

## Trumpets: Soon To Be Fulfilled?

**Attitudes of Generation X**

**Richard T. Ritenbaugh**

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I have a few questions for you.

Which holy day is the most important to you? All of them are important, and all of them are vital to God's plan of salvation. But, which of the seven annual holy days is of the greatest interest to you? Which holy day's fulfillment do you think about most often? Which holy day's fulfillment will have its greatest effect on you, the people of the world, and all the other things through time? Which holy day's meaning has the greatest impact upon us as we live day by day? Which holy day's fulfillment do you yearn for most eagerly?

Since today is the Feast of Trumpets, the obvious answer is the Feast of Trumpets. But, have you ever looked at the Feast of Trumpets from the angle of how important it is to us—to you personally? Have you realized how much of an impact the meaning of the Feast of Trumpets has on us day by day?

Do you realize that in one form or another, we think about the Day of Trumpets, or its fulfillment, every day of our Christian lives. As a matter of fact, it is one of those things, which is in the "Lord's Prayer," "Thy Kingdom come!" Christ says that we should be praying this all the time. That is our goal: The establishment of the Kingdom of God.

However, how long do we have to wait until Christ returns to establish His Father's Kingdom? How long until our change comes? How much longer do we have? "How long, O Lord?"

Do you know that this is a very current question in the greater church of God? Some say, and I have read this and heard this from a high-ranking evangelist in one of the churches of God, who believes that we still have several hundred more years. Some in other churches of God say, "Well, we might have twenty or fifty more years." Some say that we can count them all on one hand. Some are now saying that He will come tomorrow! Some are saying today, the Feast of Trumpets!

And do you know, some who are not with us, who are New Agers, say that He has already come, and is in Arizona someplace!

Are we even living in the last days? Some are even questioning that now.

What is the answer? Does our former teaching under Herbert W. Armstrong still apply? Has the breakup of the Worldwide Church of God, and the developing lack of power in preaching the gospel to the world, meant that everything that he taught us is wrong? Did Herbert W. Armstrong read the fig tree (in the gospel accounts) wrong? Was he putting his own interpretation into events and scriptures to get us to run gun-lap after gun-lap?

So, before we can go any further in determining the importance of the Feast of Trumpets, we have got to re-prove that these are indeed the last days—the end times. And then, we can

determine what we should be doing about it, and then we will know just how important the Day of Trumpets really is to us!

We will begin in II Peter 3 today. This was his last message written to the church of God before his death. And, he was seeing something that was going on in the church, and he was writing to warn them about how conditions are at the end time.

II Peter 3:1-4 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

Turn over to the book of Jude who has some parallel thoughts regarding false ministers and other apostates who had come in.

Jude 16-19 These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage. But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.

You see? We were warned over the years. I just reminded, you by reading these two, that this would happen. That, in the last days people would be saying, "Aw, we still have got a couple hundred more years! We're not living in the last days!"

Just when all the factors are in place, cynics, mockers, scoffers, skeptics, rationalists, and "absolutely reasonable people," would try to convince God's people that Christ is not coming soon; that they can rest on their laurels, take it easy, and plod all they want.

"Aw, we've got plenty of time! Twenty, fifty, a hundred years! I'll take Europe at least, oh, ten, twenty, twenty-five years to be able to challenge the United States politically, economically, and militarily. Don't you know that the Middle East is quiet? And you know that two hundred million-man army that is supposed to come from the east? What sign of that do you have? They have not even begun forming yet."

By the way, I just heard yesterday that Iran has the highest birthrate in the world. And, it is sitting right there next to India, which has a billion population, which is next to China, which has over a billion population—do you not think that they could just blow a whistle and two hundred million men would just suddenly show up?

We were just talking about this one the other day. "Aw, every thought in man's heart is not evil continually, yet. There are a lot of good people out there still. Look at all the good Samaritans there are. There are just gobs of good people out there. They can't be all bad."

"Christ wouldn't come back now. We haven't gone to all the world as a witness with the gospel for the end to come yet. We still have a huge work to do. We need that twenty or twenty five years before we can put everything together and reach everybody through the Internet, and through broadcasts, and telecasts, or whatever."

People are saying these things out there.

"Ah, the church of God needs to re-unite before Christ can come back. Everybody—every last true Christian on the face of the earth must be under one umbrella again."

Can you find those things in Scripture? I cannot. Daniel 12 tells me that they are going to be scattered all to pieces, and He will have to re-gather them under whoever He wants to use to re-gather them. It will not be under some ecumenical umbrella that somebody puts up, saying, "Y'all come!"

So, we can come up with dozens of excuses, rationalizations, justifications, and reasons why Christ will not come soon.

And, do you know that they all have one thing in common? They are not looking at it in faith. But, what Peter says, is, the thing they have in common is that they assume that events are going to continue just as they always have. They are looking at the past, alone, rather than looking at God's Word, to tell them how things will transpire.

Peter warns us that world events are going to look like they are just going to go on, and on, and on—and then suddenly something will break, and it will happen. We will be in it up to our noses or even higher! When this sudden change comes, are we going to be ready?

So, what are the last days? What are they the last days of? Is it the end of the world?

Most of us know the answers to these questions. But, just for clarity's sake, we will review a little bit.

The terms are used for the first time in a very interesting place, Genesis 49:1 where Jacob called his sons together, and said to them, "I'm going to tell you what your tribes and nations are going to look like in the last days." And, then he proceeded to tell them all these characteristics so that we in this audience could tell where they are.

And, it is also found in two scriptures that we read every Feast of Tabernacles, Isaiah 2:2, and Micah 4:1.

Isaiah 2:2 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it.

The prophets Micah and Isaiah then go on to describe what will occur when God's Kingdom is

established on the earth. He is talking about the establishment of the government of God at Christ's return, and thereafter.

It is used 16 times by Jesus Christ and the apostles in the New Testament. And they use either the last day(s), or last time(s), or last hour. And, John uses it more than all the others—8 times; and four of those in chapter 6 alone! "I will raise Him up at the last day." And also in John 11: 24 when Martha comes and says, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day," meaning the resurrection of the dead. And, in John 12: 48 Jesus uses "the last day" to mean, "The Great White Throne Judgment."

So, just from these few little scriptures, and we will touch on some more later, we can see that the last days, the latter days, the last time, or the last hour means pretty much the same as the Day of the Lord in the Old Testament. It could be one particular day when Christ comes, or it could mean the time of the whole year of the Day of the Lord, or it can mean the general time when Christ is ruling (which would go on for eternity); but most specifically when people talk about the "last days," they are talking about the period of time just before and after Christ returns. We all knew that.

But, when we think about the last days, especially those of us who remember Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's teaching, we think of Matthew 24. The last day is its theme.

Matthew 24:3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

They asked Him a very specific question about what the last days are going to be like. That is the theme. And then Christ goes on and gives them sign after sign of when the last days will be. "What will show us when You will come?"

And He answered those questions. Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong frequently went to verse 14 and said that this is a great sign that the gospel will be preached around the world as a witness. But, he also went to verse 22 to show us what the most conclusive sign is.

Matthew 24:22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

It is interesting to look at this verse in a few other translations.

Matthew 22:24 (RSV) . . . No human being would be saved...

Matthew 22:24 (The Four Gospels, E.B. Reeed) . . . No living thing would have escaped. . .

Matthew 22:24 (Berkley Version N.T.) . . . Not a mortal would survive. . .

Matthew 22:24 (Moffat) . . . Not a soul would be saved alive. . .

Matthew 22:24 (Living Bible) . . . all mankind will perish. . .

Matthew 22:24 (NIV) . . . no one would survive. . .

Matthew 22:24 (Amplified) . . . no human being would endure and survive. . .

Matthew 22:24 (REB) . . . no living thing would survive. . .

Matthew 22:24 (Young's Lit. Translation) . . . no flesh would have been saved. . .

Matthew 22:24 (NT, Kenneth West) . . . all flesh would not be saved from destruction. . .

I have just used ten different versions, there. I think we can get a pretty good idea of what it says. It means that in those days—the last days—will be recognized by mankind's ability to annihilate every living thing on planet earth. No flesh, no living thing, no mortal could endure it.

If God does not intervene in world affairs, the nations of this world will fight until there is not one left standing. So, we should ask, "Is this possible today?"

Do you know that the United States and the Soviet Union just fought a 45 year cold war in which both sides stockpiled enough nuclear weapons to kill us all 50 times over? The technical term for that was, "overkill." You only need to do it once, you know.

And, they have been taking down those stockpiles little by little. But, I got on the Internet the other day, and I typed in "overkill," "nuclear," "atomic bomb," "hydrogen," and a few other words like that, and I came up with a World Wide Web page that told me that in 1995, 40,640 nuclear weapons are still available to the five major nuclear powers—United States, Russia, Britain, France, and China. And this number does not include the nations who are suspected to have nuclear weapons and capabilities, such as Israel, India, Pakistan, North Korea, South Africa, Iran, etc. The 40,640 are the ones they know about.

Oh, I almost forgot! We not only have nuclear weapons to worry about, we have poison gas weapons too. Ever heard of chemical weapons? That is what got our soldiers in the Gulf War all sick (World War I, also). It was one of our objectives in the Gulf War to stop Saddam Hussein from producing any more chemical weapons. That was one of the terms of the U.N. decision at the end.

And, do not forget biological weapons—viruses, bacteria, and other critters put into your water, or air than can kill you in a few minutes, or a day, or so. And something else—the neutron bomb! It only kills people and other organisms affected by radiation, but leaves all the buildings standing so the victors can come in and use them eventually.

And I am just guessing—but how many top-secret space-based weapons systems are there floating around up there we do not know about? I do not know. I am not being paranoid, but I am just saying that we have that capability to outfit our satellites with lasers.

Are we living in the last days? I think so! I believe that it is very clear!

This one sign proves it conclusively—Matthew 24: 22—for in no other time in world history has it been possible to eradicate all life from the planet. Only since the advent of the atomic bomb in 1945, or the hydrogen bomb in 1952, has man had the knowledge and the ability to wipe himself out of existence . . . all flesh could be killed.

So, mankind has been able to commit complete genocide for about 50 years now. No one has pushed the "button" yet, so this could go on forever, could it not? You do not suppose that someone would be stupid enough to do that, do you, to launch a nuclear attack? All it takes is one irrational person.

There are now low-yield nuclear weapons that are the size of a baseball. Imagine throwing one of those into a big crowd somewhere. That would cause a big ruckus in the world, do you not think so?

But, could we not go for a long time, maybe centuries like this, because mankind is so good that he would not dare do this?

We know that mankind has never not used a weapon that he has invented. Every weapon that he has invented he has used at least once. And now, we have them that can kill all life from planet Earth.

Although many consider nuclear weapons to be armaments of last resort, how can we confidently assert that no one would ever resort to them? I do not think that we can. There are too many madmen in the world for that. How long must we wait before genocide begins?

That answer is in the Book!

This is one of the other versions of the Olivet Prophecy, which is also found in Matthew 24: 32-35, and Mark 13: 28-31—the Parable of the Fig Tree.

Luke 21:29-30 Then He spoke to them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near.

He was telling them something that they already knew. When they went down the street, or down the road, and they saw that the fig tree was budding out, they knew that spring was progressing, and that summer would be quick in coming.

He addresses this directly at us:

Luke 21:31 So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near.

Read the fig tree, He says. "You see all these signs? They tell you that it is coming soon!"

Luke 21:32-33 Assuredly [Jesus leaves no doubt], I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. [Then Jesus guarantees it again] Heaven and earth will pass away, but My

words will by no means pass away.

"This generation—but no farther!"

If we are thinking of the generation of the apostles, then we have not looked at history lately! Jesus Christ did not return during their lifetimes. So, we know that He did not mean that generation He spoke to.

We will put verses 31 and 32 together, here. "When you see these things happening . . . this generation will by no means pass away till all things are fulfilled."

The interpretation of this is that the generation that sees these things happening will be the generation that Christ returns to, the one that Christ will come back in. This is the plain understanding of this.

Adding this back in—from 1952 onward, mankind has had the ability to eradicate all life from this planet. You have this generation that sees these things happening, and the ability to knock out all life on the planet. Therefore, we have narrowed it down to one generation pretty closely.

I say, my own interpretation, that they are the generation that fought and won World War II. And, fought and won the Cold War. This is my guess. The other interesting thing about this generation is that they are the generation who latched onto and supported Herbert Armstrong more than any before or since. And if it is not them, it is the one after them—the generation who came into their own during the 1950s.

This is fairly narrow, do you not think so? The World War II generation was the one that saw the horrors of war—pestilence and famine around the world during that period of trouble. They are the ones who have had to endure the growing natural disasters, outbreaks of killer diseases; they were the ones at the helm when these things have taken place. This is the generation who discovered, invented, tested, and used nuclear technology which can kill all life from the planet. They were the ones who stockpiled 40,640 nuclear weapons that we have still got around.

This is my interpretation. It is not exact. And I do not think that Jesus Christ meant for it to be perfectly exact. He did say that no man knows the day or the hour.

But, these are the people who are right now in their 70s and 80s. We see Mr. Bob Dole, one of the last candidates for President of the United States from the World War II generation.

And, if it is not them, it is they who are now in their 50s and 60s. It will not be long before these people will be fading into history, sad to say—or in our hope, glad to say! Christ is coming back soon! Now, we generally know that these are the last days because of these things I have brought to you again today.

Because religious deception is intensifying, because wars and rumors of wars are intensifying, because famine is intensifying, because diseases are intensifying, because earthquakes are intensifying, and other natural disasters are intensifying . . . but you know, they are a little impersonal, do you not think so? Those happen to "other people" who are far away.

Some of these things we can look at very intellectually, and say, "Yeah, we know they are

happening." But we have never experienced the time of the end personally, except up here in our mind's imagination.

I would like to go to another sign of the end that will hit a lot closer to home. It will hit every one of us, one way or another, because we either are it, or our children are it, or our grandchildren are it. And, this sign of the end is now known as Generation X.

You did not think that it could be possible, did you? It is kind of surprising.

This is the generation called the "baby busters," because they came right after the "baby boomers." They are also called the "boomerang" generation, because the boomers went out and they came in. They are also called the "thirteenth generation" (which I will explain a bit later), the "MTV generation," and the "new lost generation." Such interesting choices of words.

Paul is going to give us some more clues and signs that we are living in the last days, and it has to do with attitudes of the generation coming into its own at the end.

II Timothy 3:1-5 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

That is very condemnatory, is it not?

Notice that in verse one, the first words are, "But know this..."—it is a warning. It is very important. And then, when he gets finished with it, he says to get away from such people who have attitudes like this. He is dead serious.

Now, I am not here to trash or ridicule the Generation X. I am here like a reporter about their general attitudes. But I must say because I believe that it is important that the people who are of Generation X understand that I, myself, am a Generation X person—not product, but person. My sister Sharon is also a Generation X'er, but she says that I belong to the World War II generation because we are so different in many different ways.

These 13'ers—and that is what I am going to call them, mostly, today—because they are the 13<sup>th</sup> generation, and they are the ones in the world, and hopefully not in the church. I hope that the parents have taught them well enough not to be like this. But, I bet we are surprised at how many of these attitudes have crept in, not only to the 13'ers, but also the baby boomers, and the ones before them, and the ones before them, the GI's—World War II generation.

13'ers belong to the thirteenth generation—that is the thirteenth since the founding fathers of the United States. That is Benjamin Franklin's generation. They consider that one to be the first generation.

George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Nathan Hale, and even Benedict Arnold are considered the second generation called the Liberty Generation.

So, it comes down like this for thirteen generations, to generation X, the MTV generation. We have come a long way from the Liberty Generation to the MTV generation. This includes everyone born between 1961 and 1981. They are the ones coming into their own, these days—those born in 1961 will be 35 years old this year—between 15 and 35 years old basically.

Now I got most of my stats from a book titled, *Thirteenth Generation*. And it has an interesting subtitle (it uses computerese), *Abort, Retry, Ignore, or Fail?* They are saying, "What will we do with this generation?"

These authors, Neil Howe and Bill Straw, admit that their findings are generalities. And most 13'ers say that these are oversimplifications. But, what they have done is taken a cross section of America, and analyzed it with the best of their abilities. Unfortunately, many of the trends, attitudes, and ways of thinking are listed in II Timothy 3: 2-5.

Let us go down the list and see how these things fit.

Lovers of themselves.

This one comes first because this one is the basis for everything that the 13'ers do. They have been taught since they were babies to love themselves. They are the most pampered generation in the history of the world, and one of the reasons why they are the most pampered is because their parents, the Silent Generation, is the wealthiest generation ever in the history of the world. They are also the busiest generation in the history of the world.

So, the parents, in order to assuage their feelings of guilt for having left their children all the time, continually give them things. They keep giving them gifts and toys and everything that they think of—clothes, cars, and new techno gizmos—to make them feel good, as if they have provided for their children.

We could also use the terms selfish, self-centered, and self-absorbed generation. These are the young people of "Beverly Hills 90210," and their copycats; and, the generation of kids on the "Cosby Show," and their copycats; and, interestingly, and ironically, they are also the kids of "The Simpson's," and their copycats. These are just the extremes. The bad boy with no shame, and the prissy, don't-ruin-my-hairdo types on "90210."

This comes out in several different facets.

Topping this list is clothing. They just gotta have those Air Jordans. "I will kill for a pair of Air Jordans." How about ripped jeans at the knees? It may be passé now, but at the time, they were the height of fashion. Bugle Boy shirts (or name your designer). "Gotta have these 'cause they're me!"

On the other side, there is the grunge look. This is that dichotomy that we have—those who dress to the nines, and those who cannot care less what they wear. There is also the gang-banger look from the ghettos.

They are also the ones who have brought back the 1970s "retro-look"—platform shoes, and that sort of thing. This is because that is when they grew up! They idolized the "Partridge Family,"

and "The Brady Bunch." It makes them feel good. It is sentimental to them. They flocked to that re-make movie of The Brady Bunch, and loved it.

They are also the designer look—GQ, Mademoiselle—that you see on "90210."

This is also the generation of body sculpting—steroids (pumping up), and the anorexic/bulimic (throwing up). "Gotta make my body look perfect!"

This is the generation of what I call "body accessories." This would be an overabundance of earrings, nose rings, navel rings, nipple rings, tongue rings, lip rings, eyebrow rings, and all the other places that body piercing has ventured to put rings in or on.

They have also made very popular and fashionable the tattoo.

Let me read one of these things, here, from this book, page 82:

These days, many a kid who feels that life's edge seizes upon some physical ideal, and tries to push, push, push a body way beyond it. Boys beef up often to ridiculous and hazardous extremes. Girls waste away with anorexia, and the binge and purge bulimia—eating disorders nearly unheard of before the 1970s whose victims are nearly all female, all white, and all young.

In an era otherwise marked by unprecedented focus on good health, adolescent obesity is on the rise, and teens of both sexes are increasingly piercing, tattooing, or otherwise disfiguring their bodies.

Where the old boomer drug of choice lifted minds over body, and heightened sensory awareness—pain included—the 13'er drugs of choice put body over mind, dim the senses, and enable anxious young people to vanquish social or athletic competitors.

Tragically, another way they show their love for themselves is their soaring, astronomically tragic suicide rate. Suicide, do you not know, is a completely self-centered act. It cares for no one. It cares not at all about the effects on other people they leave behind. They just want to end it all. That is why many of them wear black. Another name for 13'ers is "the tragic generation," because they feel so low, or they let themselves feel so low.

Ten percent of adolescent boys and 18 percent of adolescent girls have admitted that they have attempted suicide. And one million of them have succeeded.

From 1971 through 1989 the number of adolescents admitted to private psychiatric hospitals increased fifteen-fold. Even though the overall youth population declined during the 1980s, psychiatric care for adolescents was one of the fastest growing, and one of the most profitable branches of medicine.

One movie, *Heather's* talked about these tragic teenagers. One of the teacher characters in this

movie said, "Whether to kill yourself or not is one of the most important decisions a teenager can make."

Lovers of Money

Another quote from the book,

It's okay to be selfish as long as you are upfront about it. We trust ourselves, and money. Period.

Another 13ther says,

I'm very materialistic! I'd either like to be at the top of things in the business world, or live on a beach in a shack. I just don't want to be in middle class suburbia.

The author says,

Thirteeners trust hard green because their earliest life experiences taught them that you can't trust anything else. Having grown up in a childhood world that stressed private rights and liberties, they learned that families may leave you, neighbors may rob you, governments may cheat you, but money is always faithful.

Like your body, [another 13'er obsession] it is a purer extension of your personal will. It depends upon no one else. In sufficient amounts it can vanquish any foe, or deter any predator. Money isn't everything, but for a generation uninvited to most other avenues of social approval, it is the best thing within reach, they think.

This money has put them into debt; they are one of the most indebted generations in the history of the world. Listen to what Katherine Hennessee, a professor at Texas Tech says,

I've seen kids with fifty thousand, some to seventy thousand dollars in debt. They spend their money on clothes, pizza, tuition, books, fun, travel, presents for girlfriends, shoes, watches, engagement presents, proms, formals—kids just go haywire.

Another quote from the book,

They are little Drexel Burnhams, like little S & L's free spending in the 1980s when they got their first taste of plastic [credit cards]. Broke now, their parents are like ATMs hit up regularly to pay for plane

tickets, and to help tame credit card debt.

Another one from a high school senior,

A lot of parents will give credit cards to teach their kids responsibility about handling money. It always backfires. Kids usually end up sucking their parents dry.

Boasters, and Proud

I will read another quote from this. This is what they say about themselves:

We're street smart, David Letterman clever, whizzes at Nintendo; we can name more beers than presidents. Pop culture is to us more attractive than education.

And they are proud of it! How about another one?

I'm not afraid. Only the strong survive. I'm strong.

In fact, the authors say that the 13'ers think of themselves as the clean-up generation. That is, the generation that has to right the wrongs, and clean up the messes of their elders. One of them says,

We're not trying to change things; we're trying to fix things. We are the generation that is going to renovate America. We're going to be its carpenters, and janitors.

What a thing to be proud of. They do not set their sights very high, it seems.

Blasphemers

Modern translations render this word as, "railers," "defamers," "abusive," "contemptuous," and "given to bitter words."

Who do they rail against? Who do they defame and abuse? The baby boomers' generation. They cannot stand baby boomers. They say that baby boomers ruined everything for them.

I want to read something, here. This is what a baby buster, a 13'er, said about the baby boomers:

Oh, you're too easy on yourself. While you are at it, why don't you talk about how the baby boomers have turned America into a shrink-wrapped processed non-dairy petroleum cheese by-product?

Why don't you discuss how your idiot obsession with celebrities, beauty, and youth has made every single one of my friends convinced that they are ugly and worthless? Instead of taking care of all the problems we face daily about our jobs, family, and future, your generation has sautéed us kids in saturated fats, ludicrous cable channels, and Hollywood gossip. You've broiled us in the media, basted us with your movies about dead hunks, and stir-fried us in Kim Bassinger's romantic problems. Maybe I'm being irrational, but there is just something about the baby boomer mentality that makes me want to burn down the magazine rack at the supermarket.

Okay, here is a 13'er talking to a baby boomer,

13'er: I want an admission from you.

Baby boomer: An admission of what?

13'er: An admission that your generation wasn't as spiritually fabulous as you would have us believe. Rock 'n roll, civil rights, and Viet Nam protests were movements that you were not responsible for, yet you guys take credit every chance you get. And, stuff like drugs, crime, sexual diseases, and family stress is all stuff you blame us for, when you were the ones who raised them all up to an art form! You blame young folks for having no concept of the higher ideals in life, when you are the ones who trash most of them. You delved into the selfish, flakey, hippy, drug philosophy when it was hip, and then did a one-eighty and accused us of having short attention spans.

Baby boomer: Okay, you have a point.

13'er: You guys seem to have completely lost sight of the emotional work ethic. You spend all your money on every two-second varnish remover, baldness cure, or instant religious salvation that comes on cable [TV] after midnight. You're always looking for the easy way out, figuring that it is much simpler to stick a vacuum cleaner into your love handles, than to eat right in the first place. You're gnat-like attention span has produced a culture of ideas that is far junkier than any video game that we could ever waste an hour playing, and the voracity with which you go through self help books, celebrity diets, and unauthorized biographies show how little soul you had to start with. You were given everything, and then somehow began to confuse your quest for ideological perfection with self-indulgent laziness. Someone famous once said, "Some people are born great. Others have greatness thrust upon them." But, you guys seem hell bent on having greatness surgically implanted.

Are they not railers? Defamers? Abusive? They are all true.

Disobedient to parents, or disrespectful to parents

Have you heard the term "diss?" "I'm gonna diss you man!"

That word began as "disrespect." But, in the McLanguage of the modern era, disrespect became just diss.

Thirteen-ers face the highest divorce rates, and also the highest abortion rates. They are the latch-key kids who had the television as their babysitter, and were indulged with expensive clothes, cars, stereos, games—you name it! Because, their parents felt so guilty for spending so little time with them.

Most 13er's have no respect at all for their parents, and many of them feel that they know more, and are more mature than their parents.

Listen to a 13er after remarking about his parents:

So, what do you do? It is really rather simple. You can choose to be another weak-kneed historical statistic, and end up being as much of a confused self-absorbed dork as your parents were, and go ahead and marry someone you don't particularly like, having kids, eke out an existence, and get a messy divorce that shatters your children's concepts of a higher more beautiful ideal in life; or you can choose to be a real adult, wait until you find someone who is your emotional complement, take a vow to stick around until you die, and mean it. I ain't come close yet, but at least I know what runway I'm on.

That is what they think of their parents.

Unthankful

I will read another quote,

Twenty years ago, the biggest fights between adolescents and their parents were over global values involving politics, war, and religion. Today, surveys show that their biggest quarrels are over how they spend their money, and what they do with their leisure time. Thirteen-ers collectively lack that strong attachment to the familial, educational, and economic institutions that once helped move older generations from here to there on the ladder of adult success. They appreciate neither what their parents provided for them, nor the tried and true methods for prosperity that have a long and successful history.

They want to do it their way. They have no appreciation for what their parents have done for them.

Unholy, and having a gorm of godliness but denying the power thereof.

"They are irreverent," "without piety," "having no religion," "irreligious," and one translation put it as "wicked."

This next is from George Gallup, and the Gallup Poll:

Religion ranks behind friends, home, school, music, and TV as factors teens believe are having the greatest influence on their generation.

Another one, regarding a female 13er,

In her despiritualized life, she strips billowy questions down to their real-world fundamentals having come of age without war, but with an incessant fear of nuclear holocaust, she sees apocalypse for what it is: Just death. She sees herself as post-ideological, and even in some ways post-religious. She's hesitant to impose her beliefs on everything from school prayer to abortion on others. Her god is straightforward, prone to action. What god sells, he services. When he bills, he collects. Then, it is over. She values the physical.

Muscles matter, style counts, speed is crucial to him, and nothing is incontrovertibly real, unless he can touch it, feel it, do it.

You have heard these, I know. This was the generation that was most heavily influenced by the "God is Dead" idea that their parents and older brothers and sisters seemed to have embraced.

They believe in sound bytes, rap lyrics, advertising slogans.

These have become their mottos:

"Just Do It."

"Ain't Nobody Lookin Out for Me, but Me."

"Do the 'Do'"

"Life is Short, Play Hard!"

"Let's Party"

The slogan from Jolt Cola: "All the Sugar, Twice the Caffeine"

"Life is a Sport, Drink it Up"

"Image is Everything!"

"Why ask 'Why'?"

They do not have anything like, "In God We Trust," or "One Nation, Under God." These do not seem to make any impression on their collective minds. These 13er's are the ones fleeing the churches and going into witchcraft, and new age religions. Or, they are becoming secular.

A University of California at Berkley professor says,

TV is their collective dream machine—their temple.

An ethics reports reads,

An unprecedented proportion of today's youth lack a commitment to core moral values like honesty, personal responsibility, respect for others, and civic duty.

Unloving

This is also rendered as calloused, inhuman, without natural affection, hard-hearted. This is the generation of the inner city gang, neo-nazis, carjackings, and crimes such as perpetrated by Lyle and Eric Menendez. They were raised on movies like "Dirty Harry," "Rambo," and "The Terminator."

Back in the late 1960s boomer criminals were associated with rage, and betrayed expectations. Today, the 13er criminals seem emotionally detached, even insensate.

Columnists William Raspberry accuses them of being a generation of animals—the ability to shut off their conscience.

At the peak of his boxing career Mike Tyson bragged, "Sure! I shot at a lot of people! I liked to see them run! I like to see them beg!" A swarm of aspiring street "tysons" invented the word, "wilding" to describe this type of behavior.

Unforgiving

This also means irreconcilable, implacable, and relentless.

Here is a description of a male 13er:

His face masked his troubles. It was a face without affect or emotions. Sometimes he appeared stoic, and unamused. In an adult, the hollowness of his face might have been construed as a look of judgment, but in Lafayette [the boy's name] it conveyed weariness. Even in its emptiness, it was an unforgiving face. He was an unforgiving child. "I do not have any friends," he told his mother, "just associates. Friends, you trust."

The authors write,

When a 13er begins to feel like a loser, he becomes not just your momentary garden variety loser, but a totally wasted lifelong loser, the kind who stops hoping for another chance. When something goes badly wrong, a 13er's first instinct is to blame himself.

And I add that he never forgives himself, and commits suicide.

Slanderers, traitors.

It is not mentioned directly in this book, but all you need to do is watch Oprah Winfrey, Phil Donahue, and other television talk shows. Who are the guests on these shows? Mostly young adults who have some gripe against somebody else, and they air it nationally.

Without self-control

Again from the book,

By almost any measure, the first 13ers born from 1961 to about 1964 mark an extreme for the sociopathology of American youth. They set the all time US records for drunk driving, illicit drug consumption, and suicide. They have been among the most violent, criminal, and heavily incarcerated youth cohorts in US history. Among later born 13er's, the picture is brightening some, but not much.

Brutal

From the book,

In the 1980s America became acquainted with a new breed of inner city youth criminal, a sharp-footed gangster with an all-the-business attitude toward his mayhem. He uses calculated violence to protect "inventory" against smugglers; provides customer service for safe house guests; builds market share against competing gangs; collects accounts receivable from addicts; maintains employee relations with drug runners; and manages risks—that is, the police.

To run such enterprises in the face of like-minded rivals a reputation for remorseless brutality is an indispensable asset. Fifteen-year-old enforcers brag about their ability to kill for professional reasons only. "No hard feelings," and "Strictly Business," run the movie clichés. And they collect murder news clips as macabre resumes.

Despisers of good

Here are some quotes from the 13er's themselves,

We are clueless, yet wizened; too opinionated to voice concern; purposely enigmatic and indecisive.

Mine is a generation perfectly willing to admit its contemptible qualities.

We are an impatient, quick, and dirty generation.

Our generation is probably the worst since the Protestant reformation. It is barbaric!

It is only wrong if you get caught!

The high expectation, low sweat generation has yet to introduce a new art form, or cultural movement of any significance. The only music form they have invented is "rap." Most Americans believed the stereotype that immigrants work hard, get a good education, and have a very good life. Maybe it used to be like that, but not anymore. You have to be deceptive and unscrupulous in order to make it.

From one 13er to another describing a music video:

"...stupid...inane...vapid...mindrot...stench...pablum...", and the other one says, "Yeah, it's all right!"

A description of industrial rock music in Entertainment Weekly,

There is nothing quite like it! A sound of a horrible accident on an assembly line with a beat you can dance to!

Regarding grundge,

To me, the thing about grundge is not that it is anti-fashion, it is un-fashion. Grundge is about not making a statement.

From Mike Myers in *Wayne's World*, someone asked him what his goals were for the 21<sup>st</sup> century were,

. . . to tend to have fun rather than not have fun; to have gainful employment, a really cool girlfriend, great tunes, and a good pickup game of hockey twice a week.

I am sure that he was trying to be funny, because he is a comedian, but where did he get those ideas? Who did he think that they would appeal to?

Headstrong, and lovers of pleasure

In other translations it is "reckless," "acting without thought," "adventurers," "rash," and "hot headed."

The 13er's put pleasure above everything else. And the more dangerous the good time is the better. They are the ones who came up with bungee jumping, gangs, "do the 'do,"—ever see the commercials where they do these hair-raising things in the mountains?—skate boarding, mountain biking, hot dog skiing, snow boarding, sky diving with snow boards attached to your feet, wind surfing, regular sky diving, and anything else that would bring you this close to death.

One 25 year old person said this about 13er's as to how they will age,

We will channel our money toward opportunities for travel and growth, buying sports equipment, and getting out in our environment. Hey, we need good tennis shoes, stuff to go camping, but not a BMW, or an oceanfront condo.

From a tennis shoe advertisement,

Life is short. Play hard!

Dialog from the movie, "Top Gun" (pilot to copilot),

I feel the need—the need for speed!

The 13er's have the reputation for being risk takers, always pushing the envelope. That was one of the big words in "Top Gun." Also "to go where no one has gone before," they are the Star Trek generation.

The common attitude is, "Life is short, then you die. So, live it up while you can! The future is a bad place, so let's live it all right now." Or, "Life is a party!—a sport!"

Plus, we have movies like, *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, *Ferris Buhler's Day Off*, and *Risky Business*. These are the movies that one 13er said, "comes closest to depicting life as people our age know it to be."

Like the Cindy Lauper song says, "They just wanna have fun."

Are we living in the last days? You better believe it! Are the attitudes in the present generation consistent with what the apostle Paul writes here in II Timothy 3? Very much so. Like I said before, I do not mean this as any condemnation of this generation. I just want to make it a sober assessment of the world we live in, of the times we live in. It is a dangerous world out

there! People who have attitudes like this cannot be trusted with the "button."

Gang activity, drugs, and murder are everywhere in our society. There is no place to hide. Even small towns—hickville—has problems with drugs, and gangs.

Did not we just have an announcement a few months ago about a boy who was trying to get out of a gang here in eastern North Carolina? There is not much out there. Even Mena, Arkansas played a huge role in American cocaine distribution.

People seldom care to be good Samaritans anymore, because they do not know if they are going to be "dissed" when they stop to help.

Millions of babies are aborted every year.

Racism is flaring up. Black against white; black against Hispanic; white against Hispanic; white against Asian; Asian against black. It does not matter who you are, there is someone out there who hates you.

This is the era of carjackings, home invasions, stalkings, and drive-by shootings. We are all affected in some way or another.

What do we do? God has told us that we cannot fight it, either politically or physically. We are not going to take over the world. How could a few thousand change billions of attitudes? So, what do we do?

Well, we can recognize it for what it is. It is the time of the end. Do what God says to do about that. John 5 is an interesting chapter when we think about the Day of Trumpets because it begins, "After this was a feast of the Jews."

Now if you look this up in ordinary commentaries, they will say that they are not exactly sure what this is. But, the best arguments I have seen say that this is the Feast of Trumpets because the themes of the chapter are the resurrection, Jesus Christ as judge, and Jesus Christ as the giver of eternal life. These are all themes that have to do with the Day of Trumpets.

So, notice what He tells the man. The first part talks about that He healed a man who could not get into the pool when the angel stirred the water. Remember that story? He heals him, and tells him to go on his way. He finds him later, and He tells him—listen to this:

John 5:14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him,  
"See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."

Now, let us take this spiritually. You have been called out of this world, and healed. You have been given the mind of God, and the Spirit of God. And what does He tell you?

"See? Look! I have put you on the right path! Now, what I want you to do, your duty now is to stop sinning! Repent of your wicked ways lest you return to the world, and end up worse than when I called you!"

That is what Jesus Christ tells this man. When you apply this spiritually, that is what Jesus

Christ tells us.

Peter has something very interesting to tell us, because Peter gives a litany of examples or sequence of events that describe what we have just been through.

II Peter 2:19-22 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

Now, we have read verses 1 through 4, so we are going to skip down. He has been telling us that this is the end time, and there would be these mockers who would say, "Where is Christ?"

II Peter 3:5-7 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

What is he saying? "Do not sin! Repent! Because if you do not, you are going to end up in the Lake of Fire!"

That is pretty scary. The worst thing that Jesus Christ was talking about was ultimately the Lake of Fire. What could be worse than eternal death, when He promised you eternal life?

But we have another great and fiery trial coming up just over the horizon. It is called the Great Tribulation. And, this is, indeed, a worse thing that could come upon us as well. And it is also described in terms of fire.

Normally, we think of this in terms of our everyday run of the mill trials, but it is not just that. It looks forward to a greater trial here in this end time.

I Corinthians 3:12-15 Now if anyone builds on this foundation [Christ] with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; [where does he point us?:] for the Day [of the Lord] will declare it [be seen], because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's

work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Do you want to have to endure the fire, and watch all your works be burned up? I do not.

I Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

Do you not know that this is for you? Look at what you have been given!

I Corinthians 3:17 If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

Understand this! Repent, it says! It is your duty lest some worse thing come upon you, because we are living in the last days.

Now, what does Jesus Christ tell us? This was very interesting when I went through Revelation 2 and 3. We are going to quickly go through two chapters, here, because I think you will see very soon what we need to be doing. Remember, He says to overcome to every one of them. He says that he who has an ear, let him hear, to every one of them. So, listen to what He says to these churches:

Revelation 2:5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.

He is not pulling any punches here. He said the same thing that Paul said, that if anybody destroyed the temple, God will destroy him. He will take away his lampstand.

Revelation 2:10 Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Some of you are going to have to be persecuted and go through tribulation. Get ready, He says.

Revelation 2:16 Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

"If you do not repent, I am drawing a sword after you! Maybe that will get your attention!"

Revelation 2:20-23 Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess,

to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.

That is what Paul said back in I Corinthians 3.

Revelation 2:24 Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden.

No other burden than what? To repent! That is a pretty big burden, though.

Revelation 3:3 Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

And to Philadelphia, what does He say?

Revelation 3:11 Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

Keep what you have, at least!

By now, in the message to Laodicea, He is almost begging:

Revelation 3:18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

He tells them to buy character, righteousness, and holiness! Put in those spiritual eyes that you get through the Holy Spirit so you can see the truth.

Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

Repent, repent, repent! That is all He says here.

The time is now. Christ is coming back soon, and He may be coming back sooner for some of us than we may think. There is an old gag line, "For you may die tomorrow." You might. Christ is coming for you, then, not however many months or years we have until Christ returns. Your day of judgment and salvation is up. Maybe Christ pulls the plug on you because He has said, "That's enough. You have proven it." But, maybe, "time and chance happens to us all." Or, maybe we do something stupid; or maybe He just decides that it is better that you die.

When you die, that is your day of salvation.

If you do, will you be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of Man when He returns? (Luke 21: 36)

You know, the Day of Trumpets is, indeed, a day to rejoice in the return of Jesus Christ, when He is going to return as Lord, and Savior, and King, and our High Priest to set up the government of God on this earth; to put down all rebellion. What a wonderful time that will be! What a relief that will be from these terrible last days that we live in! What joy we will have at being changed into immortal spirit beings, being able to communicate face to face with Him, and to help Him in the governing of this earth.

There is a flip side to this day that I have dwelled on because I think that it is very serious, and timely that we did. It is a most solemn day, because this is a day of judgment, war, destruction, and death.

Read Joel 2 to get a sense of this war, destruction, and death.

But, do you know what? Immediately after He describes Christ's army coming back, and laying waste, do you know what He says? It is very interesting.

He says, "Repent! Call a fast! Call a sacred assembly! Turn back to the Lord! Give Him your whole heart!"

And only then, will we be refreshed.

Joel 2:30-32 And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. [And then He smiles] And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the remnant whom the LORD calls.