

# *Perspective*

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## **Are You Ready for Hard Times?**

Many baby boomers remember a time when they had outhouses. Water in the kitchen was drawn from a well and kept in a metal bucket on the counter of the kitchen with a dipper for all in the household to use. If there were fresh vegetables, they came from a large garden carefully grown and harvested. Excess tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, cucumbers, squash, or whatever else were either canned or placed in a deep, cool root cellar. There were good times and bad times when food was either available or it was not. Some had to rely on commodities from the government or starve. Most millennials in the western world have grown up with all the modern accoutrements of life—abundant food, indoor plumbing, electricity, refrigerators, dish washers, washers and dryers, high speed internet, smart phones, computers, and other conveniences not afforded previous generations. But what would we do if all these things we have become accustomed to suddenly disappeared?

### **The grapes of wrath**

During the Great Depression, Oklahoma experienced drought and dust storms, known as the Dust Bowl. It ruined farmers' crops and destroyed livelihoods already damaged by the failing economy. Take for example, Tom Joad, a young man from a farming family who had just been paroled from prison after serving four years on a homicide charge. After losing his farm, his family journeyed to California to become crop workers. On their way to California the Joads received disheartening news about a lack of jobs and antagonism, especially towards "Okies." Once the family arrived in the state, they found the hearsay to be true, and their hard times continued. Grandma Joad died during the family's passage through the Mojave Desert. The family was forced to live in Hooverville, a grubby tent city (named after President Herbert Hoover) where migrant workers lived at the fancy of unethical contractors and dishonest deputies.

In the post-World War II era of economic growth in America poverty diminished, but it was not eliminated, particularly in certain parts of the country. I grew up in Arkansas, Missouri and later Oklahoma in the 1950s and 60s in a family of eleven. There was a lot of poverty among minorities, children, and single-parent families and times could be tough. My father supported the family as a trucker. Things were good until he sustained a serious back injury on the job. When he lost his job, the trucking company gave him three thousand dollars as a settlement, and said good bye. That is when our large family began to feel the effects of poverty. It was not always like the intense poverty portrayed in John Steinbeck's book, *The Grapes of Wrath*, written in 1939, but it was close. Eventually, my dad retrained himself and he ran a successful HVAC business. We experienced how quickly our lives could change for the worse or the better. Hard times can come suddenly; job loss, injury, or illness or in some cases, like the crash of the stock market in 1929, some lost all they had overnight. The setting of Steinbeck's book was during the great Dustbowl of the 1930s when the Joad family departed from their farm in Oklahoma to travel to California to work as migrants in the agricultural fields. At the same time, the Great Depression, which was triggered by the Wall Street Crash of 1929, resulted in a severe global economic downturn which lasted until about 1939. The period was characterized by high unemployment rates and poverty. Industrial production and international trade went into a downward tailspin, and there were widespread bank and business failures around the world. Whether we will ever again have a chain reaction downturn in the world again like the Great Depression is hard to know.

### **Unforeseen effects of the U.S. Strait of Hormuz blockade**

The world today is more interconnected because of the AI revolution than it has ever been before. The overnight dive of the American stock market on October 29, 1929, known as Black Tuesday, triggered a domino effect that plunged the entire world into the Great Depression, the worst economic crisis of the 20th century.

It wasn't long ago most people had never thought about the importance of the Strait of Hormuz or Kharg Island in relation to the cost of gas in their vehicles or food on their table. Soon everyone will know, if the stalemate with Iran is not resolved. Politico.eu published an article on May 20, 2026, "World has 6 months to avert major food crisis, says UN as Hormuz struggle drags on."

The article states, "The closure of the Strait of Hormuz could trigger a severe global food price crisis within six to 12 months unless governments act quickly, the Food and Agriculture Organization warned Wednesday.

Decisions now by farmers and governments on fertilizer use, imports, financing and crop choices will determine whether food prices spike later this year or in early 2027, the agency said... The impact is already showing. The FAO Food Price Index, which tracks monthly changes in international food commodity prices, rose for a third consecutive month in April, driven by high energy costs and disruptions linked to the Middle East conflict. The shock will unfold in stages, the agency said: energy, then fertilizer, then seeds, then lower yields, then commodity prices and finally food inflation reaching shoppers..."

We pray the US-Israeli-Iran War will not take the world in the direction of increasing global poverty, and it may not. However, we must ask the obvious question, "Have the United States and United Kingdom and other nations of the West walked along a righteous path warranting God's blessings?"

How much we yearn for our nation, modern Israel, to turn to God and repent, but so far that hasn't happened. Malachi 3:6-8 says, "*For I am the Lord, I do not change; therefore, you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob. Yet from the days of your fathers, you have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you,*" says the Lord of hosts. "But you said, "In what way shall we return?"'" These verses in Malachi describe the posture of most people, "What do we need to do?" They are oblivious they are doing anything wrong.

In Deuteronomy 28:15-19, God warned ancient Israel about the ongoing consequences for disobedience: "*But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: 'Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the country. Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Cursed shall be the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out.'*" In verse 25 of the same chapter it says, "*The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them; and you shall become troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth.*"

Keep in mind, God warned ancient Israel of the progressive intensity of punishment if they disobeyed: "*But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant, I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you. And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. I will break the pride of your power...*" (Leviticus 26:14-18)

### **Only God can produce a permanent peace**

If per chance the United States can haggle a deal with the Iranians to safely open the Strait of Hormuz and peace is brought about in the Mideast region, it will only be temporary. The mentality of the Iranian regime is to never give up; they will go underground and begin to build again to fight another day. I Thessalonians 5:1-3 warns us: "*But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.*"

In verse 4-8 of the same chapter, it goes on to caution: "*But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.*"

Man does not know the way to peace and those who insist on living man's way won't find it (Isaiah 59:8). Real peace will never come by the hand of carnal man, but will only be brought about by the return of Jesus Christ.

Times of incredible hardship may fall upon God's people in the near future, but we must trust in our Father and Jesus Christ. It will be our finest hour. Jesus said, "*You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But not a hair of your head shall be lost. By your patience possess your souls.*" (Luke 21:16-19)