

The Age We Are Living In and Being the Lord's Testimony

I. The age we are living in:

- A. Satan, the ruler of the world, developing it toward its climax:
 - 1. The characteristics of the world match all the prophecies in the Bible concerning the situation at the end of this age. See Appendix A
 - 2. The world in general expresses Satan more and more.
 - 3. At the end a great hero will arise who will be fully one with Satan in his rebellion against God—Rev. 13:1-6.
 - 4. The majority of the people on earth will worship him—v. 8.
- B. At the same time, the Lord is gaining a people who will be one with Him to become His bride:
 - 1. To become part of His bride, we need firstly to receive Him as our life.
 - 2. Then we need to have Him grow in us to maturity.
 - 3. The more He grows in us, the more He can express Himself in us.
 - 4. When His bride has made herself ready, the Lord will return—Rev. 19:7.

II. The Lord wants His people to be a testimony of Himself to the world:

- A. Even though we live in the world, we are not of the world—John 17:16.
- B. The Lord has given us His word, both the constant word of the Bible and His speaking within us as our supply to sanctify us and keep us out of the hands of the evil one—vv. 14-17.
- C. The Lord wants us to speak His word to others so that they also may believe—v. 20.
- D. When the Lord can bring us into the real oneness of the Triune God, that is an even stronger testimony to the world—v.21.

III. We who have received the Lord have a choice:

- A. By default, we are naturally caught up in the things of the world:
 - 1. Sinful things appeal to the lusts of the flesh; our flesh has the corrupted nature of Satan.
 - 2. The other elements of the world, even if they are not sinful, can occupy and distract us from turning to the Lord.
- B. We can choose to stand with the Lord by:
 - 1. Turning to our spirit to enjoy Him.
 - 2. Learning the truth in His word and seeking His speaking within.
 - 3. Assembling together for mutual encouragement—Heb. 10:25.

IV. The choices we make affect others, not only ourselves:

- A. The Lord sanctified Himself for the sake of His disciples—John 17:19:
 - 1. He talked with Nicodemus, an elderly gentleman at night in a private home—John 3:1-2.
 - 2. But He talked with a Samaritan woman in an open, public place during the day—4:6.
 - 3. He was in no danger of falling into sin with a woman, but he would not do it privately because that would have been a bad example for His followers.
- B. Parents influence their children more by their living than by their words:
 - 1. Children may not remember much of what their parents teach them, but they will never forget what they see in their parents.

2. Any looseness by the parents will be repeated by the children; for example, if the parents tell “white” lies, they cannot expect their children to be honest.
3. Enoch is a good example: we do not know what his life was like before he begot a son, but afterward he walked with God for the rest of his life—Gen. 5:21-22.

C. Young people also affect others by their living:

1. Many young people do things that they would not have done before because of peer pressure, because they want to be accepted by others.
2. Young people in their early teens look up to those a few years older than themselves.

D. When we stand before the Lord, we will need to give an account of all that we have done or said unless we have repented and confessed it—Matt. 12:36; 1 John 1:9.

1. The serving ones have told me that young people giggle and make fun when others are speaking in the meeting; this is a serious sin that the Lord will judge.
2. Learning to speak the things of the Lord well takes practice; when we are first trying to do it, we can easily say something wrong.
3. If we stand with them by paying attention and saying “Amen” with our spirit, we will be encouraging them and helping ourselves to get more out of the meeting.

V. We do not need to be dragged down by the world, by the cares of this life, or by others; we CAN STAND against all those things to be the Lord’s testimony.

Appendix A:

What will the situation of the world be like at the end of this age?

I. Matthew 24:7-8:

“For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.” Of course, wars, famines and natural disasters have been happening throughout human history, but has there ever been a time when these have been more frequent than now?

II. Matthew 24:12:

“And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.” Lawlessness is surely a major characteristic of the times we are living in. No longer is it a condition that is isolated to a certain region and period of time. Declining respect for government and leaders is happening in all societies around the world. Many protest against anything that they don’t agree with or lack of action on their favored cause; some are willing to go to any length in trying to take matters into their own hands. The resulting lawlessness is making the world a more dangerous place.

III. Luke 17:26-27:

“And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.” Eating, drinking and marriage are normal activities in human life. On the one hand, this indicates that people in general will be unaware that the Lord is coming. On the other hand, in the days of Noah, people were abusing these things according to their lusts. Genesis 6:11-12 reads, “The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on

the earth." The situation of society in general had become so offensive to God that He could not tolerate it any longer.

IV. Luke 17:28-30:

"Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed." By the time of Lot, not only had society degraded even further morally, but it was also characterized by commerce and business.

V. Daniel 12:4:

"But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase." Running to and fro, along with an exponential increase in knowledge, are characteristics of the times we are living in more than they have ever been before.

VI. Second Timothy 3:1-5a:

"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."

VII. The times we are living in:

How would you characterize the times we are living in? What point above does not apply to the general condition of societies around the world? What would you add as a general characteristic of the world today? You may be able to argue that any one of those points can apply throughout human history, but what about the whole picture?

VIII. Matthew 16:1-3:

"Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red'; and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times." Jesus rebuked the Pharisees and Sadducees for not being able to discern the signs of the times they were in. Can you discern the signs of the times today?