

GOOD NEWS IN A VIOLENT WORLD

Note to the speaker:

While commenting on present-day violence, highlight what God's Word says about the origin of violence. Emphasize the hope of a new world of peace that the Bible sets forth. Speak in a positive manner about the Bible-based hope for the future

“VIOLENT” APTLY DESCRIBES THE WORLD AROUND US TODAY (7 min.)

Many of us have (or know people who have) been the victim of violence on a *personal level*

[Here and later, you may use recent local examples]

Violence is so common that our daily activities are affected by it—how to travel, when not to go out, what to avoid

Many families are shattered by domestic violence—child abuse, spousal abuse, incest

United States has been called the murder capital of the industrialized world (*g90 10/22 28*)

Young, old, male, female, may feel as did Job (Read Job 19:7)

On *international level*, assassinations, terrorism, and ethnic conflicts becoming ever more common

Perpetrated not only by criminals but also by political, religious, and other extremists

Many individuals and groups seem to match description of the wicked in Proverbs 4:16, 17 (Read)

Often, peaceful citizens and innocent bystanders are hurt

Leaves people in despair, dreading that worse violence is ahead

To understand what good news is available despite this violence, we need to consider its background

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OF THIS WORLD VIOLENCE? (10 min.)

Bible records times of lawlessness and violence in the past and provides insight on the true cause

Examining events of those times can shed light on events today

Violence burst forth prior to Flood (Read Genesis 6:5, 11)

Much of violence must have been caused by depraved angels and their mighty offspring (Ge 6:2, 4)

If you lived before the Flood, how would you have been affected?

Would you have felt it necessary to be tough to survive?

Or, would you have trusted in God as your hope for end of violence?

Encouraging to note that God definitely was displeased with violence

He purposed to end it, and did so (Ge 6:7, 8)

Jerusalem before 70 C.E. was another scene of violence

Jews claimed to worship Jehovah, but leaders tended to divide people into factions, even leading to revolts (Ac 5:36, 37)

God was put in the background, as religious animosities and selfish aims took first place

An “increasing of lawlessness,” as foretold, included violent persecution of Christians (Mt 24:12; Ac 7:58; 8:1-3)

Eventually led to violent revolt against Rome, resulting in destruction of entire Jewish system (*it-2 47-8*)

History since then spotted with violent times, climaxing today

Bible shows that the whole world is lying in the hands of Satan, who is trying to control everyone's thinking and actions (1Jo 5:19)

Through the media he promotes ‘earthly wisdom,’ which is animalistic, demonic, contentious, and vile (Jas 3:15, 16)

Television and movies show people getting stabbed, beaten, raped, shot, vaporized, blown up; violence becomes routine

Effect is well documented—an increasingly violent generation bent on crime (*g87 4/8 30*)

DO YOU SHARE GOD'S AND CHRIST'S VIEW OF VIOLENCE? (8 min.)

Jehovah is plainly on record as opposing anyone loving violence (Read Psalm 11:5)

He has not changed, even though people today accept violence as commonplace

God's Son is “Prince of Peace” and while on earth did “no violence” (Isa 9:6, 7; 53:9)

Gives us reason to expect that when Jesus executes God's judgment against wicked, his actions will be righteous

God is now allowing individuals opportunity to turn from violence in order to gain his approval

Similar to opportunity men of Nineveh were given to turn from ‘bad way and violence in their hands’ (Jon 3:8)

Having made this change, one should keep in mind counsel at Proverbs 3:31, 32 (Read)

The wicked may gain wealth, prominence, or power, but they do not have blessing of intimacy with Creator

As we see world becoming ever more violent, we might ask: Where are things headed? Is there good news today?

THOUGH THE WORLD IS VIOLENT, THERE IS GOOD NEWS! (20 min.)

Seeing the violence and wickedness in Jerusalem, Habakkuk was greatly disturbed (Read Habakkuk 1:2, 3)

Similarly, we could become disturbed and discouraged, feeling that there is no hope, no good news

But there is good news!

First, Jehovah and Jesus are not blind to the present violence

They are high above the wicked and are watching (Pr 15:3)

Complete end of violence and wickedness will come soon, and we can be marked for preservation—certainly that is good news!

Jehovah noted what was taking place in Jerusalem and acted in righteousness, bringing the city to destruction in 607 B.C.E. (Eze 8:17; *kj* 154-6, 165-71)

Prior to Jehovah's forceful intervention, those who were distressed over conditions were marked to be spared (Eze 9:4)

Faithful ones like Baruch, Ebed-melech, and Rechabites survived

People today who are appalled by the world's violence and who want to serve Jehovah in truth can also be spared

There are things we can do to ensure our survival of the end of the violent world—that too is good news!

As violent pre-Flood world met its end, Noah and his family knew what they had to do to survive, and they did "just so" (Ge 6:13-22)

As violence grew in Jerusalem before 70 C.E., Christians, being forewarned, knew what they had to do (Lu 19:43, 44; 21:20, 21)

They not only had to avoid being violent but also had to obey warning—that meant their survival and preservation

Our being delivered from violence today does not mean flight to some special place or simply being a non-violent person

As with Noah and first-century Christians, positive action in line with faith we have gained through studying the Bible will mean our being preserved alive (Heb 10:23-25, 39)

Preservation will be into new world, which will not be marked by wickedness and violence—that is the best of news! (Ps 72:7, 8, 14)

Under Christ's peaceful rule, violence will be no more

Wicked and lovers of violence not allowed to be part of new world, but will be annihilated (Re 21:8)

May your attitude toward violence and your actions in serving God enable you to find a place there (Read Psalm 72:18, 19)

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need be read. Source material in parentheses need not be mentioned)