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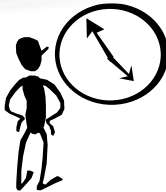
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### Time of Assembly



#### Every other Sunday:

Bible Study 9:00 a.m.

Worship 10:00 a.m.

#### OR

Bible Study 4:00 p.m.

Worship 5:00 p.m.

#### Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 p. m.

## What is This World Coming To?

By Tommy Thornhill

We are now in the year 2021 and many are fearful of what the future holds for us. We wonder, **“What is this world coming to?”** To us older Christians it is certainly disturbing to see the present “status quo” (the mess our nation is in). As I reflect back to how things were in America during my growing up years, at that time I saw this country as truly “the land of the free and the home of the brave.” Our lives were more casual and serene. People were more content, and God, His Son, and His word was honored and respected by the vast majority.

I do not have this same view today. Even with the many advancements and improvements in science, medicine, technology, education, service organizations, etc. that have helped to raise our standard of living and make life easier, there still seems to be a feeling of uneasiness, insecurity, and uncertainty about the future. The country is in a state of turmoil morally, socially, politically, and spiritually and things seem to be getting worse, not better.

While we may think our present generation is the most wicked and perverse generation ever, it’s not true. Every generation has been wicked, perverse, and evil. Some are just more open with their sinfulness than others. Jesus branded His generation as *“a faithless and perverse generation”* ([Matthew 17:17](#)), an *“adulterous and sinful generation”* ([Mark 8:38](#)). Later, when the church was established on the Day of Pentecost, the people were told to save themselves from a *“perverse generation”* ([Acts 2:40](#)). And our generation today can be lumped right along with all past generations.

Today morality is no longer respected by many. People, especially among the young, practice all sorts of perverted sins, doing them openly with no sense of shame. But this is nothing new. God’s prophet Jeremiah wrote about people with the same attitude in his day. He asks, *“Were they ashamed when they had*

*committed abominations? No! They were not at all ashamed; nor did they know how to blush" ([Jeremiah 6:15-16](#)). Today, many brag about the perversions they practice and think it strange that the moral and godly don't join them in their sinful activities ([I Peter 4:3-4](#)).*

Socially and politically, Jeremiah saw his people as well as the priests and prophets (politicians of that day) and their city Jerusalem of his day the way we see our society, politicians, and Washington DC today. Speaking of the country and the main city, Jeremiah wrote, *"She is full of oppression in her midst. As a fountain wells up with water, so she wells up with her wickedness. Violence and plundering are heard in her. Before Me continually are grief and wounds because from the least of them even to the greatest of them, everyone is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even to the priest, everyone deals falsely. They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, saying, ~peace, peace! when there is no peace" ([Jeremiah 6:7,13-14](#)).*

Yes, our nation is disintegrating rapidly and one day, sooner or later, will face the wrath of God. The pronouncement made by Isaiah for God still holds true. *"Woe to those who call evil good and good evil; who put darkness for light and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe to men mighty at drinking wine, woe to men valiant for mixing intoxicating drink, who justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away justice from the righteous man!" ([Isaiah 5:20-23](#)).*

The things I have written above just remind you of the wickedness of this world. And it will not get any better because the way or "the course of this world is directed by the "prince of the power of the air" (the devil) and he is not going to let it get any better. Those who follow him and walk after the world are "sons of disobedience" who conduct "themselves after the lust of the flesh to fulfill the desires of the flesh and mind, and by nature children of wrath" ([Ephesians 2:2-3](#)); "In the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart, who being past feeling, have given themselves over to licentiousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" ([Ephesians 4:17-19](#)).

So "what is this world coming to?" It is headed for destruction. When the cup of the wrath of God has filled to the brim, God will bring judgment to bear. On that Day the world and its lust will pass away ([I John 2:16](#)), and "the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat, both the earth, and the works that are in it will be burned up" ([II Peter 3:10](#)).

So, don't expect 2021 to get any better. Just remember that as Christians we live in this world, but we are not to live like the world ([John 17:14-16](#)). Here we are just pilgrims and sojourners ([I Peter 2:11-12](#)) traveling toward a better country ([Hebrews 11:16](#)) where our true citizenship is found ([Philippians 3:20](#)). So while living in this old sinful world,

make sure we conduct ourselves as children of God. Pray for our country and our leaders ([1 Timothy 2:1-2](#); [1 Peter 2:13](#)). Pray for our enemies, return good for evil ([Matthew 5:43-48](#); [Romans 12:9-21](#)). Practice **love** not **hate**. Seek **peace** not **turmoil**. Have **faith**, not **fear**.

This world is not our home, we are just passing through.

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## When Ahab Humbled Himself

By Jeffrey W. Hamilton

It might seem odd, but I love it when a student in a Bible class asks a deep question -- you know, a question that shows the student was thinking far beyond the immediate lesson.

This morning, a student was working on a lesson about greed and he planned to use Ahab's acquiring Naboth's vineyard as the base text of his lesson. But he noticed something when Elijah confronted Ahab:

*"Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who is in Samaria; behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth where he has gone down to take possession of it. You shall speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD, 'Have you murdered and also taken possession?'' And you shall speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD, 'In the place where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth the dogs will lick up your blood, even yours.'''"*

*"Ahab said to Elijah, 'Have you found me, O my enemy?' And he answered, 'I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the LORD. Behold, I will bring evil upon you, and will utterly sweep you away, and will cut off from Ahab every male, both bond and free in Israel; and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked Me to anger, and because you have made Israel sin. Of Jezebel also has the LORD spoken, saying, 'The dogs will eat Jezebel in the district of Jezreel.' The one belonging to Ahab, who dies in the city, the dogs will eat, and the one who dies in the field the birds of heaven will eat."*

*"Surely there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do evil in the sight of the LORD, because Jezebel his wife incited him. He acted very abominably in following idols, according to all that the Amorites had done, whom the LORD cast out before the sons of Israel."*

*"It came about when Ahab heard these words, that he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and fasted, and he lay in sackcloth and went about despondently."*

*"Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'Do you see how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days, but I will bring the evil upon his house in his son's days'" ([1 Kings 21:17-29](#)).*

"What a minute, Mr. Jeff! That wasn't fair! Didn't you say that sons aren't held re-

sponsible for their fathers' sins? Why are Ahab's sons getting the consequences of Ahab's sins?"

It is true that God said. *"The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself"* ([Ezekiel 18:20](#)). Israel thought they were in captivity because of their forefathers' sins. *"What do you mean by using this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, 'The fathers eat the sour grapes, But the children's teeth are set on edge'?"* ([Ezekiel 18:2](#)). The main point God made in [Ezekiel 18](#) is that Israel was in captivity because they were **continuing** the sins of their forefathers, and as a result, they needed to change. *"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, each according to his conduct," declares the Lord GOD. "Repent and turn away from all your transgressions, so that iniquity may not become a stumbling block to you. Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord GOD. "Therefore, repent and live" "* ([Ezekiel 18:30-32](#)).

Back in the days of Saul, God ordered Saul to completely wipe out the Amalekites. *"Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey."* ([1 Samuel 15:2-3](#)). But wait a minute! This is roughly 500 years after the Amalekites attacked Israel. Why is God punishing these people for what their forefathers had done? The answer is the same. This nation had never changed. God gave them hundreds of years to repent and they never did. A subtlety often overlooked is that in the story of Esther, Haman is an Agagite ([Esther 8:3](#)). Agag was the name of the Amalekite kings (like Pharaoh was the name of the Egyptian kings and Abimelech was a common name of the Philistine kings) ([Numbers 24:7](#); [1 Samuel 15:8](#)). This explains Haman's extreme hatred of Mordecai the Jew. But it also shows us people who did not change generation after generation.

Thus, when King Jeroboam sinned, God declared that He would remove all of Jeroboam's descendants.

*"Go, say to Jeroboam, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel, "Because I exalted you from among the people and made you leader over My people Israel, and tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you -- yet you have not been like My servant David, who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only that which was right in My sight; you also have done more evil than all who were before you, and have gone and made for yourself other gods and molten images to provoke Me to anger, and have cast Me behind your back -- therefore behold, I am bringing calamity on the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male person, both bond and free in Israel, and I will make a clean sweep of the house of Jero-*

*boam, as one sweeps away dung until it is all gone. Anyone belonging to Jeroboam who dies in the city the dogs will eat. And he who dies in the field the birds of the heavens will eat; for the LORD has spoken it." ' " (I Kings 14:7-11).*

Notice that the same punishment given to Jeroboam is given to Ahab and it is for the same reason. Jeroboam's son, Nadab, was just as bad as his father. *"Now Nadab the son of Jeroboam became king over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years. He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father and in his sin which he made Israel sin" (I Kings 15:25-26).*

Ahab's children were just as bad as their father. Of his son, Ahaziah, it was said, *"Ahaziah the son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned two years over Israel. He did evil in the sight of the LORD and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin. So he served Baal and worshiped him and provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger, according to all that his father had done" (I Kings 21:51-53).* Ahaziah's brother was also evil. *"Now Jehoram the son of Ahab became king over Israel at Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years. He did evil in the sight of the LORD, though not like his father and his mother; for he put away the sacred pillar of Baal which his father had made. Nevertheless, he clung to the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel sin; he did not depart from them" (II Kings 3:1-3).* Remember Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab? She led her husband astray. *"He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for the daughter of Ahab became his wife; and he did evil in the sight of the LORD" (II Kings 8:18).* Then Ahab's grandson continued the family tradition. *"Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Athaliah the granddaughter of Omri king of Israel. He walked in the way of the house of Ahab and did evil in the sight of the LORD, like the house of Ahab had done, because he was a son-in-law of the house of Ahab" (II Kings 8:26-27).* Athaliah then killed her own children and grandchildren so she could be queen (II Kings 11:1)!

Sin isn't inherited, but it is passed down generation after generation. Sometimes it gets so bad that the only solution is to cut off the source.

However, notice what God did when Ahab showed humility before God. God didn't release Ahab from any of the consequences of his sins. God only delayed when Ahab's descendants would start dying. It might not seem like much, but consider that Ahab's descendants had a chance to repent. But none of them turned from Ahab's ways. God was willing to offer mercy simply because Ahab once dropped his pride. Sadly, Ahab and his descendants never took advantage of the opportunity to change.

God was being more than fair in His dealings with Ahab, just as He has shown mercy to you and me. We still live. We still have time to turn from our sins and humble ourselves before God. But will that change take place? The choice is yours alone to make.