

## Are We Facing Famine in America?

(Go to Meeting)

Russell Kemp—2021

Good evening, everyone. It's been a very hectic and busy week for me, but I'm very grateful to have the opportunity to be here and talk to everybody.

This past year has been a very difficult time for those of us in America. I'm sure that I can include Canada, Australia, Europe—a very difficult time for everybody when we look at Covid, riots and so many things that have taken place in the last almost year and a half now.

However, with all that said and done, looking over the years, America has been tremendously blessed. I say that in my case, but in many respects we have been the envy of the world. I've made that statement many times, that no generation of people has ever enjoyed the blessings that have been poured out on my generation.

I was a baby during WWII, but when I stop and think about it, ever since that time it seems like our nation has been blessed. We fought wars—Korea, Vietnam and still are fighting in the Middle East—however, it was on other people's soil, not here. So, we have been tremendously blessed in so many ways.

I believe that one of the greatest blessings that has been given to us by our founding fathers, quite honestly, was the Constitution of the United States of America. Before accepting it, before the founding fathers accepted the Constitution, they made sure to add the Bill of Rights.

What seemed to be foremost on their mind at the time was the first of the ten amendments, which included the ability of *freedom of speech!* Many people in the world don't have that opportunity. Jesus told the apostles, by the way, in:

Acts 1:8: "...you shall be My witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto *the ends of the earth.*"

That freedom of speech has given us the opportunity to do just that! Up until this generation, this time, most people have not really had the ability to take it to the ends of the earth, especially when you look at the fact that we have:

- radio
- television
- worldwide Internet

*This is just amazing technology!* Never, never in the history of the world has this been possible: *the opportunity to do what we can to be able to speak to*

*the rest of the world about God and His plan for humanity!*

We have truly been blessed in that area. However, conditions can change. Witness the events of this past year; there is no doubt that it has been a difficult year for those of us throughout the world.

Could we also now face a famine? Think about the seven years of famine in Egypt, where only Joseph—a man of God—was able to save the nation. He was certainly inspired by God to do that! But the famine that I'm referring to here is different and it is given to us in the book of Amos. This is the only place in the Bible where it's mentioned.

Amos 8:11: "'Behold, the days come,' says the Lord GOD, 'that I will send a famine in the land... [we know what a famine is; basically a lack of food, a lack of bread and water] ... **not a famine of bread nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD**'" (v 8).

The Word of God has certainly been a staple in this nation since it's founding. We have an abundance of churches everywhere. I live out in the middle of 'no-man's land.' I'm about 15 miles two three small towns in any direction. Even out where I live there are three churches within a mile of my house. We have an abundance of churches, there's no question about that.

Just about every home has a Bible, and there's no shortage of TV evangelism! All you have to do is turn on your TV 24/7 and flip to the right channels and you'll hear many, many sermons.

However, ***a famine of the Word, a famine of the Word could come simply through indifference!*** We're already seeing a decline in church attendance throughout the nation. I'm not just talking about the Churches of God, but we are talking about church attendance. The number of American that claim to be a Christian has shrunk significantly over the last 20-30 years. I don't know, at one time we were close to about 90%, but now are about 60% that claim to be Christians.

Quite honestly, many churches are not exactly faithful in teaching the Truth of God. I ask:

**What would it mean to have a famine for the Word of God?**

A nation without the Bible is basically a nation without freedom. We're told:

John 8:32 “And you shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall set you free.”

Christ told us that He’s the Way, the Truth, and the Life.’ We get that Truth from our Bibles! One of the very first things that tyrants in the past have done to enslave and control their people is to burn their Bibles and shut down their churches.

The history of nations, such as the Soviet Union, revel in banning religion. It’s one of the first acts to control the people. The very foundation of America was based on religious freedom. That was the main reason and the cause of people fleeing Europe for American, *that religious freedom!*

The very development of our nation was based on Biblical principles. A lot of people would argue that, but I’m telling you, if you go study true history, it was. The Bill of Rights specifically ensures us freedom *of* religion. The fact that our nation has been preserved, even in war, shows God’s intervention.

Historically, our churches have been the guardians of our freedom, and sound Biblical principles keep us alert to just the exact value of freedom. A nation without *the Bible*—we talk about some of these nations burning the Bibles—*the Word of God, is a nation without a foundation!*

*Christ is the Truth, and notice what He tells us; Matthew 7:24: “Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and practices them, I will compare him to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock; and the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; but it did not fall, for it was founded upon the rock.... [Christ is the Rock] ...And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not practice them shall be compared to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand; and the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it” (vs 24-27).*

When we read that, it’s pretty clear that we need to know the Truth, and to keep the Truth if we are to remain a free people. It’s getting harder and harder to know what is truth anymore from the leaders of our nation.

They’ve taken God out of our schools, and refuse to acknowledge that our blessings and freedoms have been given to us by our heavenly Father. How long can we remain a blessed nation if we don’t acknowledge where these blessings come from?

The life, or the land, built upon the Word of God will stand as we just read in Matt. 7. It is God’s Word that provides the solid foundation and building

our life and foundation of a nation on the Word of God is what sustains us through the many storms that we face in life.

*Apart from the Bible, there are no absolutes!* Everything becomes relative. No one knows what is right or wrong. When we go to that, it’s called *moral relativism!* In other words, each individual will decide what is right or wrong, and we’re getting closer to that every day in this nation.

The Bible, the Word of God, is what provides us a moral compass for individuals, as well as the nation. Without it, *we are lost!* Notice what happens to a nation that loses its moral compass:

Isaiah 1:2: “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD has spoken, ‘I have reared and brought up children, but they have rebelled against Me.’”

Even though He is referring here to ancient Israel, it pertains to modern Israel, as well; God doesn’t change!

Verse 3: ““The ox knows his owner, and the donkey his master’s crib; **but Israel does not know Me; My people do not understand.**”

Listen carefully, because what follows is what happens to a nation that abandons God and abandons His Word.

Verse 4: “Ah, sinful nation, a people burdened *with* iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the LORD; **they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger; they have gone away backward.**”

This is what happens to a nation without the Word of God! This is where we’re heading:

Verse 5: “Why should you be stricken any more? **You will revolt more and more; the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.**”

*So goes a nation without the Word of God!* We were, without a doubt, at one time a truly Christian nation. We did have a President who did tell us that we’re not a Christian nation, but we were at one time. We weren’t perfect; we did not truly understand all God’s Word, but throughout our history we turned to God. We thanked Him for the blessings.

- Where are we in contrast today?
- Are we now a Christian nation?
- Do we listen to the Word of God?
- Do we keep His Laws?
- Do we keep His commandments?
- Is that the nation we’re living in?

I’m going to read some very common

Scriptures that we read all the time. I want to make a point here. We are either blessed or cursed, depending upon keeping the Word of God.

Deuteronomy 28:1: “And it shall come to pass, **if you shall hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD your God** to observe *and* to do all His commandments, which I command you today, the LORD **your God will set you on high above all nations of the earth.**”

We started as a Christian nation, observing and teaching the Word of God. As a result, we receive tremendous blessings! I don't think anybody would argue when you look at the history of our country.

We could go through all of those blessings and curses; I'm not going to do that. But suffice it to say, that we've been blessed in the city, the field, and certainly have been protected from our enemies. We have enjoyed peace and prosperity far above all the nations on earth. I'm truly blessed that I was born when I was and have lived in this nation that long. However, this is what God tells us:

Verse 15: “And it shall come to pass, **if you will not hearken to the voice of the LORD your God** to observe and to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, **all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.**”

Without going into detail of all the blessings and cursings, we can read through them and look at them later. That's a pretty profound statement coming from God.

- **if you do** what I ask you to do, and tell you to do, you will be blessed
- **if you do not** do it, you're going to be cursed

*Just witness this past year!*

- Covid-19 pandemic!

*Tremendous problem! Shut everything down!*

- with the shutdowns, people obviously are unemployed.
- the amount of money we're spending!
- the riots in our cities
- the tremendous debt to the other nations

**Is there a famine of the Word?** Overall, as a nation:

- Are we teaching our children and the people to keep the commandments of the Lord?

**if not**

- Could this be the reason for our current decline?

- Why is this happening to our nation and to all the other Israelite nations, as well?

*God gives a very clear answer to that:*

Verse 45: “And all these curses shall come on you, and shall pursue you and overtake you, until you are destroyed **because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God to keep His commandments and His statutes, which He commanded you.**”

Either we're blessed if we keep His commandments, or we're not blessed otherwise!

2-Tim. 4 *describes a nation that truly has a famine of the Word of God!* Remember that Amos told us that there would be *a famine of the Word*. He referred to it in *the latter days!* Paul here describes the result of the famine of the Word. In other words, people do not want to listen! They don't want to hear what will occur in the last days.

2-Timothy 4:3: “For **there shall come a time...** [just like Amos] ...when they will not tolerate sound doctrine... [the Word of God] ...but according to their own lusts they shall accumulate to themselves *a great number of teachers*, having ears itching...”—**people not teaching the Truth, the Word of God!**

The same as *a famine of the Word of God!* They're not teaching the Truth!

“...to hear what satisfies their cravings; and they shall turn away their own ears from the Truth; and they shall be turned aside unto myths” (vs 3-4).

- we've taken God out of our schools
- they want 'in God we trust' eliminated, taken out of everything
- there are certain things we teach in church that will soon be hate crimes

As a matter of fact, I think they are in a couple of the other Israelite nations.

- Where does it all end?
- Will we take God completely out of our country?

*if we do*

- Is that not a famine of the Word?
- Will God continue to bless a country that has forgotten Him?

Paul warns us what it will be like if we continue this trend; notice that he refers to this as *the last days!*

2-Timothy 3:1: “Know this also, that in *the last days* perilous times shall come.”

I think that it's important that we actually digest this and think about it.

Verse 2: "For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, braggarts, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy... [starting to sound a lot like the country I live in] ...without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, despisers of those who are good, betrayers, reckless, egotistical, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" (vs 2-4).

That sure gives us an accurate description of what we're beginning to see today. This is an accurate result of **a famine of the Word!** People who do not want to hear God's Word, or listen to it. This is what happens when we take God out of our country.

A nation without the Bible—the Word of God—is a nation without faith.

Romans 10:17: "So then, **faith comes by hearing, and hearing through the Word of God.**"

If you don't hear the Word of God, you don't listen to the Word of God, you're not going to have the faith. If we have a famine of the Word we basically become a nation without faith.

Paul's statement in v 1-3 is pertinent to modern Israel, as well:

Romans 10:1: "Brethren, the earnest desire of my heart and my supplication to God for Israel is for salvation. For I testify of them that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.... [not according to the Word of God] ...For they, being ignorant of the righteousness *that* comes from God, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (v 1-3).

At this point today, where we stand in this nation and certainly in many of the other Israelite nations, do we have a complete famine of the Word of God? *No! Obviously that is not correct!* We have a lot of the Churches of God that are still teaching the Truth. We still have a lot of stuff being broadcast on the Internet. So, it is not yet!

However, when we look at things like the 'cancel culture movement' **where are we going?** *Think about that!* They want to take everything down.

- anything that's offensive to someone has to go
- statues are being torn down
- names of schools and sports teams, road, etc., are being changed

*All of them are offensive to someone!* Already, in some countries, *it is considered a hate crime to teach **Biblically** offensive things!*

How much longer before Christian teachings will be banned from the radio, television and Internet because it is 'offensive to someone'?

We would all hope that the people of this nation would repent as the people of Nineveh did. I don't see that happening, unfortunately, but I do pray for it; I certainly hope that it would come.

What is the result of non-repentant people that **won't hear** the Word of God? *We see what happens in Gen. 6! We know this was the time of Noah!*

Genesis 6:11: "Now the earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.... [we're certainly seeing a lot of that today] ...And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth" (vs 11-12).

Noah was facing what we may be facing in the near future if we continue, as a nation, heading in the direction that we're going. Noah was a preacher for a long time. Nobody wanted to hear the Word of God—**famine of the Word of God!**

Verse 13: "And God said to Noah, 'The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence...'"

Have we not become a violent society? *Look at the murder rates in the cities!*

"...through them. And, **behold, I will destroy them...**" (v 13).

They had a *famine of the Word*, because they ***refused to listen to the Word of God!***

Jer. 22—God is speaking to the king of Judah, but what He said is obviously appropriate to any nation that God has blessed and given prosperity. Especially when you look at a nation like ours that has had peace and prosperity.

Jeremiah 22:21: "I spoke to you in your prosperity... [What happened?] ...*but* you said, 'I will not hear.'.... [***a famine of the Word***] ...This *has been* your way from your youth, **for you have not obeyed My voice.**"

We, as a nation, have been the recipients of the prophesied blessings that were promised to Abraham and his seed. I hope we realize that! I hope we can really look back and see the blessings!

Now, as He speaks to this nation in their prosperity:

- What do they say? "...**I will not hear...**"

- Do you think this nation hears?
- Is that not a ***famine of the Word?***

*God tells them what the outcome will be without repentance; v 22: “The wind shall eat up all your shepherds...”*

- Who are the shepherds?
- Are these all those who speak in the name of God, but not truthfully and not doing His will?

“...and ***your lovers shall go into captivity...***”

- Is this not all the nations of Israel?
- America today and its allies?

“...***surely then you will be ashamed and humiliated for all your wickedness***” (v 22).

- Is this the fate that awaits America?

We know that in Jer. 30 it talks about the time of ‘Jacob’s trouble’ and how he will be saved out of it. *But not before he goes into captivity, and not before a lot happens!* I’m not sure, but the amount debt we owe to China and the rest of the world, *we are close to captivity anyway!*

Are we actually a Christian nation? *Unfortunately, we have become what Paul describes:*

Romans 1:21: “Because when they knew God, they glorified *Him* not as God, neither were thankful...”

- Do we really show God thankfulness for what this nation has had?

“...but they became vain in their own reasonings, and their foolish hearts were darkened” (v 21).

In other words, their belief and trust in God was gone! They would rather trust in themselves and this idea of ‘moral relativism’ and making their own decisions on what is right and wrong.

Then Paul gives us a description of what our nation has become; a pretty accurate description:

Verse 28: “And in exact proportion as they did not consent to have God in *their* knowledge...”

That would be a ***famine of the Word!*** They did not consent to listen to the Word of God.

“...God abandoned them to a reprobate mind, to practice *those* things that are immoral” (v 28).

- Has our nation become immoral?

Verse 29: “Being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality... [Do we see

that today?] ...wickedness... [Do we see that today?] ...covetousness, malice; full of envy, murder... [take a look at the murder rate in all our major cities, pretty sad] ...strife, guile, evil dispositions; whisperers, slanderers, God-haters...” (vs 29-30).

They not only don’t want God in their own lives, ***they hate God and they want Him out of our country!*** They want to make sure that none of us have the right to call on God.

“...insolent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things *and practices*; disobedient to parents, void of understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable *and* unmerciful; ***who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who commit such things are worthy of death...***” (vs 30-32).

***Without repentance we all come under the law of sin and death!*** No doubt about that at all! If you sin, you’re going to die if it’s unrepented of.

“...not only practice these things themselves, but also approve of those who commit *them*” (v 32).

Our nation has certainly changed it’s attitude toward that. There’s an awful lot of things wrong. The only thing I can say is that when you read that, could you find a more accurate description of the direction of our nation today?

By ignoring the Word of God, ***America is already facing a time of trouble!*** We’re facing a lot of trouble! We have cultural wars!

I think it was in the 1990s; we were so blessed to have all the various cultures, but these cultures don’t get along anymore.

- we have race divisions, unfortunately
- we have record deficits and we will continually spend more than we have; *unpayable debt* approaching \$30-trillion and growing!
- look at the waves of immigrants crossing our border

Just walking into the nation. They turn themselves in and they turn them loose into our cities—***both legal and illegal!***

- nothing but gridlock in our capital!
- riots in our streets!
- skyrocketing crime!

Brethren, that’s all the result of a ***famine of the Word! People who do not want to hear the Word of God.***

What should we do? *We will face difficult times in the future as our society becomes more violent and corrupt, as they were in the days of Noah!* We are already seeing hatred and disdain for God and His Word! When will the attack actually intensify on Christians in our nation?

Concerning people who don't want to hear the Word of God. Will God treat America any different than He did the nation of Judah when they refused to listen to His Word. Notice what God had to say to them as He spoke through the prophet Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 6:13: "For everyone from the least of them even to the greatest of them is greedy for gain; and from the prophet even unto the priest everyone deals falsely. They have also healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed, nor could they blush; **therefore, they shall fall among those who fall. At the time that I punish them, they shall be cast down,' says the LORD**" (vs 13-15).

Verse 16: "Thus says the LORD, 'Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths... [maybe looking at our past] ...where the good way is and walk in it, and you shall find rest for your souls. But they said, "**We will not walk in it.**"' In other words, **famine of the Word!** 'We won't listen!'

Verse 17: "Also, I set watchmen over you, saying... [in other words, telling them to *keep the Word of God*] ...'Hearken to the sound of the ram's horn.' But they said, "**We will not hearken.**"' They weren't going to listen!

Verse 18—*speaking to the nations of today*: "Therefore, hear, you nations, and know, O congregation, what *will happen* to them? Hear, O earth, behold, I will bring evil on this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, **because they have not hearkened to My words, nor to My Law, but have rejected it**" (vs 18-19).

Whether is *a famine of the Word of God*, as a result of government sanctions, or just plain indifference of the people—as they were in the days of Noah—**the results are the same!**

As a Church, we have the responsibility to feed the flock, *even if the people refuse to listen!*

Ezekiel 34:2: "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds, 'Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?'"

This is where we stand! This is the position! **If indeed, a famine of the Word comes**, we need to be prepared! What do we do? *By studying the Word of God!*

We need to continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of God. How do we do that? *By reading, praying and studying!* We are to pray for His Kingdom to come. Indeed it will, but not before some of things come to pass.

I speak from the heart! My wife and I have nine children, and now, I believe, 20 grandchildren. I lost track of the number of great-grandchildren. I truly tell you that I hate the thought of them dealing with this rapidly changing world. I don't like what I see, and I pray that we will repent and draw closer to God.

What do we need to do? *We need to all pray that God will give us leaders to turn this nation around!* In the meantime, you and I need to:

- study
- live in the Truth
- keep the Truth
- keep God's commandments
- repent of our own sins as necessary

And as my wife reminds me a lot, **most of all we need to continue to pray that God will heal this nation!**

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Acts 1:8
- 2) Amos 8:11
- 3) John 8:32
- 4) Matthew 7:24-27
- 5) Isaiah 1:2-5
- 6) Deuteronomy 28:1, 15, 45
- 7) 2 Timothy 4:3
- 8) 2 Timothy 3:1-4
- 9) Romans 10:17, 1-3
- 10) Genesis 6:11-13
- 11) Jeremiah 22:21-22
- 12) Romans 1:21, 28-32
- 13) Jeremiah 6:13-19
- 14) Ezekiel 34:2

Scripture reference, not quoted: Jer. 30

RK:bo  
Transcribed: 8/29/21

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