

## **BE PREPARED**

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How close are we to the end of this age? We don't know! I assume that we all watch world events? But ... much is really "business as usual" — wars ... rumours of wars ... politics ... economic woes. All fairly standard.

There are clearly areas where major problems could erupt. Middle East with oil threats — militant Islam — immigration pressures and the rise of "far-right" — polarised opinions in the USA — UK — other countries. Some economists warn of a major collapse of world economies is "now overdue".

But ... things could bob along for years yet — or ... alternatively erupt almost overnight.

The question for today is: If the world lurched into chaos in the next 3 ... 6 ...12 months — are we prepared?

#### **Isaiah 30:12-14 (NKJV)**

12 **Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel:**

**"Because you despise this word,**

**And trust in oppression and perversity,**

**And rely on them,**

13 **Therefore this iniquity shall be to you**

**Like a breach ready to fall,**

**A bulge in a high wall,**

**Whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant.**

14 **And He shall break it like the breaking of the potter's vessel,**

**Which is broken in pieces;**

**He shall not spare.**

So there shall not be found among its fragments  
A shard to take fire from the hearth,  
Or to take water from the cistern."

The breaking comes suddenly ... in an instant.

Though — if we are watching in the right place — we will probably see it developing ... but ... nonetheless ... the end still comes abruptly!

So. If real serious trouble and tribulation broke out soon — or the early birth pangs of the end-times happen any time soon — are we ready for that white-knuckle ride? Are we prepared?

Can we have confidence if the world we're used to collapses all around us?

It's all fairly quiet at the moment (for most of us). A good time to mentally prepare for what might yet happen ... suddenly!

**Psalms 46:1-3 (NKJV)**

**1 God is our refuge and strength,**

**A very present help in trouble. (He is there)**

**2 Therefore we will not fear,**

**Even though the earth be removed,**

**And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;**

**3 Though its waters roar and be troubled,**

**Though the mountains shake with its swelling.**

Selah

Economic/political upheaval? Suddenly!

We will not fear ... because the Lord of hosts is with us.

**Psalms 46:7 (NKJV)**

**7 The Lord of hosts is with us;**

**The God of Jacob is our refuge.**

Selah

GOD IS WITH US.

We might see major corporations collapsing ... banks ... governments overthrown ... the world's system tottering.

**Psalms 32:6-11 (NKJV)**

**6 For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You**

**In a time when You may be found;** *(certainly today is a good time to be found)*

Surely in a flood of great waters *(major attack/upheaval)*

They shall not come near him.

7 **You are my hiding place;** *(preserved ... to watch over ... to keep ... to protect)*

**You shall preserve me from trouble;**

**You shall surround me with songs of deliverance.**

Selah

8 **I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;**

**I will guide you with My eye.**

9 Do not be like the horse or like the mule,

Which have no understanding,

Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle,

Else they will not come near you. *(Don't be stubborn ... difficult to influence)*

10 **Many sorrows shall be to the wicked;**

**But he who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall surround him.**

11 **Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous;**

**And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!**

GOD IS OUR HIDING PLACE.

If necessary ... God will instruct us and teach us in any action that's required (verse 8).

**Psalms 91:1-8 (NKJV)**

1 **He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High**

**Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.**

2 **I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress;**

**My God, in Him I will trust."**

3 **Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler**

**And from the perilous pestilence.**

4 He shall **cover you with His feathers,**

**And under His wings you shall take refuge;**

**His truth shall be your shield and buckler.**

5 **You shall not be afraid of the terror by night,**

**Nor of the arrow that flies by day,**

**6 Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness,**

Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday.

7 A thousand may fall at your side,  
And ten thousand at your right hand;

But it shall not come near you.

8 Only with your eyes shall you look,  
And see the reward of the wicked.

Protection in times of major trouble. We shall not be afraid of terror or arrows (missiles) ... disease epidemics ... 10,000 dying at our right hand.

It doesn't sound just like spiritual platitudes ... does it? Real genuine destruction ... real genuine protection.

Of course ... keeping our focus and trust in God is for our lives generally — but particularly important in times of major trouble or distress.

Other people won't be the answer — unless God uses them as part of His solution — but we don't want to put our confidence in people or human organisations.

Jeremiah 17:5-8 (NKJV)

5 Thus says the Lord:

“Cursed is the man who trusts in man

And makes flesh his strength,

Whose heart departs from the Lord.

6 For he shall be like a shrub in the desert,  
And shall not see when good comes,  
But shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness,  
In a salt land which is not inhabited.

7 “Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord,  
And whose hope is the Lord.

8 For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters,  
Which spreads out its roots by the river,

And will not fear when heat comes;  
But its leaf will be green,  
And will not be anxious in the year of drought,  
Nor will cease from yielding fruit.

Trust in the Lord to be blessed and protected.

Maybe we feel quite comfortable on a personal level? Got assets ... a home that we own ... pension accounts ... some secure investments? **Watch out!!** Things can change in an instant!

### **1 Timothy 6:17 (NKJV)**

17 **Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.**

Riches aren't dependable. Ask those who were millionaires in the Spring of 1929. Or major investors in Lehman Bros in 2008. Amazon ... Google ... Walmart ... could all go if circumstances turned against them. It's happened to others.

If our economies collapse — or just shrink dramatically ... will we panic? Will we turn to the Federal Government ... The Bank of England ... EU's economic wizards?

Thankfully ... The Bank of Heaven is not affected!!

### **Matthew 6:19-21 (NKJV)**

19 **“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth,** where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

20 **but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,** where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

21 **For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

The Bank of Heaven is secure.

### **Matthew 6:24-32 (NKJV)**

24 **“No one can serve two masters;** for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and mammon.** (*Aramaic word for riches*)

25 “Therefore I say to you, **do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink;** nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

28 “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;

29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

31 “***Therefore do not worry***, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’

32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For **your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.**

You can’t serve God and mammon (riches and profit). **Don’t worry!** You have a Heavenly Father who will take care of you.

#### **Psalms 23:1-6 (NKJV)**

1 **The Lord is my shepherd;**

**I shall not want.**

2 **He makes me to lie down in green pastures;**

He leads me beside the still waters.

3 He restores my soul;

He leads me in the paths of righteousness

For His name’s sake.

4 **Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,**

**I will fear no evil;**

**For You are with me;**

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

You anoint my head with oil;

My cup runs over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

All the days of my life;

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord

Forever.

No lack. Green pastures. Even in the valley of the shadow of death ... God is with us.

Don't just treat Psalms as light-weight scriptures — just “songs”. They are a key portion of God's Word to us. Psalms is the most quoted Old Testament book in the New Testament. They are there for a reason! Including encouragement.

Humanly speaking ... we might wonder how God could look after us if there is a major disruption in our towns ... neighbourhood — even the entire country. Well — we don't need to know the how ... we don't need the specifics in advance — the just shall live by faith (the evidence of things not seen).

But God has left us numerous examples of what He can do. And ... he can do a lot.

Think of the original Exodus for a start! 40 years in the wilderness looking after millions.

#### **Mark 6:32-44 (NKJV)**

32 So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves.

33 But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him.

34 **And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd.**

So He began to teach them many things.

35 **When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, “This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late.**

**36 Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat.”**

37 **But He answered and said to them, “You give them something to eat.”**

And they said to Him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat?”

38 But **He said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.”**  
**And when they found out they said, “Five, and two fish.”**

39 Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass.

40 So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties.

41 And **when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among them all.**

42 **So they all ate and were filled.**

43 **And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish.**

44 **Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men.**

Jesus fed 5,000 men and others with just 5 loaves and 2 fish. And ... there were 12 baskets left over.

In another place ... it mentions more than 4,000 who were fed — with 7 large baskets of left-overs.

If necessary ... God can do the same for us — whether as a group ... or a family.

But that was Jesus in person? Only He can do miracles like that??

Let's look at the example of Elijah.

#### **1 Kings 17:8-16 (NKJV)**

8 Then the word of the Lord came to him, (*Elijah*) saying,

9 **“Arise, go to Zarephath, (a Gentile town) which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.”**

10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. **And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, “Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink.”**

11 **And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, “Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.”**

12 **So she said, “As the Lord your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar;** and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.”

13 And *Elijah* said to her, **“Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son.**

14 **For thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth.’”**

15 So she went away and did according to the word of *Elijah*; and she and he and her household ate for many days.

16 **The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke by *Elijah*.**

There was a 3½ year famine. She was a poor widow! The flour and oil continued daily for the whole household. (God didn't provide it upfront all at once. It requires continuing faith. "Give us this day our daily bread").

When the time comes ... it will make no difference to God whether manufacturers ... suppliers ... distributors ... are available or not.

HE CAN PROVIDE IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCE.

### **Luke 5:1-9 (NKJV)**

1 So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret,

2 and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets.

3 **Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat.**

4 **When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."**

5 **But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net."**

6 **And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking.**

7 **So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. (What size of catch was this? It must have been huge!)**

8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

9 For **he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken;**

Peter had a net-breaking haul of fish. It would feed many ... but was also profitable for Peter and his partners. A miraculous income ... even contrary to all of the evidence.

Yes .. but sometimes you need "real" money?

### **Matthew 17:24-27 (NKJV)**

24 When they had come to Capernaum, those who received the temple tax came to Peter and said, “Does your Teacher not pay the temple tax?”

25 He said, “Yes.”

And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?”

26 Peter said to Him, “From strangers.”

Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are free.

27 Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you.”

If hard cash is required ... 😊

“Piece of money” = Stater = Silver Coin. Sufficient to pay the temple tax for Jesus and Peter. (This was levied on Jewish men aged between 20-50). What about the other disciples? This is one reason why some think that the other disciples were still teenagers ... and not required to pay the temple tax.

God can find many ways to support his sons and daughters. He’s a much-more Father!

Philippians 4:4-8 (NKJV)

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

5 Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (*Peace of mind ... even in difficult times*)

8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

BE ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING!

No matter how grim things may look in the natural — we should be able to enjoy the Peace of God — secure!

**Philippians 4:19 (NKJV)**

19 And **my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**

GOD WILL SUPPLY ALL OF OUR NEEDS!

If God is a good Father ... and loves His sons and daughters — that's what we would expect. Especially when times are tough! Can we believe it?

**Proverbs 3:21-26 (NKJV)**

21 **My son, let them not depart from your eyes—**

**Keep sound wisdom and discretion;**

**22 So they will be life to your soul**

**And grace to your neck.**

23 **Then you will walk safely in your way,**

**And your foot will not stumble.**

24 **When you lie down, you will not be afraid;**

**Yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet.**

25 Do not be afraid of sudden terror,

Nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes;

26 **For the Lord will be your confidence,**

And will keep your foot from being caught.

Sleep will be sweet. No fear of terror. The Lord is our confidence.

We may know these things “in our heads”. But ... one day — possibly suddenly — life may change dramatically. It would be good to have these truths in our heart.

It is worth dwelling on — **before** the time! So that we can be prepared.