were the three Israelites from the fiery furnace.
6. America – Our political and religious swamps are being drained. The Lord started draining the church’s swamp 30 plus years ago, and He continues. Those who refuse to confess and repent, who are resisting His cleansing of our deep, self-justified, and institutionalized sins, are experiencing “having their teeth pulled without anesthetic.”
7. The church – He started with us, didn’t He – 1 Pet. 4:17. He always has. The least we resist Him, the more informed, humble, and easily repentable we will be. In the flesh, individuals and churches who have the most religion going for them will repent the less; but in the spirit, those who have the most simple, wholesome, spiritual life going for them will repent the most; our eyes are clearer, hearts softer, and minds uncluttered with religiosity. I watch those who are among the more religious and grieve over their rejection of spirit and truth; the same goes for those who have a degree of spirit and truth but reject “available more.”
8. The “Big and First **ME**.” Remember: “Informed, humble, and easily repentable.”
9. From years past, from the broken heart and weeping eyes of a saint as he watched his son die of cancer brought on by intravenous street drugs of years past: “Thank you, Lord, for the successful pains and joys of life. The results are worth far more than the costs of getting here. My son’s life mirrors the unfortunate but eventually victorious life of the son who initially would not obey but finally did his father’s will [Matt. 21:28-32]. Praise you, Father, for turning Him to you before taking him home.” God is only good, and always on His schedule.
10. We put our faith in things like gravity and car breaks, in less reliable things like people and the weather, and in the Lord [who is absolutely reliable but who does not do things the way we want]. We develop experience with Him, the invisible Person. Our negative experiences are meant to teach us things about us and Him so we can get more in line with Him and have less of the negatives – actually to see that there are no negatives as we develop disciples’ hearts and minds.

In all cases we have to learn to have faith in that which we have not yet totally or finally experienced. Each person, place or thing in life has a “rest of the story” for us, almost all of which we consider at least reasonably reliable, or we would be living a terrible life. The more of the unreliable we have, the less confident and personally reliable we become.

How did Jesus overcome this human tendency? He did His Father’s will, placed the results in His Father’s hands, and received the best. Then He gave all of Himself into the day. So, Luke 10:37(b).

1. While we are living through the details, let’s not forget the basic plan, knowing that the Lord is the Author and Finisher of His plan. This is it: The Lord God determined in advance that the universe [and beyond] would be established, presided over, and perfectly and completely governed by, through, and for Jesus Christ the Himself-man. There is no Plan B, He has never even considered changing His plan, it is perfect, and no part of it can be completed by anyone other than Himself. It is a done thing. He laid down His life on its perfection and completion, and so can we.
2. If you are satisfied with your present measure/standard/yardstick for growth in the Lord, you can keep it. If you are not satisfied with your growth or with whatever you are perhaps subconsciously using to measure how you are doing, you can change it. The availability of spiritual growth yet ahead of us in this life is so much more than the measure that we have accomplished, the aim being to be like Jesus who was the human image of our Father in heaven.

So there is still much of Him to learn, experience and become. But we may be doing “pretty good,” in our estimation. Whether doing good or poor, my question is still, “What are you using for your yardstick?” If you are like me, you have settled for a composite of several good Christian folks without being clearly aware of it. After all, none of us would dare say, “I’m a good, high-class, normal Christian, and that’s good enough for me and better than most.” What a standard that is! It sounds much like the Pharisee in the temple who said about the same thing – Luke 18.

We may become overly satisfied spiritually, which actually indicates spiritual immaturity. Our continual abiding [although always imperfectly] in the Lord results in good spiritual nutrition and spiritual growth. That comes from more than “time in service.” It requires [to at least some degree] our love for the Lord personally [showing as yieldedness], and cooperation with the plan He has at work in our souls and in our living situations. It can be put this way, “We must decrease in order for Him to increase in us.” His increasing in us is THE BIG THING going on. I hope you can sense both your yearning to be like Him, and the at-least-occasional internal opposition there in your soul. Stay honest with Him; repent and ask for His help. That continually cultivates fertile soil for eternal fruit.

1. Some of you already know that we have moved residence from Corpus Christi back to Athens, Texas. We have been here now for three weeks. Jay, our number three son, and his wife, Terri, bought us a home in Athens, spruced it up, assured that all things worked perfectly, moved us in and settled us [except for several resistant boxes still needing to be unpacked – my job], and are brooding over us to see that things go as they and the Lord want them. Very comforting.

Our house in Corpus Christi has sold and the Lord is stirring in exciting ways among the saints there. Life goes onward, although we have not yet seen much of the Lord’s expected work here. So, don’t go looking for us at 6653 Downing St. in Corpus Christi. We are at 1102 Lonnie Drive in Athens, Texas 75751, USA. We will be glad to see you, but remember Nancy’s disabilities. You may be the chief cook and bottle washer during your visit. Come.