

## The Handwriting Is on the Wall (2005)

### **Destruction of the Family**

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We are going to begin this sermon by turning to Isaiah.

Isaiah 1:2-6 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord has spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel does not know, my people does not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity; a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should you be stricken any more? You will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

I believe that if any of us heard this pronouncement the very first time it was given by Isaiah that we would know that within the lifespan of a generation disastrous calamities would begin falling upon our nation. And sure enough, brethren, they did. They fell upon the people of Judah who heard this the first time. God is true to His word.

This sermon had its genesis back in May when I prepared a message that I titled "The Day of Israel's Calamity." In that sermon I noted, that unlike the Gentile nations, the Israelitish nations have not yet experienced a major environmental disaster. We have experienced a number of heavily property-damaging hurricanes like the recent one Katrina in New Orleans, and Rita, but no tsunamis have devastated our shores like the one in December 2004 that Indonesia experienced. That one killed 283,000 people and completely swept away billions of dollars of real estate besides.

Now, how valuable is property compared to human life? There is no adequate comparison between the two. Property is nothing compared to human life. But by way of comparison, I think it was less than two days after Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans that somewhere between 701,000 people died while attending a religious festival in Iraq. Panic set into a large crowd that was crossing a bridge spanning the Tigris River. They panicked upon hearing the rumor that a suicide bomber was to attack them. They began pushing one another, especially against the rails of the bridge. The rails collapsed and one thousand people perished in about one quarter of an hour, drowning in the Tigris River.

How does that 701,000 people who died within a few minutes compare to the comparable

number that died in New Orleans over a period of days? In addition to that, the Iraqis had to contend with what amounts to a civil war going on in their nation and having to face being blown up anytime they might go to shop, or to look for a job, or whatever.

And now we have had an earthquake whose death toll has already exceeded 38,000 people, and devastated a large portion of Pakistan. But no volcanoes have spewed massive deaths in our nation. Major earthquakes have not leveled major portions of even one heavily populated Israelitish city. We have experienced some drought conditions, and harvests have been blunted, but not to the extent that our economy has been devastated.

How does any of these calamities compare to an earthquake that occurred on January 23, 1556 in China and took the lives of 830,000 people in the blink of an eye? Also in China on July 27, 1976—just 31 years ago—the Chinese government reported that 255,000 people were officially dead. But those in other parts of the world who keep track of these things think the Chinese were lying, because under Mao Zedong they liked to give everybody the appearance that they were powerful and well prepared for everything that came along, and so the estimates are that it actually killed over 600,000 people.

On September 1, 1923, Kanto, Japan was the epicenter of an earthquake that killed 144,000 people.

I got these figures from a Live Science website, and they listed three other earthquakes that killed over 200,000 people just in the last century or so. We have experienced nothing comparable to what has happened in these other nations.

You can be sure that major events of this nature are coming, because they are prophesied, and America gives no indication of national repentance from its gross immorality that is under way. There are behavior and social calamities that are nationwide in scope that are far more devastating in the long run than any earthquake, so be not deceived. We are not escaping. Our calamities are in other areas.

The United States and Britain especially at this time in our history, but also including other Israelitish nations, are experiencing major social and cultural calamities that give evidence of the decadence of our national character. It has not happened with the sudden shock and impact of an earthquake, or of a hurricane devastating one small area of our nation, but historically speaking, in terms of time, it *has* happened with shocking suddenness to those who research into the future social ramifications of what they clearly see is happening.

The cultural calamity I am speaking on in this "Handwriting" sermon is producing social disruption on a scale that at times falls just short of the social destruction caused by war. We might say as a nation, "Why should we have to face such calamities?" Are we worse than the Gentile nations, or any other people that are on earth? The answer to that question is no. On the surface we are not worse than other nations, but (and this is *ahuge* "but") we are more accountable to God than any other nation that has ever existed on earth. Has any other nation ever been given the immense gifts that the United States and Britain especially have been given?

One might think of our vaunted economic wealth and personal and political freedoms. Maybe you might think of the beautiful weather patterns and the abundance of water. Do you realize

that the United States and Canada alone have forty percent of all the fresh water in the world? You might think of the mineral deposits, or of our military power. But the greatest gift given us is this Book—the Bible—that tells us straight from our Creator how to live.

This Book has been thoroughly rejected over the past one hundred years, and now, since God clearly states that "to whom much is given the much more will be required," the piper must be paid. God is not only a God of mercy, He is also a God of justice, and He does not let people get away with the breaking of His law, and the rebellion against His authority. They think they are getting away with it, but they are not.

The major calamity that is giving clear evidence that the payment is being extracted is the destruction of the family. In this area of our national life the historically rapid destruction of the family gives strong evidence that the handwriting is surely on the wall. We have been found wanting, and our days as a viable and influential nation are staggering to a close because the cultural and social ramifications are immense. No nation in all of past history has ever endured the destruction of the institution that God has created to be the major building block of His people's culture. The family is the first institution that God created over four thousand years before the Church came into being. The unfolding of the Bible's instruction begins with a marriage and it ends with a marriage.

Genesis 2:21-24 And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

The prime importance of marriage and family life and the well-being of mankind and God's purpose are shown in that this is *the first step* God took following the creation of the Garden of Eden and Adam and Eve. All of mankind is derived from the formation of that one union.

I want you to turn to Acts 17 so that we can see this right out of God's Word. The apostle Paul is the speaker.

Acts 17:26 And has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.

It matters not what your nationality is, what your gender is, what your race is, what language you speak. Everyone of us in this one sense is related to everybody else because that "one blood" was in Adam. When Eve was created, she took part of the same blood that was in Adam. That is why Paul can say "one blood." Not two. One. Mankind started out as *one*, and if you understand, we are being eventually brought to the place where we are "one" again, but right

now we are not one by a long shot.

In Isaiah 1 God speaks to Israel as if He is their father, and they His rebellious children, thus providing a relationship foundation for what He requires in the remainder of the book. The family provides the foundation of every culture on earth. Of even greater importance, but far less recognized by most people on earth, is that the human family life provides us with many relationship options to help us prepare for family life in the Kingdom of God.

Father, mother, and children form the nucleus of a normal family as God designed it, but the relationships extend out from that nucleus to include several generations of people, some who may have no blood relationship to each other but become part of a family through a covenant—the marriage covenant—thus a family includes grandparents, aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, several levels of cousins, as well as brothers and sisters-in law.

Let us look at another verse in Galatians 4: 26 where we begin to get direction on a *spiritual* aspect pertaining to family.

Galatians 4:26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Spiritually, Jerusalem above is the mother of us all. Spiritually, we also have a Father, which is in heaven. We have a mother, and brothers and sisters who are not blood related, but *are* related by a covenant—the New Covenant and a common spirit.

Have you noticed that in this book God typically works through families?

Galatians 3:29 And if you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed [or descendants], and heirs according to the promise.

Physically, Abraham is reckoned as the father of the Israelitish people, and it was to him that God gave the promises. In addition, spiritually he is reckoned as the human father of the "Israel of God," which is the Church, which is to inherit the promises made to him.

God chose to work through the family of Levi by appointing them as the priests of Israel. They became then the spiritual teachers of the descendants of Abraham. Moses and Aaron were brothers. God chose the family of Aaron within the family of Levi to be the high priest of Israel, overseeing the spiritual education of Israel. He chose the family of David within the family of Judah to be the kings administrating the government of God over Israel.

Jesus and John the Baptist were cousins. Jesus' brothers, James and Jude, were apostles, and each one of them authored a book of the Bible. Among Jesus' original apostles, Peter and Andrew were brothers, as were James and John, "the sons of thunder," as Jesus nicknamed them. Interestingly these two—James and John—also appear to have been first cousins of Jesus because their mother was sister to Mary, the mother of Jesus.

God's pattern of doing this gives strong evidence of the importance of family relationships, and we need to pay attention. This pattern has been given for our instruction, but to what end?

Let us go to John 17: 17-23. Here is practically the last thing Jesus said before He was crucified. It is a prayer, and it is a prayer that not too long before Jesus uttered the words that we are going to read, that He said He is praying for *us*. The "us" here means those who came *after* the apostles—those who would be reading the words that the apostles wrote. That is *us*, and those who preceded us in the time before us all the way back to the apostles.

John 17:17-21 Sanctify them through Your truth: Your word is truth. As you have sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word: That they all may be one; as you, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

Surely you understand when He said "that they be one," He is not talking about us all being one being. We are separate children, all in one family, of one mind, of one heart, of one character, of one perspective

John 17:21-22 That they all may be one; as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that You have sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them: that they may be one, even as we are one.

Do you know what that glory is? It is this Book—the Word of God. It is the root to being one with God. It shows us how to become that way.

John 17:23 I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one.

Do you know what that "one" is? It is one family. The Church is our introduction, as it were, to that one family. The job of the Church is to educate us so that we can be of one mind with Jesus Christ and with His Father and God. That is the only way we are ever going to become "one." It is as if we all have uniform instruction on what the Father is like, and what the Son is like so that our lives and our attitudes and our conduct can be molded and shaped into what they are were they alive in the way that we are right now.

John 17:23 I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

We are being drawn ever deeper into a family that exemplifies God's truth in attitude, conduct, perspective, and purpose. Families typify unity. They look alike. They think alike. They act alike. This is what characterizes the word "family."

*My Readers Digest Encyclopedic Dictionary* says that the word family means: "Any class or group of like or related things." In regard to a family of languages it says: "A group of languages assumed from certain shared characteristics to be descended from a common parent." Shared characteristics is what distinguishes family.

What are some evidences that give indication of where we, Israel, are headed as a nation in regard to this? I cannot give you statistics from all the Israelitish nations, but I can give some for the United States of America and maybe just a few from Britain as well because I have easy access to them.

In August a news report appearing in *The Washington Times* newspaper that came by the Internet gives strong evidence of the destruction of family life. The source of the article was a Census Bureau report containing what most might consider to be merely dry statistics on the human contents of the American family household. The common public perception of the makeup of a typical American household is father, mother, and one or two children—"the nuclear family" as it is generally called.

Population Census Bureau records from earlier in the history of the United States give us fairly hard statistics that the nuclear family has always been the largest segment of a wide variety of types that constitute what the government considers a household. But that model of family life as the largest segment has been dwindling over the past fifty years, and so in the year 2000 the boundary was crossed. The nuclear family slipped into second place for the first time in American history.

As late as 1990 the census revealed 25 million nuclear family households; however, by the year 2000 that category, despite a fairly significant increase in the overall population, had lost 500,000 of that number and slipped into second place behind single adult households, which in 2000 numbered 27 million. You can see the gap is already significant.

In third place: In 1990 there were 20 million married couple households *without* children. That type retained third place in the year 2000, but the number had grown to 22 million, giving indication of a growing number of married couples who do not consider having children to be a high priority. The trend now seems to be very solidly set as a major part of the fabric of American society.

A Mr. Peter Fancese, who tracks these sorts of trends for the marketing firm of Olgilvy and Mather, and is founder of *American Demographics Magazine*, has studied United States demographic trends for 35 years. He states: "Single adult households are continuing to grow and might even hit 34 million by the year 2010." That would be a considerable increase of 7 million single adult households in just five more years.

Can you see a revolution is taking place in American life? There is no one cause that appears to be driving what is occurring, but the evidence is mounting that a revolution in American life is taking place; but this is not a revolution that is going to produce greater liberty, but greater bondage. It is not really a quiet one either, because once the drift in these statistics is seen, it begins to become evident that if things do not change, and fairly quickly, we are courting in the United States a major social disaster. We will see *why* as we progress here.

In the United States the family is being destroyed from within through a cancer of neglect of the true values that produce strong families—values that respect the worth of life itself and produce loyalties to right principles of conduct so that life can be lived without fear, enveloped in an abundance of love.

I am going to give some statistics that the breakdown of the family is contributing mightily to what is happening within the United States culturally. These figures are taken from *The Washington Times* article, Saturday, April 3, 1993, so they are over ten years old, but since that time it has grown worse.

"Between 1960 and 1993 the population of the United States increased 41 percent; however, violent crimes increased 560 percent. Illegitimate births increased 400 percent. Divorce rates quadrupled. The percentage of children living in single parent homes tripled. Teenage suicide has more than doubled."

"Immediately following WWII, 80 percent of children grew up in a family with two biological parents. By 1980 [only about 25 years later] it was down to 50 percent. In 1960 5 percent of children were born out of wedlock. In 1990 it was 27 percent overall, but among blacks the figure was an astounding 57 percent of all babies born were out of wedlock."

"Births to unwed mothers rose an astounding 102 percent in one decade—the 1960s. It rose 72 percent more in the 1970s, and another 52 percent in the 1980s. Seventy percent of juveniles in jail in the United States of America come from broken homes."

What do you think they are learning in jail? How to be qualified citizens of the United States?

"Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a New York Democrat—the man who discovered the link between family decomposition and poverty—now notes that there is a tendency in the country to "normalize" what was formerly regarded as deviant behavior, treating single parenthood (despite all the evidence of its deleterious consequences) equally acceptable as a 2-parent relationship."

Brethren, we are witnessing the crash of the United States of America. How long it is going to take, I do not know, but the evidence is in our culture, and broken marriages are leading the way.

Ephesians 6:1-4 Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth. And you fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The overall theme of the book of Ephesians is unity. It is primarily concerned with unity with God, and unity within the Church. Now why would Paul include this admonishment regarding family life in this book? The answer is because right principles regarding unity are learned in the family. Godly unity is the product of love and loyalty, and where are we supposed to learn love and loyalty? You know very well where it is supposed to be learned. It is learned from children watching their parents love one another.

The family was intended by God to provide the environment for nurture. Nurture has a sense of feeding; however, it is feeding and *more* besides, because it carries with it the sense of training, combined with loving care. This means the true nurture carries an attitude of concern for the continuous well-being of all of the family's members, and for end results that are produced in the children that are positive and in conformity with high standards of conduct set by God Almighty.

Notice that Paul directs his admonishment to fathers. Why? First of all, because God holds fathers as the party primarily responsible because God has appointed *him* the head of the house. But most men have a tragic flaw today in their attitude especially toward children, because in a man's mind the woman is the one primarily responsible. *No she is not!* But men are nurtured with the false concept and develop a strong tendency to ignore family responsibility, giving children only "a lick and a promise," as we used to say.

Have you ever noticed in family entertainment seen on television that the father is almost invariably pictured as a non-comprehending dolt? Who knows? That might be a pretty clear, right picture. I do not know, but I hope it is not that way in your house.

This does not mean that mothers are without flaw in their conduct and attitude toward children. But it seems so easy for fathers to frustrate their children through neglect, or through irritated impatient outbursts of wrath that result in undue severity, injustice in judgment, sometimes even cruelty, favoritism, suppression, sarcasm, ridicule, and abuse of responsibility.

Nurture is feeding and care with clear objectives in mind, and the father must be *the* major part of it, especially in overseeing that it is done. The destruction of the father's role in black family life is clearly seen by sociologists as the primary cause of high crime rates, high unwed birth rates, and low academic attainment of young blacks.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 And these words which I command you this day shall be in your heart: And you shall teach them diligently unto your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the posts of your house, and on your gates.

This is an overall statement of the responsibility of both parents. This series of verses is saying that parents are to be parenting 24/7. Do you understand, brethren, that you are preparing children to be children of God? That is an awesome responsibility.

Think about this: When a young person is inducted into the military, his nurture as a soldier begins. Everything in basic training especially is bent in the direction that the leadership has determined works effectively to produce the very best soldier. Night and day the inductee is put through the disciplines by his superiors because they care about what they produce, because the survival of the nation may very well depend on the qualities brought forth by their disciplines. During basic training the inductee comes face to face with a strong and well-defined

authority structure which sees its responsibility clearly, and they are determined to carry it through.

I think that we ought to be able to see that there is a parallel between the military and a family having children born into it. The specific purpose of each is different to be sure, as are the attitudes and the methods employed, but like the military, the family must produce a quality product because the survival of the nation depends on that product. As a nation we are failing, and those statistics on family life are strong evidence of the cancer that is eating away the strength of this nation.

Now what happened? *How* did it happen? I have already told you how it happened. It is largely a matter of neglect and ignorance of this Book. It is neglect of responsibility and ignorance of what God says about the importance that parents have in regard to the strength of a nation, and the blessings it will receive from God because they follow through with what their responsibility calls for them to do.

You may recall that I drew material for a couple of sermons a couple of years ago from a book titled, *The Fourth Turning*. In that book the authors examined 600 years of British and American history and gave an overview of a repeating series of typical events that occurred during that time. The authors, Strauss and Howe, who are on the faculty of the University of Chicago, showed that strong evidence exists of a clearly-defined cycle of roughly 80 to 100 years during which family life within these nations, and childrearing attitudes, produced four clearly distinguishable stages or turnings within the British and American culture. They compared these cultural turnings to the four seasons of each year.

Spring is when there is a new birth of beauty and peaceful hope within the culture. Summer is when the culture flourishes and prospers. Autumn represents a period of social unraveling as the culture begins to decay from within as morality declines from former high standards, which in turn leads to a winter of painful crisis of war.

At the time I gave those messages I was most interested in the autumn unraveling because we were living in it at the time, and the winter crisis period because, (as the authors Strauss and Howe predicted), our cultures would enter the winter-crisis period about 2005. They did not say that 2005 would have us in the grip of a national crisis as soon as it arrived, but rather by that year—this year—the door would be open to the crisis which might not occur for another 5, 10, or 20 years.

Winter does not usually start just with a boom and we have a five-foot blizzard. It kind of builds up. That is what they are saying. By the year 2005 they felt that just about everything would be in position for the door to be open for the crisis to occur. They said then that by 2005 we would begin to see that the piper would have to be paid for our earlier negligence in the second and third turnings.

They also predicted that by this year 2005 we would begin to see a few positive changes taking place, especially in regard to family and child training. Brethren, some of those small changes in the attitudes of child training (or lack thereof) of their "boomer" parents, and grandparents, are beginning to turn back to more "old fashioned" methods. As the authors predicted, it will not be enough to avoid the crisis, but it will produce the children who will be fit, be prepared, for the

next spring turning. Those children who receive the good parenting will be the leaders in the next generation.

Jeremiah 30:4-7 And these are the words that the Lord spoke concerning Israel and concerning Judah. For thus says the Lord: We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask you now, and see whether a man does travail with child? Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's [or Israel's] trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.

A whole string of current events gathered from all over the world are giving strong evidence that this is the crisis looming before us. We can compare this with something that Jesus stated in Matthew 24: 36.

Matthew 24:36-38 But of that day and hour knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark.

Jesus stated that the period of time just before the great crisis at the close of the age would be characterized by conduct similar to that period of time preceding Noah's flood. His overall statement is generally understood to indicate life more or less going on normally, with little attention paid to the overall moral and spiritual condition of the times.

What is interesting in regard to this sermon is something that Genesis 6: 1-2 states. As you know, this was just before the flood. It was just before Noah was commissioned to build the ark that would eventually lead to the saving of his life and his family's life.

Genesis 6:1-2 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

God specifically mentions marriage just before the flood—marriage that had gone awry—and thus the inference is very strong from what He states there that it was an exceedingly negative light that led to what He did in bringing the flood on the earth. It gives us a strong indication that when marriages and family life deteriorates to a certain level so that hope for recovery of the Israelitish culture is no longer possible, that God intervenes and lets loose the forces of His corrective punishment.

Now what was it that worked to destroy the quality of what marriage and family life was

producing up until the late 1950s and early 1960s? There is no one factor, but at least five that coalesced over several decades producing attitudes and the resulting conduct that subtly tore family life apart. I want to give you these five, and I extracted them from the March 2005 issue of *Whistleblower* magazine. The entire issue was an expose of these factors.

I am not going to give you any solutions in this message. I am just asking you to compare yourself to the sources of the attitudes and examine yourself, because I think overall you know what to do. The problem is in carrying it out. These factors have impacted every one of us. I want you to see the factors that have worked upon you, making marriage more difficult. Other messages will undoubtedly cover some specific aspects of family life and childrearing. Are you willing to give the time and attention required that your children deserve to have, and that God demands we give them?

Brethren, perhaps if we know what to look for we can avoid the justifications and repent where we have fallen short, and turn and do the right things. What we are looking at here are attitudes produced by events of major influence. I want to warn you that each of these attitudes is something that sneaks up on a person and takes over, if we give them half a chance. The attitudes are absorbed from the world, and what we have got to keep in mind always is that our responsibility is to God regardless of what everybody else might be doing.

*Whistleblower Magazine* listed five dominant influences. Author David Kupelian, who wrote the main article, felt that *WAR* has been *the* major attitude-deteriorating influence.

*These five dominating influences are:*

1. World War I
2. World War II
3. The Korean War
4. The Vietnam War
5. The 2 Iraqi Wars

War has been the major part or factor of the matrix of attitudes giving support to the rise of the others. Incidentally, I once heard Herbert Armstrong suggest virtually the same thing in a sermon thirty or forty years ago. He felt, as far as the decline of morality in the United States, that it had its defining moment in the First World War, which produced the Roaring Twenties. It no doubt has been a major contributor. It is not the one I would personally choose as the most influential, but it certainly is a major contributor. The other writers in the same issue suggested the following:

- number 1: The feminist movement
- number 2: Same sex marriage
- number 3: No fault divorce

I once heard Ronald Reagan's son say on the radio that his father, with all the political decisions he ever had to make, said the one he regretted the most was signing the No Fault divorce law in California. He felt it contributed to the downfall of the United States than perhaps any other thing. That is what was in his mind.

number 4: The abandonment by the churches of their spiritual leadership.

I read that one church pastor wrote that the church has become very good at turning wine into water. That was way back in the 1960s.

number 5: The pervasive liberal political media and educational outlook, combined with a free-wheeling credit-driven economy.

War has the effect of producing nihilism that those who survive bring home with them. Of all the psychological effects of war, the one having the greatest impact is fear, combined with cynicism, and that type and level of fear forces one to take actions toward personal security. The emphasis is on *personal*. In other words, it moves one pell-mell to a very intense self-centeredness. "You have got to take care of number one!"

If we would go on examining all of these, we would find that every one of them contributes essentially to the same thing: narcissism, nihilism, self-centeredness, driving families apart so that people are unwilling to make the sacrifices necessary to really contribute positively to a rock-solid family and children who have right values.

War moves people to take advantage of whatever provides some measure of hope, and it makes people grab at life, and moral values crash. Chastity is abandoned because people generally adopt as a theme of their life that they have got to get it while the getting is good. But again, if we looked at all of them we would find that they are all pushing people suddenly in the same basic direction. It is every man for himself. The essence of love is sacrificed. That is when you do not think of yourself. You give up what you might think is your right and you serve and help and give to the other. That is what produces love and loyalty within a family.

You put all five of these together and you know what the long-range effect is. Morals never elevate to the level that they were before. The movement of morality in each of these areas is always downward because self-concern is so sharply heightened.

I said I was not going to give any solutions at all. I just want you to see where the problems are arising. Things that have happened are then absorbed by us, and we then put them to use in our daily life.

Let us go again to the book of Jeremiah. We began with Isaiah chapter I, with God giving a warning because His children were abandoning Him and no longer looked to Him for advice and help. Now we have Jeremiah, who lived a generation or so following Isaiah. In Jeremiah 9, Jeremiah is actually the spokesperson here. He was so discouraged at what he saw in Judah that it moved him to tears.

Jeremiah 9:2-9 Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! [He was so sick at looking at what was going on, and he felt powerless to change it.] for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men. And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth: [What is God creating? He is creating a family that is sanctified by truth. It is the rock-rib foundation

of their life.] For they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, says the Lord. Take you heed every one of his neighbor, and trust you not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, [Does that not give you an idea of things just being shredded away? Where is love? Where is loyalty? Where is responsibility?], and every neighbor will walk with slanders. And they will deceive every one his neighbor, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity. [You can tell their minds are only on satisfying their own desires. Self-gratification rules the day. Get the other one before he gets you.] Your habitation is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, says the Lord. Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them: for how shall I do for the daughter of my people? Their tongue is as an arrow shot out; it speaks deceit: one speaks peaceably to his neighbor with his mouth, but in heart he lays his wait. Shall I not visit them for these things? [He means visit them with corrective punishment.] Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

Do you think this does not apply to the United States of America, and to all the Israelitish nations? This was written for us.

Jeremiah 9:13-16 And the Lord says, Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein; but have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them: Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink. I will scatter them also among the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known: and I will send a sword after them till I have consumed them.

God does not lie. He is true to His word. Families are coming apart at the seam, and it is only going to get worse. Brethren, be thankful for what you have. Thank God for His mercy, that you can take opportunity to use the time that you have to make whatever changes are necessary to produce a strong family that glorifies Him.