

# *CIVILISATION – So Called At The Crossroads ?*

Most, if not all of you who read these articles, will be aware that this world is in crisis. Those of us in the western world are very aware of serious problems in our financial markets. Burgeoning personal and national state debt, together with withering price increases in every area of the market place, are causing great concern to economists.

The question is, is this just a temporary blip in our forward quest for security and well being, or is it something more pronounced?

There is no doubt a great measure of unbridled greed is at the root of a lot of the financial imbalances being experienced in leading western nations. The 'buy now pay later' mentality is endemic among the people of these nations, and this mindset prevails from the least to the greatest of them. Lending organisations, banks etc. have been only too pleased to feed this consumer frenzy and are now having to face the consequences of this greedy, irresponsible mode of business.

The trouble we are in, however, goes much deeper than reckless, selfish forms of the use of money, and goes to the heart of the reality of this world and its present make up.

Around the year 2000 CE (Common Era) the world population topped 6,000 million human beings - that is, six billion. In the year 1820 CE that figure has been estimated to have been around 1,000 million. That is an increase of 5,000 million in little under 200 years. At this present time we have added to our six billion figure in the year 2000 some 600 million people, and are now adding 80 million souls per year to that figure. This additional yearly total equates to a nation the size of Germany. Every four years we will be adding a nation the size of the U.S.A. That's a lot of extra provisions required to sustain that number of people.

Quite recently a United Nations report on the environment stated that planet earth, as it exists, could only be reasonably expected to support two billion people to an acceptable standard. In this assessment they were not factoring in the damage the near seven billion people now

living on it were inflicting on its vitality. As this planet stands at the present, a number nearer one billion population would be more realistic.

The question arises – How did we manage to get from one billion persons on the planet to near seven billion as of now? I, until quite recently, assumed it was just a natural geometric progression of people having babies. I hadn't realised how energy, and particularly fossil energy, had played its part in this population explosion.

This modern world, with its civilisation bestriding this planet earth, has been made possible by the utilisation of fossil fuel. Starting with coal and peat and the now more easily usable oil and natural gas, this civilisation has created these numbers. Each one of us humans on this good earth, to one level or another, is sustained by the burning and utilisation of fossil fuel.

In times before this modern energy age we humans were limited to what we could produce by our own energy, together with using that of the ox or horse or other creature, subjugated for our benefit. There was a limit to how much food we could produce by these methods. Ploughing and harvesting was labour intensive and laborious.

If one wanted to catch fish it was sail or oar that was going to get you there. There would be no trawling, as there is now, because that requires a boat with an engine. Anything you might catch couldn't be too far off-shore, as the catch would spoil because of the time taken to get to port and to market. Refrigeration is a non-starter without fossil fuel.

Fossil fuels have made it possible for us to mine minerals, copper, iron, tin, uranium etc. to the level of quantity required, and to gain access to that which was formally inaccessible to us before this energy age. The smelting of these minerals is also made possible through fossil fuel.

The transportation of goods, together with fluidity of movement for us human beings, makes possible productivity unheard of in former times. The U.S.A., the quintessential car owning, car travelling nation, makes possible its level of output and productivity through this means.

Public transport is generally of a low priority in America due to its use of the car. Rail infrastructure is also poor because distribution is mainly by giant trucks using a vast road network. America's sheer size means that these road arteries can be built to wide and generous proportions, which make volume of use and volume of cargo almost unequalled anywhere else in the world.

When public transport is used in a society, i.e. buses and trains, it may be more energy efficient but it does slow one down in ones activities. You simply can't get around as quickly or as flexibly using such means as you can using car or lorry. Hence in pure productivity terms they are always the winners.

Most of our goods today, to one degree or another, are made of plastic. Plastic is made from chemicals, almost exclusively derived from fossil fuel. Chemicals generally have their base in fossil fuel, meaning without fossil fuel, you would have no herbicides, pesticides or fertilisers of the type so often used on the farms these days. These products make possible the food output that sustains us humans in such vast number.

Okay, I think I have made the point that our human population level numbering nigh on seven billion souls is made possible by productivity borne out of the use of fossil fuel. Without this fuel our numbers on this planet would be little more than those of 1820 CE.

Now here's the rub, and it's a big one. The nations of the world have used up pretty much half of all known reserves of oil and gas over the last century, and are destined to use up the remainder in the next 40 years at the rate we're going, even taking into account our increased technical ability in extracting the stuff.

Having learned that we have at least 40 years respite until it runs out, we might take cold comfort in thinking that's a long way off and just maybe we can discover a resource, or invent a technology to replace this fossil fuel resource in that time. Well the likelihood of that happening appears remote to non-existent as things stand at the moment. What alternatives there are as of now – nuclear and wind, solar etc. have neither the scope nor flexibility of fossil fuel, and their cost of production is astronomic.

The other problem yet unmentioned, is that oil and gas extraction becomes increasingly more difficult, and extraction rates less

voluminous as reserves in their underground store deplete. Oil and gas companies the world over are struggling to maintain present levels of production. Soon production levels will start to plummet, the price will hike and availability will be less than guaranteed. World production levels in services, and every commodity, will wither bit by bit, step by step.

The worst off at the beginning of this cycle as it occurs, and it will, will be those communities and nations that depend mostly on this fossil fuel energy. Those peoples that have what we euphemistically call a subsistence living will fair the best. The inevitability in this scenario of lessening fuel will be - going on human tendencies of the past - war, famines, pestilence, and vast reductions in numbers.

Is there any way to avoid this situation one might reasonably ask? One would have to answer reasonably - No! Given man's technical power in weaponry, and the likely use of it in each nation's quest for survival in a resource and commodity stricken world, it's altogether possible that we might destroy the whole planet - at least for human habitation.

Will this ultimate destruction actually occur? Will it be allowed to occur? The answer to that is - No.

What I have explained thus far about our present world condition, has been recorded in the pages of the Bible for thousands of years. The author of the Book, who reveals Himself as the God of Israel, foretold these events and described their ultimate outcome.

The Book of Revelation, in chapter 6, describes *Yeshua* the *Messiah* (Jesus) breaking the seals on judgment scrolls, depicting a course of climatic events to take place at the end of this age of man. This period equates with a time known as 'Jacob's trouble'.

***Jeremiah 30:4***

***These are the words the Lord spoke concerning Israel and Judah. This is what the Lord says :***

***“Cries of fear are heard - terror, not peace. Ask and see – can a man bear children? Then why do I see every strong man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labour, every face turned deathly pale?***

***How awful that day will be! None will be like it.***

***It will be a time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be saved out of it’.***”

The leading tribe of Israel is that of Joseph, which makes up the heart of the Anglo-Saxon world. Judah is made up of centrally the tribe of Judah, known largely as the Jews, and has become economically and security dependent on Joseph.

The seals in ***Revelation 6*** depict seven years of trouble – American, British, Israeli in the main – which will affect and virtually destroy the whole world.

The first seal describes a religious fervour that breaks out and manifests itself in the environs of what was the territory of the Roman Empire of old. People of Europe will get religious because religion will seem the only solution to the world’s woes in the shortage crisis coming.

The second, a red horse, is war; the third famine; and the fourth disease and epidemics.

By these, it states in verse 8, was a quarter of mankind killed. The other seals open out into further carnage until we reach a time, at the end of the seventh seal, known as the seventh trumpet or shofar blast, when the God of Israel supernaturally and forcibly enters the world fray to enforce his government.

***Revelation 11:15***

***“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah (Christ).”***

A new age begins, a new heaven and earth starts to express itself. Israel is restored, its people, what is left of them, are brought back to what was Canaan.

The reason why we have come to this point in our development as humanity, is that God has never been in what we humans are doing. We, in the form of Adam and Eve, rejected his involvement and this was allowed to prove a point - that life without His direct involvement goes nowhere worth going.

***“Because you did not submit yourself to me”***, God says :

**Genesis 3:17**

***“Cursed is the ground because of you, through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.***

***It will produce thorns and thistles for you and you will eat the plants of the field.***

***By the sweat of your brow will you eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken.”***

Conditions on this earth, as marvellous and ordered as it is, are hostile, and the earth is a difficult place for man to live in. It’s tough. It reflects an existence without God in it.

The breaking open of the storehouse of fossil fuel has given a generation of humankind, particularly in the western orbit of humanity, a taste of the easy life, in the physical. It hasn’t done much for us in the head or heart department though, for that is something oil or gas can’t help us with.

Soon however we will experience on this earth something quite different. The curse of Genesis will be taken away and we will not have such need of fossil energy to make life bearable.

**Malachi 3:6-12**

***“I the Lord do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them.***

***“Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the Lord Almighty.***

***“But you ask, ‘How are we to return?’***

***“Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me.’***

***“But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’***

***“In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse - the whole nation of you - because you are robbing me.***

***“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.***

***“I will prevent pests from devouring your crops and the vines will not cast off their fruit,” says the Lord Almighty. Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the Lord Almighty.***

Israel, when they, as a people, were brought into the land of Canaan under guidance through Joshua, were to inherit a land with much potential. It was to be a Land ‘Flowing With Milk and Honey,’ picturing a benign and prosperous environment.

All of this was predicated on their being obedient to Torah and looking to God in the way they organised themselves. Giving to God through tithes and offerings, as designated in Torah, would finance God’s economic order through the Levitical priesthood system.

Through this the God of Israel was a sort of business partner who would make sure things grew and prospered. In return, the people of Israel would recognise his involvement and give a percentage in response to this. Had this and other things that Torah required to be done, actually taken place, then Israel would have become paradise on earth. It didn’t of course, because the people didn’t submit to God’s requirements. They robbed Him and ended up being thrown out of the Land.

In a time soon to come, the remnant of Israel, (after the trouble I have spoken of comes to pass,) will return to the Land and carry out things in a way their forefathers did not. In this soon coming restored Israel, God will be fully involved in the economy of the Land. Blessing upon blessing will come out of this arrangement until the Land ‘Flowing With Milk and Honey’ will truly exist and, this time, continue.

Pests and disease will not ruin crops - no need for pesticides and fungicides. Rain will come in due season - no more need of pumping water out of deep aquifers. The sun will shine, re-invigorating soil bacteria to release nutrients to hungry crops - no more need of artificial fertilisers. The curse on the earth through Adam will be lifted.

***Amos 9:13-15***

***“The days are coming” declares the Lord, “when the reaper will be overtaken by the ploughman and the planter by the one treading grapes. New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills.***

***“I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit.***

***“I will plant Israel in their own Land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them,” says the Lord your God.***

Israel will, as a people, be fully involved with the Lord their God. As a consequence they will prosper and flourish, not only physically, but spiritually. They will feel right inside and outside of themselves. Through their example the nations of the world will follow their example and experience their own blessing.

***Revelation 21:3-4*** says it all :

***“Now the dwelling of God is with men and He will live with them. They will be His people and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain for the old order of things has passed away.”***

Welcome home Dad!

***Scriptures quoted from N.I.V.***

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