

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) And the Church (various Scripture)

While the world's best and brightest are searching diligently for a vaccine and cure for the Coronavirus, Hindu's in India are trying cow urine as a cure. That's right. These people held a cow urine drinking party this past weekend in hopes that it can stave off Coronavirus. I bet it'll at least help with social distancing. Fast forward to Branson, Missouri and the Jim Bakker Show where brother Jim is at it again, this time he's selling something called The Silver Solution that he is telling his dupes can cure COVID-19. It's going for \$125 bucks a kit. The government has stepped in and issued a "Cease and Desist" order to Jim telling him to stop the sell of what amounts to snake oil. You would think Jim Bakker had had enough of the Federal government. So there ya have it. Cow urine or snake oil. I think I'll pass on both.

INTRO:TEXT Take your Bibles and turn to Matthew 24, the gospel of Matthew and chapter 24, v.1. I feel safe in saying this morning that we're living in the end times, the last days and as John put it, "the last hour." It just "feels" like it, doesn't it? Most people know enough about what the end of the world will be like to think that that's where we are now. I believe they're right to feel that way. And being that the visible church has exchanged the truth of God for lies being sold by the hundreds of thousands of false pastors and false teachers and false prophets and false apostles, we are no doubt going through the last of the signs of the Lord's return, the Great Apostasy, the great falling away from God the Father of our Lord Jesus.

By the way, I have recently watched several of the false prophets of our day prophesying what is coming for 2020, not one of them saw the Coronavirus coming. Gee. I wonder why.

Amazingly, a virus is what has gotten the attention of the entire planet and possibly the tool that God is using to punish some and get the attention of the rest. Someone said a long time ago that **nothing happens on earth that doesn't pass through the hand of God first.**

If you've been to the grocery store in the past few days or Walmart, it looks like people are expecting a heavy snow. We were at Walmart Friday and there was only one loaf of the brand of bread we use on the shelf. Beverly was at the Food Lion later on Friday near Indian Trail with her cousin and she said it was a mad house. So much for "social distancing."

But personally, the reason I feel we're in the last days is found in Matthew chapter 24... and Luke 21 and 2 Thess. 2 and 2 Tim. 3 and the entire book of the Revelation. So, if you're not feeling it yet, turn in your Bibles to Matthew 24 and we'll begin reading at v.1. Then be ready to go to Luke's gospel and chapter 21.

I'm preaching for faith, not fear.

Matthew 24:1 Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him.

² And He said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down."

³ As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you.

⁵ "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. Note this, beloved. The first people Jesus refers to when He was talking about His return was the false prophets and false Christ. One might think after reading this chapter that He should have lead off with wars and stuff.

⁶ "You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end.

⁷ "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. Wars will not be merely rumored, they will be real. And we're talking about world wars and little wars.

⁸ *"But all these things are **merely the beginning** of birth pangs. (Matt. 24:1-8 NAU)* Jesus is telling His disciples that it's going to get worse before it gets better.

When our first child was born, she was breach and when Sue Ellen was in the delivery room she was in such pain that she yelled at me and told me to get out. I was just trying to comfort her. Her labor was prolonged and she had a really rough time so I learned a little about birth pangs. Now, kidney stones I know a lot about. I went through "passing the stone pangs" 14 times...so far.

"See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end." That's a command. Jesus commanded His disciples to see to it that these events didn't frighten them. Fear seldom does anyone any good and in fact, it can eat away at our faith. And it can empty the shelves at the Walmart store and Food Lion.

By the way. The world's news sources survive and thrive on the public's fear. Wall Street survives and thrives on greed, the news folk survive on our fear. Fear and greed both make money.

Now turn to Luke chapter 21. This chapter is parallel to Matthew 24. Luke 21 and we'll read v.11,

¹¹ *and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places **plagues** and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. (Lk. 21:11 NAU)* I wonder where running out of toilet papers falls in those categories.

The Lord Jesus commanded His disciples not to be frightened and then He gives them and us lots of reasons to be frightened. What's up with that? Here's what's up? We're in the world but we're not of the world. What frightens them shouldn't frighten us.

²⁵ *"There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves,*

²⁶ *men fainting **from fear and the expectation** of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. (Lk. 21:25-26 NAU)* The unbelieving world will know something's up.

Scientists and Al Gore are selling the global warming theory and in part I believe it. But their message is terrifying those who only trust in science. Since we're witnessing ice caps melting we're being told that sea levels are going to rise and we're going to witness some serious flooding along our coasts. *in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves,*

The word perplexity comes from our Greek text and means that people are going to be so confused and terrified by what's happening to our oceans that they're going to be unable to resolve the problem and they're just going to give up. They're going to be so confused that they will not be able to see a way out. It's kinda like rapture of the deep where divers sometimes can't tell which way is up. And the last place they want to turn is to God.

Beloved, we live in a different realm than the unbelieving world lives in. We live in the kingdom of God. We live in the body of Christ. We are the church! Our citizenship even as we speak is in heaven. We have been transferred from the authority of darkness, or the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of God's dear Son. We walk by faith, not by sight.

Now notice Luke 21 and v.11 again.

***Luke 21:11** and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places **plagues and famines**; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. (Lk. 21:11 NAU)*

Now notice the words "plagues and famines" in v.11. Jesus said they will be "in various places." I take that to mean since Jesus said this 2,000 years ago, that there will be places throughout history that God will send disease and famine to put an end to whatever it is the peoples there were doing. Remember Sodom and Gomorrah? And Nineveh? And Jerusalem in 70AD? There won't be one or two places where these plagues and famines will happen, they will be universal.

Did you know that God uses four judgments to punish some? ²¹
For thus says the Lord GOD, "How much more when I send My four severe judgments against Jerusalem: sword, famine, wild beasts and plague to cut off man and beast from it! (Ezek. 14:21 NAU) The context of Ezekiel is the coming of judgment upon Israel and specifically the city of Jerusalem where the heretics of the Lord's day have chosen to preach their lies from. It makes sense, doesn't it, that the Coronavirus is universal? We're in the last days and the last hour and we're now in the midst of the great apostasy, and that is universal as well.

Common sense should tell us to be extremely careful about things like personal hygiene and not touching certain surfaces in stores and public restrooms. Common sense tells us that restaurants should close their doors to all but take-out orders.

The Coronavirus, COVID-19, is highly contagious once it gets out into the world and that's why WHO has declared it a *pandemic*. Pandemic simply means that this new virus is now present on 7 continents. Pandemic doesn't mean Coronavirus is dangerous, but widespread. It is dangerous. An *epidemic* is when a disease is affecting or tending to affect a disproportionately large number of individuals within a population, community, or region at the same time. typhoid was *epidemic*. *Pandemic* is when the disease has gone into other nations and continents.

But back to our word "plague" in Luke's gospel, and I will close with this. Plague comes from a Greek word that means pestilence, plague, (disease) epidemic (MT 24.7; LU 21.11) A disease that is particularly deadly and threatening. In Scripture it is usually epidemic but sometimes it is pandemic, like say, sin. But it also applies to individuals like Hitler and Stalin and Lenin meaning a person dangerous to public welfare *harmful, troublesome*; possibly substantively *troublemaker, pest* (AC 24.5) And like those monsters, this too shall pass.

And it will, beloved of God.