

Greetings from Tyler,

It is difficult to comprehend what is happening to the United States. Many of us find the nightly news, the analysis and competing opinions hard to stomach day after day. The only thing left to debate is, where is this leading? Where will it end? What kind of America will we see six months from now, two years from now?

There is simply no ability to paint a more frightening scenario than current economic realities present. Unemployment just zoomed past eight percent, and is already well into the double digits in some places. The stock market remains in something akin to a free fall, as one "market bottom" after another is reached and surpassed.

See breaking news article, "[Obama's Radicalism Is Killing the Dow](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123629969453946717.html)" [paste <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123629969453946717.html> into your Internet browser]

Heartfelt warnings about where America is headed are everywhere. They are even beginning to seep into the mainstream media as the very people who promoted the advancement of a socialist agenda in this country watch their retirement accounts evaporate and realize that their hopes and dreams for the future will never materialize.

Hardly a newsbreak passes without another announcement informing us of some new move or plan by the government to tax, regulate, ban or prohibit. Whether or not you are disdainful of the wealthy, it is a defiance of simple logic to presume that subjecting the most productive of Americans to punitive measures will somehow "stimulate the economy." That's about as smart as borrowing your way out of debt!

All of the major corporations and banks that have already soaked up hundreds of billions in "bailout" funds are still hovering near bankruptcy. Major, shocking defaults still loom, amid the prospect for yet future "bailout" infusions. General Motors, AIG, General Electric, Citibank, to name a few, remain at risk as their stocks plummet to near worthlessness. Unsettling as that reality is, the dominoes have barely begun to fall.

Europe is in deep financial trouble. And from a prophetic point of view, this is at least equally important to the impending demise of the United States. The cover story in this week's Economist warns that the European Union could break apart due to default on heavy investment and lending in the eastern European countries that broke away from the old Soviet Union. But that's not all. We're hearing that European banks also hold a massive amount of debt owed by Japan, and that is also in danger of default.

Economic failures lead to changes in government. Dad said so. Media billionaire Rupert Murdoch said so last week, and history bears them out.

Our founding fathers realized and wrote how dangerous government could become unless its role were carefully limited. George Washington likened it to fire, which controlled and managed plays a vital role, but which can destroy everything if it runs rampant.

I don't know if anyone can (or would dare) describe the conditions that will prevail, particularly in the big cities, when desperation and widespread shortages of staples eventually take hold. Never mind the potential for earthquakes, floods or natural disasters, or unnatural disasters like 9-11. Our current government proposes more spending than all presidents from George Washington to the present, combined. It's been called "inter-generational debt," meaning that every American baby will be born with a crushing debt to bear. Maybe that's melodramatic. But the Proverbs admonish us to make provision for our children and our children's children. What our leaders are doing is destroying the financial security of the middle class, and absent divine intervention or a dramatic change of course, assuring that no future generations will taste the freedom and prosperity that was our hallmark.

The Jerusalem Post ran an article this week reporting that Israel is "seriously considering" military action to prevent Iran obtaining nuclear weapons. Numerous sources agree, Iran already has the material to produce multiple weapons. Time is short, as Russia is about to supply Iran with advanced surface to air missile systems that would greatly complicate such an action. The report also worries that Iran will spread its nuclear weapons capacity with other nations and entities that are enemies of Israel and the United States. But we now have to wonder whether the American / Israeli relationship will live on as we have known it. The new Department of State seems inclined to run roughshod over Israeli concerns, telling the Israelis how they will handle the future of Jerusalem, demanding a "two state solution," and even pumping just shy of a billion U.S. taxpayer dollars into Gaza, bolstering those who constantly call for and work toward Israel's demise.

The Garner Ted Armstrong telecast this week offered material on the "trinity" and the booklet, Is God a Mystery. It brought 435 responses, with one hundred forty four first time requests.

It is all too certain now that we will face times, individually, organizationally and nationally that we'd never have thought could have overtaken us so rapidly. There is still relative normalcy in our society, and we have a window of opportunity to prepare, pray and plan to provide for and protect our families and friends. May God guide us individually and collectively as we enter into an era many thought would never come.

Hope you'll all have a good, peaceful and restful Sabbath day.

Mark Armstrong