

SABBATH THOUGHT 2022-07-16—JESHURUN GREW FAT

If you want to know what the tribulation could be like, look no further than the country of India today. The majority religion is Hindu but it is not the kind that the music group called the Beatles swooned about in the 1960s. The members of that popular band brought back with them concepts of karma and reincarnation. As wonderful as they made those sound, those ideas are actually completely foreign to Hinduism. There are only two kinds of Hindu believers: oppressors and victims. This is due to a rigidly imposed caste system that enslaves the majority of adherents to a life of poverty under those in the higher tiers. Worse yet, Hinduism is less tolerant of those not born into it. That includes those in other religions, agnostics, and atheists. Basically, the entire rest of the world has no tier—they are lower than the lowest caste.

The current Indian government fervently supports the radical belief that Hinduism must purge everyone and everything that is not Hindu. They have even passed anti-conversion laws against all other religions. In fact, the government has encouraged, supported, formed, and trained groups of thugs (the RSS) throughout the country who use threats, violence, and murder against all who preach a different religion. It is part of a national pogrom to “purify” India. These criminals even have the blessing of, and coordinate with, the local police and judicial systems. Those most hated are Protestant Christians—even more than Muslims.

A husband disappeared in the night only to be found the next day dead in a roadside ditch. A son is kidnapped and beaten to death in the jungle. When his remains were found, they were unrecognizable. A thirteen-year old girl begged her father’s attackers to spare his life so they kicked her in the stomach and she almost died from internal hemorrhaging. A pregnant woman was so badly injured that her unborn baby died and she was in a coma for three days. Whole groups were locked in their church buildings and beaten repeatedly for long periods. A sleeping farmer woke up to find his house engulfed in fire and he barely escaped only to discover many of his cattle and other stock animals dead from the inferno—his family’s only livelihood. In spite of the constant threat of harm and death, many refuse to recant. Instead, they forgive the neighbors who murdered their loved ones.

India is one of almost 30 countries in which religious persecution continues in this modern age. The worst offenders are Burma, China, Eritrea, India, Iran, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Vietnam¹. Want to know what it will be like in the Tribulation? Move to any one of these countries and try proclaiming the gospel. Even if you say nothing, eventually they will wonder why you do not work on the Sabbath or they will catch you with a Bible.

¹ *US Commission on International Religious Freedom, 2020.*

But not so in the good ole USA. On average, people here live in houses that have four rooms per occupant; three toilets; indoor heating, cooling, and plumbing; two cars; ten electronic devices including TVs, cellphones, tablets, video games, smartwatches, etc; eight guns; and enough food to last 33 days. On top of that, they only work an average of 34 hours per week but get 20 vacation days per year. The abundance is unspeakable.

Annual income is \$56,310 and, yet, most live paycheck to paycheck. How do they spend that much money? Each month they spend \$2,064 on a mortgage, \$1,296 for their two cars that cost \$42,380 each, \$411 on groceries, \$127 for cellphones, \$100 for TV, streaming, and satellite, \$243 on entertainment, \$83 for gifts, \$152 on electricity, and much, MUCH more. The average household is spending 120% more than they ~~earn~~. Scratch that. Many do not actually EARN what they are paid—they are subsidized.

People have too much free time. Restaurants, night clubs, movie theaters, stadiums, and fun parks are everywhere to provide respite from the boredom. Everyone, including children, have so much STUFF that money is a substitute for gifts because people have everything. When they do receive a gift, many times it is just a new replacement for something they already have. People have so many clothes that closets are now large enough to walk into.

No one goes to bed fearing they will be attacked in the middle of the night or wake up wondering whether they will be able to feed our family today. They are easily slighted and hang on to anger, hate, and bitterness. They complain about the smallest inconveniences, gripe when grocery store shelves are not filled to overflowing, criticize the clothes others wear, and drive empty vehicles that could comfortably seat four to eight people. The news presents tragedies in twenty-second sound bites that are followed by ten minute interviews with celebrities, popular singers, or tours of 20,000 square foot second (or third or fourth) homes of the rich and famous. The ultra-rich are always talking about how much the average person is oppressed and in need of handouts but they do not personally seek out the poor and help. They leave it to so-called charities to deal with the “untouchables.”

Houses are filled with decorations and paintings made by others and replicated in factories. Fake flowers adorn coffee tables (why is there a table just for coffee?) because it is too much work to water a real plant. No one lacks necessities so they spend money to adorn their homes and yards as proof to others of their financial success and prowess. Maids are hired to clean because using that \$500 vacuum cleaner is too much work. City dwellers spend \$ 47,035 to \$112,605 on pickups and then customize them further so they can accelerate to 60mph in less than 6 seconds. (Buy a pickup from some urbanite because their trucks have never been used for heavy loads, the only scratches are from the parking lot, and the interior stains are from 64-ounce sodas too big for the cup holders.)

A doctor visit is necessary for every cut, cough, and complaint. There are pills and potions for hair loss, stained teeth, wrinkles, and every other minor “affliction” with a

Latin name. Sugar and sweeteners are in so much of our food that each meal is more like dessert. For our indulgences, doctors test our blood for sugar and cholesterol.

Some of the most profitable companies in the world made great wealth selling one thing: coffee that cost \$7 for the “grande” size. People bemoan gasoline prices but still drive ten miles to get a double latte before work. (I never even heard the word “latte” or “cappuccino” growing up.) In a “crisis” they buy toilet paper, baby wipes, and generators. Thanksgiving Day is a time to add ten pounds. (How is “thanksgiving” about eating our favorite things and watching football rather than praying?) Neighbors are complete strangers to one another. People say, “You are in my prayers” but do they?

Who are these people? Americans, including most of the children of God. Are we really different than the rest of this country? The USA received the greatest of God’s blessings:

DEUTERONOMY 32:9-14 For the LORD’S portion *is* His people. Jacob *is* the lot of His inheritance. 10 He found him in a desert land, and in the waste of a howling wilderness. He led him about, He cared for him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. 11 As an eagle stirs up her nest, flutters over her young, spreads abroad her wings, takes them and bears them on her wings, 12 The LORD alone led him, and *there was* no strange god with him. 13 He made him **//Israel/ ride on the high places of the earth so that he might eat the increase of the fields. And He made him suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock, 14 Butter from cows, and milk from sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the sons of Bashan, and goats, with the finest wheat. And you drank wine, the blood of the grape.**

This country has forgotten God. They are blind to God because they no longer see Him from behind the mountain of their wealth. And now there will be consequences:

DEUTERONOMY 32:15, 19-25 But **Jeshurun //Israel/ grew fat and kicked.** You grew fat, thick, *and* satisfied. Then he forsook God Who made him and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. ... 19 And **the LORD saw and despised them** because of the provoking of His sons and of His daughters. 20 And He said, ‘I will hide My face from them; I will see what their end *shall be*, for they *are* a very perverse generation, children in whom *is* no faithfulness. 21 They have moved Me to jealousy with *that which is* not God. They have provoked Me to anger with their vanities. And I will move them to jealousy with *those which are* not a people. **I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation,** 22 For a fire is kindled in My anger, and shall burn to the grave beneath, and shall consume the earth with its increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. 23 I will heap up evils upon them. I will spend My arrows on them. 24 **Exhaustion by famine, and consumption by burning heat, and bitter destruction, and the teeth of beasts I will send on them, with the poison of serpents of the dust.** **25 The sword outside, and the terror inside,** shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling *also* with the man of grey hairs.

What will the Tribulation be like? Imagine being a true believer in India—and then add the worst possible famines, droughts, sicknesses, and diseases. Unlike the Protestant Christians there now who, in their poverty still eke out a meager living, this country will be devastated. Only then will anyone turn back to God.

Why such a terrible message of doom and gloom? It came about when I was thinking about fasting. What is fasting? It is afflicting our souls:

ISAIAH 58:3, 5 *They say, ‘**Why have we fasted**, and You do not see? Why **have we afflicted our soul** and You take no knowledge?’ Behold, in the day of your fast you pursue your business and exploit all your workers. ... 5 Is this such **a fast** that I have chosen? **A day for a man to afflict his soul?** *Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast and a day pleasing to the LORD?**

Denying ourselves food and drink is how we “afflict our souls” when we are not already suffering “a great trial of affliction.”² Too many have so much abundance that they have to deny themselves food in order to be afflicted. What is the point of affliction? To be humble before God³. **Because** of our wealth and comfort, God’s people need to draw close to God in fasting and prayer because our lives depend upon it. We can either be humble when the Tribulation comes upon us or we will learn humility during it⁴.

LUKE 21:34, 36 Watch yourselves, **lest your hearts be preoccupied with high living and drinking and the cares of this life**, and that day come upon you suddenly. ... 36 **Watch therefore, and pray [and fast] at all times** that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and **to stand before the Son of man.**”

Jeshurun is fat and has kicked at God but it should not be so with God’s people. We are called to stand before God the Father and Jesus Christ. Come out of this world. Draw close to Them now, so that we can stand WITH Them at the end of this age.

May God’s grace and peace be upon you!

Steven Greene

<https://sabbathreflections.org>

² 2 Corinthians 8:2.

³ Deuteronomy 8:2.

⁴ Revelation 7:14.