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## Four Reasons Famine Is Coming to America

The struggles that farmers face today will soon affect us all.

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Last year, after four decades of farming, Nebraska grain farmer Kirk Duensing filed for bankruptcy. Several years of low corn and soybean prices left him with too many bills he could not pay. He sold farmland and farm equipment to raise emergency funds, but it was not enough. To escape his debt of more than \$1 million, he filed for bankruptcy. Now he struggles to survive by borrowing more money and hiring himself out to plant crops for other farmers.

Nationwide, most farms lost money last year. Government statistics show 223 Midwest farmers filed for bankruptcy in 2018, twice as many as did during the Great Recession of 2008. These bankruptcies are primarily the result of slumping grain prices caused by rising competition from nations like Brazil and Russia. But the woes faced by farmers have been compounded by China's tariffs on soybeans, Mexico's tariffs on cheese, and catastrophic flooding.

At a time when America's farmers are being buffeted by foreign competition, wide swaths of nine major grain-producing states have been deluged with water. The result? Average annual farm income is half what it was five years ago. This means the farming industry's debt-to-income ratio is higher now than it has been in a generation.

Farmers are facing their worst financial crisis since the 1980s, and it is still getting worse. Bumper crops of Brazilian soybeans and Russian wheat are expected to keep grain prices low, while flooded fields make it impossible for American farmers to plant those crops. *Half of America's grain fields went unplanted this year.*

Millennia ago, the Bible foretold that in the end time, American crop failures would escalate into famine. Recent events evoke these prophecies, and they could factor into and accelerate the prophesied arrival of the worst agricultural crisis in United States history.

## Low Crop Prices

President Thomas Jefferson changed history in 1803 when he purchased the Louisiana Territory. This immense expanse covered 530 million acres of rich farmland linked to the Port of New Orleans by the world's longest navigable river system. The grain that grew across America's fruited plains could be exported easily. In Britain, with abundant food shipping in from the Mississippi Basin, farmers quit the land and sought work in factories, accelerating the Industrial Revolution.

"The American political system was founded in Philadelphia, but the American nation was built on the vast farmlands that stretch from the Alleghenies to the Rockies," geopolitical analyst George Friedman wrote in *The New York Review of Books* in 2005. "That farmland produced the wealth that funded American industrialization: It permitted the formation of a class of small landholders who, amazingly, could produce more than they could consume. They could sell their excess crops in the East and in Europe and save that money, which eventually became the founding capital of American industry."

The Louisiana Purchase destined the United States to become an agricultural, industrial, financial and military superpower. The fact that this happened in 1803 is deeply significant. The late Herbert W. Armstrong explained in his landmark book *The*

*United States and Britain in Prophecy* that the Anglo-Saxon peoples who settled the United States and Britain are descended from ancient Israel. (To prove this, request a free copy of *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*) He described a detailed prophecy in Leviticus 26 where God promised to punish ancient Israel for 2,520 years if it defied His law. The Assyrian Empire enslaved the Israelites and carried them away captive in 718 B.C. Count forward 2,520 years and you arrive at A.D. 1803, the year America started becoming a superpower. Who else besides America and Britain could be descended from the “lost” 10 tribes of Israel?

America’s annual wheat production increased fivefold between 1870 and 1970, from 7 million tons to more than 36 million. Corn production increased nearly fourfold, from 29 million tons to 105 million. Soybean production rose exponentially, from almost nothing to more than 30 million tons per year.

During the 1970s, America was the undisputed breadbasket of the world, accounting for two thirds of the world’s grain exports (one third of all wheat exports, half of all corn exports, and three quarters of all soybean exports).

America’s agricultural dominance has since eroded. Its share of the global grain market is only half of what it was at its peak. Nations like Brazil, Russia and Ukraine are now producing huge harvests of soybeans, wheat and other crops. The resulting glut is punishing U.S. farmers as *surpluses drive down crop prices to half what they were just five years ago*.

Foreign competition is a major reason why the number of farms in America has fallen 20 percent since the 1970s. Small farmsteads cannot turn a profit, so farmers are selling their land to bigger farms or urban developers. Over the past half century, America has lost 160 million acres of farmland while Brazil has gained 230 million acres.

“The U.S. and other Israelite nations are surrounded or besieged by fierce and often unfair competition,” *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry writes in *Ezekiel: The End-Time Prophet*. “Prophecy indicates that the German-led European Union will soon join forces with Russia, China and Japan to shut the U.S. out of more and more markets (see Isaiah 23). As the U.S. and Britain become less and less competitive worldwide, unemployment will steadily increase. The fact that the U.S. and Britain have lost control of the world’s most strategic sea gates—like Panama, Gibraltar, Suez and Singapore—will make it much easier for foreign powers to choke off these nations’ supply lines. God prophesied in Deuteronomy 28:52 that the nations of end-time Israel would *lose these sea gates* if they turned away from Him!”

Fierce and unfair competition is already forcing many U.S. farmers to declare bankruptcy or move overseas.

Since undeveloped farmland in Brazil costs a 10th of the price of farmland in the American Midwest, more than 200 American soybean farmers have relocated to Brazil. But since Brazil is closely cooperating with China and the EU, their farming efforts may soon help these power blocs undermine the U.S. in a great trade war.

## Trade War

President Donald Trump has promised to be the greatest job-producing president in U.S. history. He is attempting to fight back against unfair trade practices that other nations have used against America. He supports tariffs (taxes on foreign imports) to make American manufacturing great again. He has imposed a 25 percent tariff on many manufactured goods from China and Mexico and is considering tariffs against Japan and the EU.

Such measures help American manufacturers, but hurt American farmers.

In retaliation against America’s new trade policies, China slapped a 25 percent tariff on U.S. soybeans, Mexico imposed a 25 percent tariff on U.S. cheese, and the EU has proposed a number of tariffs on U.S. farm products. So while American farmers are already struggling because of low crop prices, people worldwide cannot afford U.S. farm produce because their governments tax American goods.

This escalating trade dispute is rerouting the flows of global trade.

Since President Trump took office, U.S. soybean exports to China have fallen more than 60 percent—from 43.3 million tons in 2016 to 16 million in 2018. Meanwhile, Brazilian soybean exports to China have risen 73 percent—from 38 million tons to 66 million tons. Even if a temporary truce is declared in the U.S.-China trade war, American farmers may never reclaim the share of soybean trade they have lost to Chinese companies beginning to rely on Brazilian farmers instead.

Cattle graze on a drought-stricken field in the Western U.S.

American dairy farmers face similar problems. Roughly a quarter of U.S. dairy exports are sold in Mexico, but Mexico’s tariffs on U.S. cheese will drastically reduce these exports. These tariffs are prompting Mexico to reach out to the EU for a trade deal that will make it more affordable to buy dairy products from European farmers. If China buys soybeans from Brazil and Mexico buys milk from Europe, more U.S. farmers will go out of business.

America is still the world’s largest food exporter, but a time is coming when it will no longer export food.

“The United States and Britain are going to be left out in the cold as two gigantic trade blocs, Europe and Asia, mesh together and begin calling the shots in world commerce,” Mr. Flurry continues in *Ezekiel: The End-Time Prophet*. “These nations of Israel are going to be literally besieged—economically frozen out of world trade! As that happens, domestic rioting

and violence will become much more prevalent. Already in America today, instances of rioting and burning are occurring more regularly, often associated with racial hatred. ... As the economy grows worse, besieged by foreign powers, the rioters will burn more and more—because God’s wrath is upon us!”

Ezekiel prophesied that pestilence and famine would destroy one third of the population of end-time Israel.

It is important to note that Ezekiel wrote these words while he was a captive in Babylon, after the nations of Israel and Judah had already been conquered. His prophecy is not referring to the Assyrian siege against Samaria or the Babylonian siege against Jerusalem. He is referring to pestilence and famine among the modern descendants of Israel and Judah.

Today, U.S. farmers are losing a trade war with China, Europe, Russia and Latin America. Once the U.S. no longer produces excess food, the Bible shows that rioting and weather disasters will jeopardize the food supplies it needs to feed even its own people!

## Catastrophic Weather

California farmers have been cursed with drought, while Midwest farmers have been cursed with floods. These disasters have cost U.S. farmers billions of dollars. Some are calling the Midwest floods the worst agricultural disaster in modern U.S. history. Satellite images show that over a million acres of farmland were submerged this spring.

Thousands of farms were ruined as flooding washed away huge tracts of corn, soybeans and other crops. Calves, chickens, hogs and other livestock were also wiped out by rising water.

Nebraskan farmer Richard Panowicz lost 40 of his 60 recently born calves. After the disaster struck, he told the *Omaha World-Herald* that he will probably get out of the cattle business.

Agricultural analysts predict that 5 to 15 million acres of farmland are too wet to plant this year. The American Farm Bureau Federation estimates that every 5 million acres of unplanted fields subtracts 25,000 tons of grain from the nation’s production. So America could have its worst grain harvest in 40 years.

“There’s just devastation everywhere,” said Colleen Rambo, who worked out of Fremont, Nebraska, with a disaster-response team called No Town Left Behind. “The water is covering entire towns to the rooftops .... The croplands have been covered with sand. I felt like I was in the Florida beaches. ... One of the farmers was telling me that this happened back in the ’50s, and they turned over the land five feet in order to bury the sand, and they can’t do that again because they’ll just bring that sand back up. So there are millions of acres that are not going to be planted this year. The amount of food that is going to be produced by the Midwest is going to be drastically reduced this year.”

Great tracts of U.S. farmland are not growing crops this year, and the sand washed into the soil may hurt crop yields for years to come. The Midwest has already lost half of its topsoil over the past 50 years due to poor farming practices; now floods are washing away even more. This loss of precious topsoil will make farmers even more dependent on artificial fertilizer to grow crops—fertilizer that America purchases from foreign companies in Russia, Trinidad and Tobago, and Ukraine.

“One great problem this globe now faces is that most of its arable land is already under production, and much of that land is seriously degraded due to the intensive, chemically-based farming practices fashionable since World War II,” writes Wayne Turgeon in *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*. “Figure in the increasing occurrences of floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, drought and other unnatural disasters and it is clear that the world’s systems of agriculture stand on the brink of disaster.

“With food as our largest export product, the United States stands to lose the most in any trade war if any ‘natural’ or unnatural disasters should cause us to have a bad year. National reserves for our own needs, in case of just such an emergency, are very small and would barely last long enough to get us through to the next growing season.”

Most people take for granted that grocery stores will always be full of food. But when foreign nations stop trading with America and weather disasters decimate crops, the nation’s food supply will be in peril.

## Propheesied Punishment

Prophecies in Deuteronomy 28, Isaiah 23 and Ezekiel 5 describe the devastating effects that trade war and economic siege will have on America in the end time. Details about crop failures are described in Joel 1.

This chapter paints a frightful, desolate picture of starvation and disease.

“The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth. Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vinedressers, for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished. The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men” (Joel 1:10-12).

This is a prophecy about corn, wheat and barley grown in America’s Midwest perishing; about grapes, figs and pomegranates grown on America’s West Coast drying up; about apples grown in Washington and Michigan withering.

America's agriculture crisis is setting the stage for these prophecies to be fulfilled.

The Prophet Joel continues: "How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate. O Lord, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field. The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness" (verses 18-20).

Even farm animals will starve. Drought and wildfires will dry up their pastures and burn away their forage. Such disasters are sent by God to destroy America's food, even as foreign nations refuse to sell agricultural produce to the United States.

America's current agricultural crisis is setting the stage for these sobering prophecies to be fulfilled.

God promises to send these curses because the American and British people have changed His judgments into wickedness more than other nations and sinned against His statutes more than the countries that are around them (Ezekiel 5:6).

But God also reveals how individuals can be protected from this disaster.

Ezekiel 33:10-11 state, "Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live? Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; *for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*"

There is only one way that God will protect us. Our people must *turn, turn, turn* from our evil ways.

God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. "Why will ye die, O house of Israel?" What a terrifying question! Yet even if the nations of Israel reject God's warning, they will eventually repent *after* they have experienced the worst suffering ever. It is a matter of life-and-death importance to pay attention to the seriousness of the times! ■

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